

Dr. William L. Proctor

2008 WPHS Alumni Circle of Distinction

His Winter Park High School senior class voted him “Most Athletic.” At Florida State he was an amazing football player so they put him in their Athletic Hall of Fame. He was even drafted by the Cleveland Browns of the NFL, but the U.S. Army Infantry had other plans for his young life.

Bill Proctor was quite a star in sports, but his remarkable achievements off the football field are incredible. Not too many of us are able to achieve so much in a single lifetime.

Somewhere along the way Bill Proctor got excited about education. For 53 years now, he has had a tremendous impact on the lives of thousands of students. He began as a teacher and coach with Seminole and Orange County schools. Then, at FSU, [where he got 3 degrees] he became a graduate student, assistant football coach and assistant Dean of Men. That led to his becoming a school superintendent in the Carolinas and then Dean of Men at the University of Central Florida.

In 1971, Bill Proctor took over as President of Flagler College up in St. Augustine. For 30 years he served as their President and for the last 7 years as their Chancellor.

Dr. Proctor literally built Flagler. When he became president, it was an unaccredited college with an enrollment of only 162 students. By the time he retired in the school was fully accredited, with an enrollment just over 2,000! For 11 years now, Flagler has been listed among “America’s Best Colleges.”

Florida governors took note and appointed Dr. Proctor to several top posts in the State. You might wonder where those rules are from that affect you as a high school student? There’s a good chance Bill Proctor had a hand in them. For many years, he served on the Florida's Board of Education and the Florida Education Standards Commission. He was Director of the Florida Association of College and Universities; Chairman of the Independent College and Universities of Florida; and, something that really affects you, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Florida ACT Council. For 12 years, he also served as Chairman of the Board of Florida’s School for the Deaf and the Blind.

You’d think that was quite enough for one career. But Dr. Proctor found other ways to serve students and the people of Florida. Four years ago, Bill Proctor was elected to the Florida House of Representatives where he helped to create the Florida Resident Access Grant, making it possible for thousands of additional students to attend college through tuition assistance. Bill Proctor has served on several key committees in the Florida Legislature—both in education and

other areas. For example, he Chairs the Committee on Tourism & Trade.

Florida State was struggling with some issues in their sports program when the famed football coach Bobby Bowden decided to retire. They asked their football Hall-of-Famer and distinguished educator if he would be FSU's Interim Athletic Director and help with the transition from Bowden to Jimbo Fisher. As most know, that arrangement ended up with FSU returning as winning BCS championship and the country's #1 team.

Starting at WPHS, Bill Proctor became a football star, coach, distinguished educator, President and Chancellor of Flagler College, Florida House Representative --but most importantly, a dedicated teacher.