

DON SMITH:

Nice Guy Finishing Up

PFRA has few better friends than Don Smith who will retire as Vice President - Public Relations Director on March 1 after 29 years at the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Without the cooperation of the Hall, we'd have never got started back in 1979. In our early years, Don was very active in getting the word to potential members, a practice he has continued to this day. Many of you reading this first heard of PFRA through Don. We've also been privileged to print many of his biographic articles on enshrinees in *The Coffin Corner*.

A retirement is often a time of mixed emotions, and such is true for us. Certainly Don has more than earned a long and care free retirement, but we're going to very much miss seeing his smiling face at the Hall.

Aside from heading the Hall of Fame's public relations department, Don has overseen the information and curatorial staff and administered the Hall's selection process for electing new members. He also coordinated the Miller Lite NFL Player of the Week/Year program. For 25 seasons from 1970 until 1994, he coordinated the NFL Man of the Year program which honors NFL players for their contributions to their communities.

A native of Hudson, Colorado, Don and was the official scorer for every Super Bowl except the first.

He invented the forward passing statistical rating system used by the National Football League since 1973. Some people may not think of that as belonging in the plus column. Of course, most of the complaints come from folks who haven't taken the time to look into how it is actually derived, but the system is definitely more difficult than simply counting up on one's fingers and toes. The most telling argument in favor of the system is that it's far better than any of the ways the NFL used to determine its passing leader than any method they used before. Don and was the official scorer for every Super Bowl except the first.

In his 47-year sports administration career, Smith has served such organizations as the Denver Bears baseball team, University of Denver athletic department, Western Athletic Conference, Denver Broncos and New Orleans Saints. He also worked as the primary hockey press aide at the 1960 Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley.

A 1950 University of Denver Phi Beta Kappa graduate, Don is the author of two books, *Pro Football Hall of Fame All-Time Greats* and *Encyclopedia of Football* and the co-author of another, *Their Deeds and Dogged Faith*.

He lives in North Canton, Ohio, with his wife Helen. They have three grown children.