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MEDIA CONTACTS

Megan Gonzalez
Executive Director
University Marketing & Communications
University of West Florida
MeganG@uwf.edu
Office: [850.474.2658](tel:850.474.2658)
Cell: [850.982.8836](tel:850.982.8836)

Brian Henry
Director of Athletics Communications
University of West Florida
BHenry@uwf.edu
Cell: [850.490.3434](tel:850.490.3434)

UWF alumnus Anthony Pelezo gifts \$100,000 to football program

Pensacola, Fla. – June 7, 2016 – Alumnus and community advocate, Dr. Anthony Pelezo, will donate \$100,000 to the football program at the University of West Florida. To recognize this generous gift, the UWF Department of Intercollegiate Athletics has dedicated a space in the Athletic Operations Building to be named in his honor. This gift is also representative of Dr. Pelezo's membership in the Football Founders group and the UWF Sword and Shield Council.

Dr. Pelezo, a Pensacola native and 1986 graduate of UWF, practiced emergency medicine for 12 years before transitioning to a career in health care finance. He credits the attention from his professors as a major reason why he chooses to give back to his alma mater.

"I had a significant foundation that I needed to build, and I had some professors that really took an interest in my success," he said. "One was Dr. Judy Bense, who was my History of Anthropology professor at the time. She was my toughest teacher, and probably my most valuable teacher in terms of teaching the type of dedication, focus and level of effort it was going to take to succeed.

"Another was Dr. Charles D'Asaro in Developmental Biology," he continued. "He was just outstanding, and he represented the type of focus my professors gave me when I was at UWF. I really felt like they had a vested interest in seeing me succeed. In no small way, I feel like I have to pay that forward. It is in part a responsibility, and in part something I simply want to do."

A fan of all college sports, Dr. Pelezo believes that the development and success of the football program will help to build the entire athletic department, which, in turn, benefits the community at large.

"There is a direct and indirect impact on the community," he explained. "The football program will help businesses. It will attract more students. It will help with the growth of the university and its overall success."

Dr. Pelezo's \$100,000 gift will assist in startup costs for the team which is set to begin its inaugural season in September 2016.

"My heart is in building future leaders for this community and attracting people to this area," he said. "The University is an important part of this community, and it will remain an important part of this community. I'm really thrilled to be a part of this."

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UWF alumnus Dr. Anthony Pelezo on the UWF University Park Football Field