



## **Clemson Kicker Chris Gardocki, USC & College of Charleston Women's Basketball Coach Nancy Wilson Lead the SC Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2019**

For immediate release: Feb. 21, 2019  
Contacts: Ephraim Ulmer, 803/779-0905  
Andy Solomon, 843/209-4723

**COLUMBIA, SC – Clemson's Chris Gardocki, who punted for 16 NFL seasons, and women's basketball coach Nancy Wilson of Lake City highlight the South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame's Induction Class of 2019.**

The class also features USC defensive lineman John Abraham of Lamar High, Clemson baseball player Shane Monahan, linebacker Dexter Coakley of Mt. Pleasant and Appalachian State, USC-Aiken and former major league pitcher Roberto Hernandez, and high-scoring basketball standout Miriam Walker-Samuels of Claflin College.

The enshrinement of Hernandez and Walker-Samuels into the South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame are the first inductees for their respective colleges.

The seven individuals will be forever enshrined with the Palmetto State's highest athletic honor on Monday, May 13 at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. Tickets (table of eight for \$600) and program sponsorships are available by securing a table from the SCAHOF office 803/779-0905. Payment and reservations must be made by Friday, April 12.

The SCAHOF Banquet is the largest annual celebration of Palmetto State sports stars under one roof. The traditional introduction of past inductees, the Walk of Legends, is one of the event's highlights and more information may be secured at [www.scahof.com](http://www.scahof.com).

---



## **CHRIS GARDOCKI**

Clemson's placekicker during the 1989 and 1990 seasons, Chris Gardocki earned second-team All-America honors as a junior and third-team All-America as a sophomore. He received honorable mention All-America recognition as a punter by UPI as a freshman, sophomore and junior. He was fourth in punting and tied for fourth in placekicking in the nation as a junior becoming the second player in NCAA history to finish in the top 10 in both categories in the same season and the first to do it twice. Gardocki tied the ACC record for the longest field goal with a 57-yarder against Appalachian State in 1990 and had a pair of four-field-goal games in the same year. He made 72 consecutive PATs to set a Tiger record and never missed one throughout his career. Gardocki had 20 multiple field-goal games in his career, and tied Obed Ariri's career record for field goals with 63. Named to Clemson's Centennial Team in 1996, Gardocki was listed as Clemson's 19th best gridder of all-time by a panel of historians in 1999. A third-round draft pick of the Bears in 1991, he left Clemson after his junior year, and punted for Chicago (1991-94), Indianapolis (1995-98), Cleveland (1999-03) and Pittsburgh (2004-06). As a member of the Colts, he was an All-Pro selection in 1996. He played 16 seasons in the NFL, more than any other former Tiger.



## **NANCY WILSON**

Lake City native Nancy Wilson and Coker College graduate (1973) served as the head basketball coach at College of Charleston from 1976-84, the University of South Carolina from 1985-97 and returned to College of Charleston from 2003-12 winning 542 collegiate games. She was the second women's basketball coach in CofC history and posted at least 19 wins in all of her eight seasons which included a pair of 30-plus wins. Her 1980, '81 and '82 teams each finished second in the nation in AIAW Division II. At USC, she was the Metro Conference Coach of the Year (1985 & 1991), her teams were the Metro Conference Regular-Season Champions (1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991) and Conference Tournament Champions (1986, 1988, 1989), advanced to five NCAA tournaments, coached at South Carolina longer than any other women's basketball head coach (13 seasons), and posted four 20-win seasons and finished the season ranked in the final AP Poll twice (17th in 1989-90, 19th in 1990-91). On the international level, she was head coach for the 1985 National Sports Festival Games and head coach of the 1992 USA World Junior Olympic Team. She returned to coach the Cougars from 2003-12, and in 2012, the Cougars reached the third round of the WBI.



## JOHN ABRAHAM

Born in Timmonsville, Abraham prepped at Lamar High where he was primarily a track athlete. While there, he set the state record for the 200-meter dash (22.6) and played organized football for the first time as a senior. He played at USC for Coach Brad Scott and amassed 23.5 sacks, ranking second on South Carolina's career list, and was a first-team All-SEC selection. Drafted in the first round in 2000, he made an immediate impact for the New York Jets. As a rookie, he recorded 12 tackles and 4.5 sacks in only six games before being injured. In 2001, he recorded 58 tackles and 13 sacks, and was named to the AFC Pro Bowl. In 2002, he recorded 48 tackles, with 10 sacks, and was again named to the Pro Bowl. In 2003, Abraham only recorded 37 tackles and six sacks, because of injury yet tied a franchise record set by Joe Klecko and Mark Gastineau with four sacks in a 2001 game against the New Orleans Saints. Abraham was traded to the Atlanta Falcons and in 2008, he recorded a career-high 16.5 sacks and ranked third in the league. On December 12, 2010, Abraham recorded two sacks against the Carolina Panthers which gave him 100.5 for his career, making him only the 25th player in NFL history to eclipse 100. In 2010, Abraham was selected to his fourth Pro Bowl. He signed with the Arizona Cardinals in 2013 and in his first season in Arizona, he recorded 11.5 sacks, ranking seventh in the NFL. He retired after the 2014 season with five pro bowl appearances, and three first-team and one second team All-Pro nods.



## DEXTER COAKLEY

Dexter Coakley starred as a linebacker at Wando High and then at Appalachian State from 1993-96. The Mt. Pleasant native was the Southern Conference's Freshman of the Year and then became the league's defensive player of the year three times (1994-96), in addition to also garnering All-America honors three times. A two-time Buck Buchanan Award recipient (the first two inaugural awards in 1995 & '96) signifying the top defensive player in I-AA, Coakley was a third-round draft pick of the Dallas Cowboys and played there from 1997-04, earning a spot on the All-Rookie team. Coakley was twice named All-Pro (1999 and 2001) and was named to the Pro Bowl three times. In 1999, he also earned first-team All-Pro honors from *Sports Illustrated* and second-team All-Pro honors from *College & Pro Football Newsweekly* and *Football Digest*. After playing for the St. Louis Rams in 2005-06, he retired from the NFL after 10 seasons. In 2011, he earned a spot in the College Football Hall of Fame.



## SHANE MONAHAN

In his first year at Clemson, Shane Monahan produced one of the most successful freshman seasons in history as he was chosen as a first-team freshman All-American after he established six Tiger rookie records, his hit total led the ACC and his .372 batting average was third-best in the league. As a sophomore, he was named first-team All-America by Baseball America, ABCA and NCBWA, an All-ACC selection and MVP of the ACC Tournament. He totaled 137 hits, the most in the nation and just five shy of the all-time national record. In 1995, Monahan was selected ACC Player of the Year after batting .394 with 12 home runs and 51 RBI. He led the Tigers to victory at the NCAA East Regional and to the College World Series, where they finished the season with a No. 8 final ranking. Monahan became the first player in ACC history to be named league MVP, MVP of the ACC Tournament, MVP of an NCAA Regional, and first-team All-American over his career. He was drafted by the Seattle Mariners in the 2nd round

(33rd overall pick) of the 1995 draft and enjoyed a two-year (1998 & 1999) major league career. He still holds Tiger season records for hits (137), multiple-hit games (46), singles (94), and runs (97). He also holds the career record for triples (21), is second in hits (337) and total bases (535), and is third in career batting average (.394) and runs (235).



## **ROBERTO HERNANDEZ**

Roberto Hernandez is the most successful athlete USC Aiken has ever produced. A 17-year veteran of Major League Baseball, Hernandez transferred to USCA from UConn in 1986. After changing from catcher to pitcher and in his one season as a Pacer, Hernandez posted a 10-2 record with 97 strikeouts in 94.0 innings. At the plate, he belted 19 home runs and led USC Aiken to an appearance in the NAIA World Series. In 1986, Hernandez was a NAIA All-American, All-World Series Team member, and the NAIA Area 7 Player of the Year. He was drafted with the 16th pick in the first round of the 1986 draft by the California Angels. For his pro career, he was a two-time MLB All-Star, pitched in 1,010 games, had a 67-71 record, 3.45 ERA, 945 strikeouts and 326 saves. Hernandez began his career with the Chicago White Sox, staying with them for seven years (1991-97), and then spent time with the San Francisco Giants, Tampa Bay Devil Rays, Kansas City Royals, Atlanta Braves, Philadelphia Phillies, New York Mets, Pittsburgh Pirates, Cleveland Indians and Los Angeles Dodgers before finishing his career in 2007. When Hernandez retired, he ranked in the top 15 all-time in career saves and was one of only 11 pitchers to have pitched in 1,000 or more major league games. He had his Pacer jersey retired in 2001 and in 2007, he was inducted into the USC Aiken Athletic Hall of Fame. A major USCA baseball donor, the Roberto Hernandez Baseball Stadium was opened in September 2003.



## **MIRIAM WALKER-SAMUELS**

A Talbotton, Ga., native, Miriam Walker-Samuels earned "Miss Georgia Basketball" honors at Central High School before establishing an outstanding basketball career at Claflin College (1987-90). She led Claflin to the 1988 and

1989 NAIA National Championship games and set nine NAIA records during her prolific career, including most points in a game (62 vs. Dillard, 1988), most points in a career (3,855) and most points in a season (1,303; 1987-1990). Walker-Samuels averaged 35.5 points per game during the 1988-89 season, and 34.7 points per game over her career. She twice won the NAIA National Tournament's MVP Award and was a two-time first-team All-American. Walker-Samuels was a member of Claflin's inaugural Hall of Fame Class in 2008. She enjoyed a successful high school coaching career, first at Keith High in Orville, Ala., and later at Sylacauga High, also in Alabama, which she guided to the Class AAAA state championship before returning to Claflin in 2003 as head coach. Walker-Samuels succeeded her coach and mentor, the late Nelson Brownlee, and continued to guide the Lady Panthers in the same rich tradition as her predecessor. In her first three seasons as Claflin head coach, she guided her team to consecutive national tournaments. She was recognized as a Black College Sports Legend for making significant contribution to Black colleges by the Black College Sports and Education Foundation.

**Columbia, SC, USA**

**(803) 779-0905, [www.scahof.com](http://www.scahof.com)**