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Contact: Shannon Allen, Communications Manager, 817.302.3244; shannon.allen@fwcd.com

Former Cowboys All-Pro Everson Walls to Speak at FWCD’s Chip Herr Memorial Lecture

FORT WORTH, TEXAS – Fort Worth Country Day’s Captain David R. “Chip” Herr, Jr. Memorial Lecture will feature former Dallas Cowboys All-Pro Everson Walls. The lecture, now in its eighth year, celebrates the life and extraordinary military service, leadership and heroism of one of FWCD’s very own, Chip Herr, Class of 1980. Herr’s helicopter malfunctioned and crashed in eastern Saudi Arabia during a noncombat mission on February 3, 1991. He is the only FWCD graduate who has died in service to his country.

Walls will speak on Monday, September 18, in the FWCD Scott Theater (4200 Country Day Lane, Fort Worth) at 6:30 p.m. A reception in the Lou and Nick Martin Campus Center will immediately follow the event.

Everson Walls grew up in Hamilton Park in Dallas. Walls became a starter at Berkner High School, where he played football for one year as a senior and led the division in interceptions. Walls was offered—and accepted—a football scholarship to Grambling State University in Louisiana. He gives credit to legendary Coach Eddie Robinson for helping him mature as a human being. While at Grambling State, Walls was selected for the Kodak 1AA All-American Team; the Black College All-American Team; and, during his senior year, he led the nation in interceptions.

At the end of his college career, Walls attended the Dallas Cowboys training camp as a free agent. He made the squad in 1981 and donned the “blue-starred” No. 24 jersey. His nine years with the Cowboys is filled with accolades and accomplishments. In his rookie year, he broke the single-season record with 11 interceptions. He was named to the Pro Bowl Team in 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1985. In 1981, 1982 and 1985, he led the NFL in interceptions. In 1986, he was the youngest player named to the Cowboys 25 Year Anniversary Team, and, in 1987, he was named Cowboys Man of the Year.

In 1990, Walls continued his career with the New York Giants, where he was the leading pass defender with six interceptions on the Giants’ Super Bowl Team. In 1992, he signed and started with the Cleveland Browns.

After retiring from football in 1993, Walls was named to the All-Time Cowboys Team. He was appointed to the NFL’s All-Decade Team for the 1980s, and, in 1998, he was elected to the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

Walls exhibits star power off the field as well. He serves as a TV personality and commentator for various national sports talk shows. Walls donates his time to various organizations and events, including his own foundation called Ethos Education Group. Ethos shows young people how having good character can lead to success.

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What may not be widely known about Walls is his commitment to friendship and team. In 2006, Walls agreed to donate one of his kidneys to his dear friend and former teammate Ron Springs. Springs had been suffering from kidney failure as the result of Type 2 Diabetes; it had progressed to the point where Springs had his right foot amputated. Walls could not bear to see his friend suffer. The transplant, performed in 2007, marked the first time a former U.S. professional athlete received an organ from a teammate. Walls and Springs formed the Gift of Life Foundation to educate people about ways to prevent chronic kidney disease and dispel myths about the living donor process. Eight months after the transplant, Springs lapsed into a coma after undergoing a procedure to remove a cyst. He remained in a coma for four years, until his death in December 11. He was 54. Walls’ and Springs’ last major public appearance together was at the Cowboys’ 2007 season opener. Together, they were appointed honorary co-captains by owner Jerry Jones.

About Chip Herr

Herr entered FWCD as a fourth-grader, where his mother, Connie, taught middle school math. He excelled as a student and earned 11 varsity letters in cross country, soccer and baseball. He attended Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, where he earned a degree in geology and was commissioned as a second lieutenant of Marines with orders to the Basic School at Quantico, Virginia. After the Basic Officer Course, Herr was ordered to flight school at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, where he earned designation as a naval aviator and pilot of UH-1 helicopters. Herr’s first tour of duty was with Marine Light Air Attack Squadron 369, Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 39, of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing stationed at Camp Pendleton, California. It was from MAG 39 that Herr’s squadron was ordered to the Persian Gulf in August 1990, the first Marine squadron ordered into theater after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. Herr’s helicopter malfunctioned and crashed in eastern Saudi Arabia during a noncombat mission on February 3, 1991. He was buried with full military honors at Greenwood Cemetery in Dallas.

The lecture series began in 2009 in response to a void that Bill Arnold, then upper school history teacher and now director of special projects, saw at FWCD. “We wanted a way to honor Chip’s memory and thought a lecture series would be fitting,” he recalled. “When Chip died, it was big news because he was the first known Desert Storm/Gulf War casualty in Fort Worth.”

For Arnold, this lecture series is also personal. He is friends with Herr’s mom who attends the lecture each year. “It is important to Connie that we do this,” Arnold noted. During the evening event, Connie will place a wreath on her son’s memorial stone, a duplicate of the headstone that marks his grave, in the FWCD Veterans’ Garden. “This lecture series truly honors both Chip and Connie,” Arnold said.

For more than 50 years, Fort Worth Country Day has inspired the passion to learn, the courage to lead and the commitment to serve through a program that fosters the intellectual, physical, emotional and ethical development of its students. Offering a comprehensive college-preparatory curriculum to students in grades K-12, Fort Worth Country Day focuses on the 3A’s—academics, arts and athletics—bringing balance to students’ experiences, which gives them opportunities to explore multiple interests and thrive in a compassionate community that promotes integrity, kindness, courage, respect, responsibility and scholarship. FWCD has the distinction of being the only Texas Malone Family Foundation School; the North Texas site for the Duke University Talent Identification Program; the only K-12, non-university host site for a Duke TIP Scholar Weekend; and a founding school of the Malone Schools Online Network through Stanford University Online High School. To learn more about Fort Worth Country Day, visit fwcd.org.