

First James H. "Red" Hayes Scholarship Awarded

\$100,000 endowment will benefit UNH football team

By [Kimberly Swick Slover](#)
UNH News Bureau

DURHAM, N.H. -- James H. "Red" Hayes was generous in his support of the University of New Hampshire. Hayes and his wife, Claire, helped build new football locker rooms, a study lounge, and a granite sign in front of the Field House listing UNH athletic facilities, and established the first-ever fully endowed chair in the College of Liberal Arts. He has been recognized many times for his generosity and service to the university, and received both the UNH Granite State Award and the New Hampshire Alumni Meritorious Service Award.

But perhaps closest to his heart was the Wildcats football team. A former Wildcat, he became an avid fan, and at one point, Hayes had a 12-year record of not missing a single game -- home or away. In 1983, he was recognized by then Governor Sununu as UNH's number-one football fan.

A member of the UNH Class of 1932, Hayes founded New Hampshire Distributors, Inc. He began as a wholesaler 53 years ago in Concord, and also served the public as an elected member of the Governor's Council for 18 years. Following his death in 1993, in honor of his lifelong support of the Wildcats, New Hampshire Distributors, Inc., along with the New Hampshire Wholesale Beverage Association and the Hayes family, established the James H. "Red" Hayes Memorial Scholarship, to be awarded each year to a UNH athlete participating in the football program.

New Hampshire Distributors, Inc., President Tom Brown says that he and his colleagues in the industry decided that the best way to commemorate Hayes' life, as one of the state's industry leaders, was continuing to support his deep commitment to UNH football. "We've earmarked it for a lineman and a New Hampshire man, just as Red would have wanted," he says.

The first scholarship has been awarded to Michael Wells, a junior kinesiology major from Salem. Wells, who started on the defensive line in seven games last

season and played offensive guard, has a starting position on the offensive line this fall.

"One of the main reasons I came to UNH was because of the football program and the coaching staff," says Wells. "The experience of being on this team has been great. I've made a lot of friends, and this is the greatest group of guys. We're all really close, and if you have a problem, there's always someone around who can help out." Wells says the program and staff have more than lived up to his expectations.

According to Head Football Coach Sean McDonnell, the award is well deserved. "Mike was an all-state football player in New Hampshire in high school, and he went to the next level to play for the university," says McDonnell. "He is a class kid both on and off the field, and he has a lot of character. He's not at all selfish, and he's willing to give whatever it takes for the team. He is a very deserving student."

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