

# The Xenia gift that keeps on giving

- [Tom Archdeacon](#)

Staff Writer

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When it came to his prospects for playing major college football, the late Doug Adams was undersized, but over-motivated.

Growing up in Xenia, he lifted weights in the family's small garage and at the high school football stadium, where, remembered classmate Peter Stephan, now a Xenia attorney, "he ran up and down the steps with bags of sand on his back."

His dedication paid off. He was a standout in the classroom and on the Xenia High athletic fields, where he was one of the state's greatest shot-putters and a football star who caught Woody Hayes' attention.

Part of the Buckeyes' fabled "Super Sophs," Adams helped lead OSU to the national title in 1968, started three years and was a co-captain his senior season. Then he played four seasons with the Cincinnati Bengals.

After that he went to dental school at OSU and then set up a practice in Mt. Orab, outside Cincinnati. Still dedicated to fitness, he biked regularly.

That's what her only child was doing one Saturday in 1997 when he was hit and killed, his mother, Edna Adams, said: "The man who hit him had worked all night and fell asleep at the wheel as he headed home."

## ADVERTISING

Doug Adams was just 48.

Sadly, just a few years earlier, Doug's wife Ann — whom he'd met in dental school — was killed when she was thrown from her horse on their farm and hit her head on a cement cistern top.

The couple had no children.

That left Edna and her husband Armic, a longtime Xenia educator, focused on a way to keep their beloved son's memory alive.

Ten years ago — remembering those garage sessions — they donated a rental property they had which, along with some community donations, launched the Doug Adams Fitness Center at Xenia High School.

Some six years ago, when Armic suffered the first of his three strokes, Edna said she and her husband began to talk about what they would do with the money they had saved.

“My husband liked to save his money,” Edna said with a smile. When 85-year-old Armic died this past January, they still were in the same modest home they had moved into in 1958.

“They had very few needs,” Stephan, their attorney, said with a nod ... then a grin. “But never judge a book by its cover.”

### **Show stopper**

The annual Greene County Community Foundation luncheon Thursday, April 29, at the Greene Country Club, was packed with doctors, lawyers, businessmen, educators — the movers and shakers of Greene County.

The master of ceremonies was the always-entertaining Paul Newman, the former Wright State associate athletics director.

Sitting at one table up front was retired Wright Patterson AFB Commander Col. Colleen Ryan, who was the featured speaker.

Sitting the next table over was 84-year-old Edna. Few people noticed her and even fewer knew who she was. That all changed when — halfway through the affair — Newman talked about Doug Adams and then introduced her:

“His mother joins us today to share in a very special announcement. Wishing to perpetuate the memory of her son, Mrs. Adams has presented a \$1 million commitment to the Xenia Community Schools.”

There were gasps of surprise, then warm applause that grew into a rousing standing ovation.

“I believe it’s the single largest gift ever given by one individual to a public school system in southwest Ohio,” said Dr. Paul Dillaplain, the president of the Xenia school board.

A charitable trust that will be managed by the Foundation, the school will receive annual increments — “something like 5 percent off the taxable part each year ... forever,” said Xenia Superintendent Jeff Lewis.

Stephan said Mrs. Adams wants the money to go to capital improvements for sports facilities and other projects that still will be decided.

The first funds will go toward making the Doug Adams Fitness Center a state-of-the-art facility and extending weight training and nutrition education into the junior high schools.

“What a wonderful gift of life,” Stephan said. “In our society, we continually hear how our children are not physically fit. Our goal is to reverse that trend and help every student in Xenia get as physically fit as possible.”

Although Xenia school officials said they face tough financial situations like most school systems in the state, they did have a bond issue pass last November that — once their seven grade schools are reduced to five — will provide new buildings for each.

“This gift is the best example of doing the most good for the greatest number of people,” Dillaplain said. “It’s a gift that will just keep giving. It will give us some capital improvements for sports facilities and equipment and, because of the way it’s set up, we’ll get these increments ... forever.

“I’m just so proud of Mrs. Adams for what she has done. She’s so humble, so unassuming. She wanted to remember her son and help generations of kids to come and that’s just what she has done.”

She had wanted to give the gift anonymously, but the Foundation — Stephan said — “convinced her to come forward to show that generosity can come from anyone, anywhere, at anytime.”

Once the luncheon ended she was ready to have Stephan drive her back home.

“I think I’ll find something to do in the backyard — it’s just so nice out,” she said quietly. “It’s really a wonderful day.”

Thanks to her, it certainly was.

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