

Brian Keefer '01 among Saxons inducted into Hall of Fame

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Alfred University inducted three former star student-athletes into its Athletics Hall of Fame Saturday evening, Oct. 18.

Former men's basketball star Jason Amore '97; football All-American Brian Keefer '01; and record-setting women's swimmer Sara (Thompson) Geitner '04 were inducted at a banquet ceremony on campus, held as part of Homecoming weekend.

In addition, the 1963 and 1964 football teams, each connected to one of the most famous games in Alfred University's 114-year-old football history, were honored.

Amore played four seasons (1993-97) for the men's basketball team, lettering all four years and starting the last two. A team captain his junior and senior years, he helped lead the Saxons to a Presidents' Athletic Conference (PAC) title and berth in the NCAA Division III championship tournament as a senior in 1997. In his junior season of 1995-96, he was named an Empire Athletic Association (EAA) league all-star.

When he graduated in 1997, Amore held records (since broken) for three-point field goals made in a career (223) and single game (eight). His 1,392 career points rank eighth on the school's all-time list.

After earning bachelor's and master's degrees from Alfred University, Amore worked briefly at his alma mater as Director of Major Gifts. Amore, who grew up in nearby Friendship, NY, and starred at tiny Friendship Central School before matriculating to AU, spoke of his fondness for his college alma mater.

"There's not a day in my life that I'm not appreciative of everything this institution has done for me," he said. "Whenever I come back here, it warms my heart. There's no one that loves this place more than I do."

Amore earned a bachelor's degree in communication studies from Alfred in 1997 and went on to earn a master's degree in community services administration from AU in 1999. He is currently executive director of development for Belknap Campus, University of Louisville. He and his wife, Kara, live in Louisville, KY, with their son, Julian.

Keefer was a member of the AU football team four years (1997-2000) and was the Saxons' starting strong safety for three seasons (1998-2000). In 1998, Keefer was a Hewlett Packard Third Team All-American and ECAC Upstate First Team all-star after tallying a team-best 115 tackles to go with 4 ½ sacks and four interceptions.

A three-year team captain (1998-2000), Keefer was named an ECAC Upstate First Team all-star after his sophomore, junior and senior seasons. He finished his career with 317 tackles, fifth all-time at AU. During Saturday's banquet, he thanked all the people his teammates and coaches, his friends and family who aided in his achievements.

"I stand here humbled and honored," Keefer said. "It takes so many people throughout your career who sacrifice so much for you to be successful. I am so appreciative of that."

Keefer earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from AU in 2001. He is manager of process development for Pall Trinity Micro Co., Inc., in Cortland, NY. He and his wife, Lori, live in Cortland.

Thompson is the most decorated women's swimmer ever at Alfred University. A four-year member of AU women's team (2000-04), Thompson earned All-American honors as a sophomore in 2002, when she placed 16th in the 100-yard breaststroke at the NCAA Division III championship meet.

Thompson still holds school records in the 100-yard and 200-yard breaststroke and 200-yard individual medley and

swam on teams that held records in the 200-yard and 400-yard freestyle relays and 200-yard and 400-yard medley relays. She was a five-time Empire 8 champ (three times in the 100 breast and twice in the 200 breast) and twice earned state titles in the 100 breast. She was a captain her junior and senior seasons.

Geitner spoke of the closeness she had with her teammates, something she felt as soon as she arrived at AU in the fall of 2000, and credited them for her accomplishments in the pool.

"From the very first moment I walked onto campus, I felt I was part of something that was much bigger than Alfred University. I was part of a family that was the swimming and diving team," she said. "I wouldn't be here today without my teammates."

Geitner earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, with dual majors in biology and environmental studies, from AU in 2004. She also has a master's degree in adolescence science and inclusive education from the University of Rochester (2013). She teaches Regents and general chemistry at Batavia (NY) High School. Geitner and her husband, Eric, live with their two children, Case and Benjamin, in LeRoy, NY.

Also during this fall's Homecoming weekend, the University will honor the 1963 and 1964 football teams. The 1963 team lost at Susquehanna, 68-0, which would go down as the worst loss in the Hall of Fame coaching career of Alex Yunevich. The following season, AU hosted an even better Susquehanna team, which was ranked among the best small schools in the country. In what would become known as "The Miracle at Merrill," the Saxons shocked the Crusaders, 18-16.

More than 25 former players and members of the coaching and training staff on the 1963 and 1964 teams returned to the campus for Homecoming to celebrate the 50th anniversary of that great victory.

"This is about AU football tradition at its finest," said Bob Codispoti '65, a member of both teams who spearheaded the reunion. "We're here to remember the agony of defeat, in 1963, and what is perhaps the (football program's) most extraordinary victory the following year, in 1964."