

Central Catholic High School

stadium named

## Bob Benson '66 Stadium

Friday, September 18, 2009

Thanks to a \$4 million gift made by Tom and Gayle Benson and Family, the Central Catholic High School Stadium's name was changed to honor the memory of his son.

During special dedication and naming ceremonies held prior to the first home football game with McCollum High School on Friday, September 18, and in honor of Robert C. Benson, a member of the Class of 1966, the name was officially changed to: **"Bob Benson '66 Stadium."**

This is the largest gift received by Central Catholic High School in the school's 157-year history and is the lead gift for a campus expansion plan focused on supporting and enhancing the winning athletic program for which the school has long been recognized. The plan includes upgrading of the stadium and the construction of a new athletic and convocation facility designed to support the school's overall program of excellence in academics and athletics — with the ultimate goal of developing the whole person.

Robert C. Benson, son of Tom and his first wife, Shirley L., Benson, was a graduate of the Central Catholic Class of 1966 where he was active in JROTC and the Student Booster Club. He passed away in 1985 at the age of 37 after a battle with cancer.

"We are profoundly grateful to Mr. Tom Benson and his family for their continual and generous support of Central Catholic High School," said Br. Peter A. Pontolillo, S.M., Ph.D., President of Central Catholic High School. "Our stadium has a wonderful history of bringing together not only Central Catholic families — but many families in the Archdiocese — for many hours of fun and athletic entertainment. The naming of, and the improvements to our stadium are a fitting way to honor the memory of Bob Benson '66 and of the entire Benson family."

In preparation for the dedication, the 4,500-seat stadium which was built in 1995 has had installed a new state-of-the-art Daktronics sound system and 25-foot scoreboard, as well as improved lighting.

A new 60-foot air conditioned press box with accommodations for coaches and media personnel will be installed in time for the Homecoming football game to be held October 24.

Tom Benson, owner of the New Orleans Saints and San Antonio businessman, is a longtime Central Catholic supporter. He delivered the school's Commencement Address last May.

Mr. Benson enters his 25th season owning the New Orleans Saints, with the Saints having reached their greatest heights under his leadership – including multiple playoff appearances, the 2006 trip to the NFC Championship Game, a tremendous economic impact on the Gulf South region annually and the Saints serving as leaders in charitable involvement. Community involvement is the hallmark of the Saints in the Benson era, as The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame has twice recognized the team as one of the five most charitable professional organizations. Mr. Benson was honored by the Volunteers of America with the Good Samaritan Award in Philanthropy for his work in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Benson first came to San Antonio in 1956, when most businesses were centralized downtown, and purchased 25 acres on the northern outskirts of the city. Benson Management Company – the headquarters of his financial, real estate and automobile holdings across Texas and Louisiana – is located in San Antonio. In 2008, Mr. Benson and his wife, Gayle, funded the building of a football stadium located at the University of Incarnate Word Campus, known as Gayle and Tom Benson Stadium.

The City of New Orleans was recently awarded Super Bowl XLVII – the first time the NFL's championship game will be played in the city since 2002 – with Mr. Benson leading the bid to secure the game, which will be played in 2013.

In 1945, Mr. Benson served in the U.S. Navy aboard the U.S.S. South Dakota. He has remained close to this branch of the military ever since. He is the only enlisted man to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Pensacola Naval Museum and has been honored with an award from the crew of the submarine U.S.S. Louisiana. In 2007, he was honored by the U.S. Navy Memorial with the Lone

Sailor Award presented to those who exemplify the core values of honor, courage and commitment.

The Bob Benson '66 Stadium is home to four Central Catholic sports: football, soccer, lacrosse and track; and is the site for other activities such as JROTC Brigade Drills.

Central Catholic was founded in 1852 as San Antonio's first boys' school by the teaching Brothers and Priests of the Society of Mary (Marianists).