

Joe Weber

HIST 330-A

Early Life

- Born and grew up in Adel, Iowa
- Excelled in multiple sports in high school and maintained a near perfect GPA
- Due to the Great Depression, his family moved to Omaha where he attended Benson High School and experienced much of the same success
- Enrolled at the University of Iowa in 1936 to play football and earn a degree in commerce



Scholar

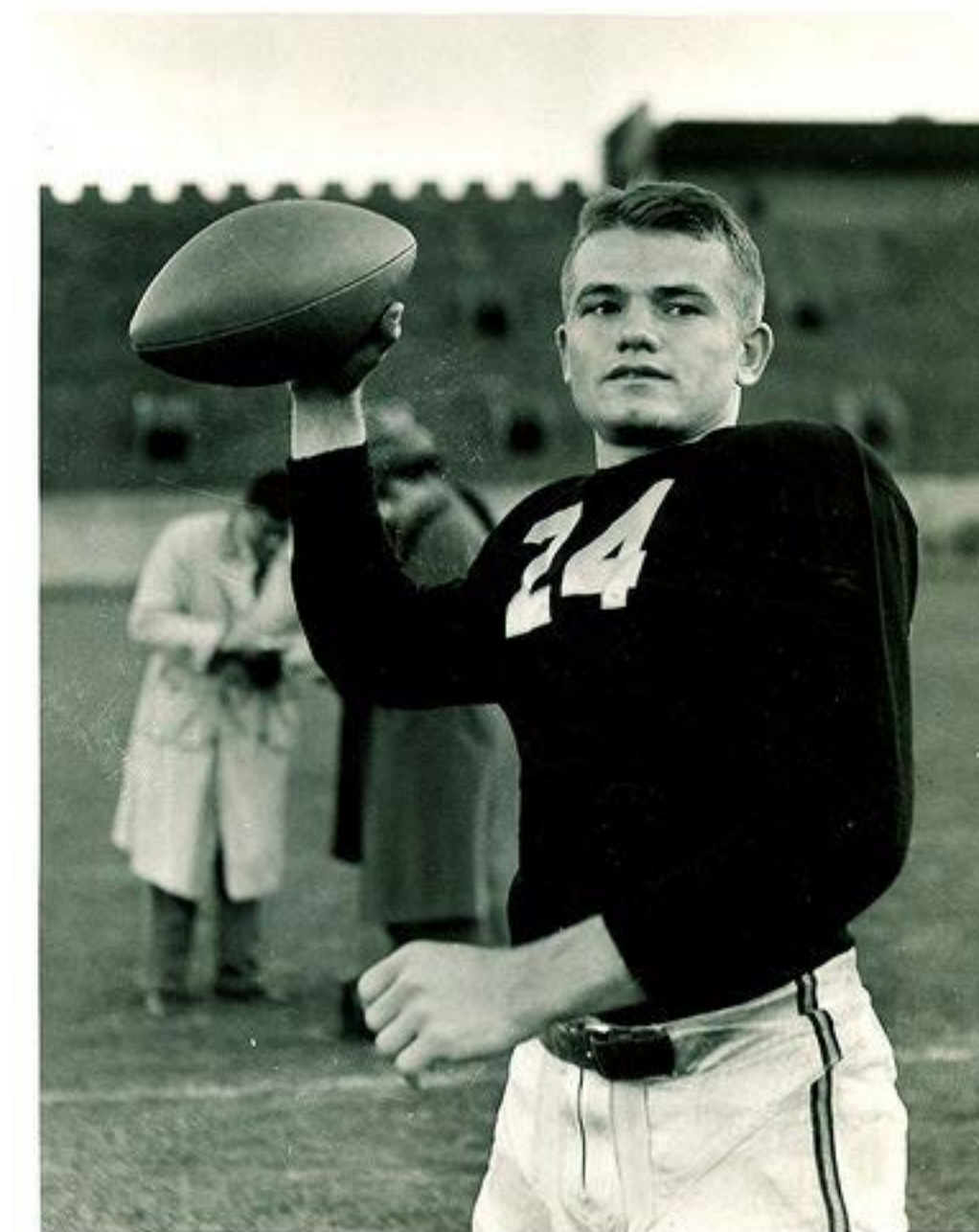
- Near Perfect high school GPA
- Phi Beta Kappa member at Iowa
- Was third out of 103 students after his first year of law school
- Graduated from Iowa "with distinction"
- Chosen by the president of the university to deliver the 1940 commencement speech at graduation

Significance

Nile Kinnick is important to sports and American history in general because he was an excellent athlete in a time of American struggle, an impressive scholar, a fierce and outspoken leader, a decorated war hero, and a beloved son, friend, brother and citizen.

Athletic Achievements

- 1939 Heisman Trophy Winner
- 1939 Big Ten MVP
- 1939 Maxwell Award and Walter Camp Trophy winner
- 1939 AP male athlete of the year



Political Career

- Grandfather was a former Iowa Governor
- Student body president at Iowa
- Spoke at Republican rallies and introduced candidates



Memorials

- Iowa Stadium named Nile Kinnick Stadium in 1972
- Number 24 is retired by the Iowa football program
- Statue outside of Kinnick Stadium
- His face is on the "heads" side of the coin used before every Big Ten football game
- Multiple books written about him
- Named to the college football hall of fame
- Ranked as the 9th best college football player of all time by college news

War and Death

- Kinnick enlisted in the US Navy just before the attacks on Pearl Harbor in 1941
- Worked his way up to become a fighter pilot on the *USS Lexington*
- Was killed on June 2, 1943 during a training flight when his plane began to leak oil and he had to make an emergency landing in the Gulf of Paria between Venezuela and Trinidad
- He was 24 years old
- Kinnick's body was never found



Select Bibliography

- Chapman, Mike. "IRONMAN: The Nile Kinnick Story." *Iowa History Journal*. 2019. <http://iowahistoryjournal.com/ironman-nile-kinnick-story/>
- Nile Kinnick, *A Hero Perished*, Edited by Paul Baender (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press,) 1991
- Buck Turnbull. *Iowa Hawkeyes: Stadium Stories*. (The Globe Pequot Press). 2005