

BUILDING BLOCK

Gerry Capone And Shawn Moore Are Working Toward Bringing A New Football Operations Center To UVA

BY JEFF WHITE

On any list of the greatest football players in UVA history, Shawn Moore would rank at or near the top. Gerry Capone's public profile is much lower, but he was an integral part of the program for nearly four decades, most recently as Virginia's associate athletics director for football administration.

"There isn't anyone that's more UVA football than Gerry Capone," head coach Bronco Mendenhall said.

Athletics director Carla Williams feels the same way. "I can pick any player from any era and ask Gerry to connect with me that player, and he has done it," she said. "He simply knows all of them. And not only that, he knows alums in other sports just as well."

Williams has been equally impressed with Moore, a 1990 graduate of the University. And so when UVA athletics decided to add two positions this spring to accelerate fundraising for the Master Plan, she turned to these esteemed members of the Cavalier football family, and both were eager to help.

Capone's new title is associate AD for development, and Moore's is associate director of development. Their immediate focus is the next phase of the Master Plan: a new football operations center.

"We are so far behind in facilities when it comes to the training and meeting space that most programs have and the technology that they're using in those spaces," Capone said. "What [a new operations center] will do to help our players and our coaches to really excel is what this is all about. It's not about how fancy the building is or the bells and the whistles in the building. This is going to be all about football and development and training and giving our kids and our coaches the best chance to compete and win games."

Capone has been at UVA since 1982, when he joined then-head coach George Welsh's staff as a part-time assistant.

Moore was a three-year starter at quarterback for Welsh and finished fourth in the voting for the Heisman Trophy in 1990, when the Wahoos rose to No. 1 in the national polls.

"Shawn is one of the most iconic figures in Virginia athletics history, and his legacy and that era of Virginia football are inspirational for us today," Williams said. "He loves the University, and he has an incredible ability to bring people together for a common purpose."



Moore, whose son, Mike, was a standout defensive lineman at UVA and now plays in the Canadian Football League, had been working in the private sector while splitting time between Arizona and Richmond. Moore said he sees his new position as “a finish-my-career opportunity to give back to the University. It’s almost like coming full circle.”

Capone, who moved into football administration two years after arriving in Charlottesville, has worked for four head coaches at UVA: Welsh, Al Groh, Mike London and Mendenhall. His new role, Capone explained, gives him an opportunity “to really help and contribute in a different way. But it’s still around football, and I want to see the program live and prosper, and I think this is an important piece.”

Virginia football is heading into its sixth season under Mendenhall. The most recent phase of the Master Plan

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— two natural-grass practice football fields and lights — was completed last summer, and that’s been an enormous benefit to the program. But the lack of a modern operations center continues to hold the Cavaliers back.

After a new operations center is built, Williams said, the department will focus on the remaining phases of the Master Plan, including the renovation of the McCue Center and the construction of an Olympic sports center.

For years, the football program was based in University Hall, which was demolished in the spring of 2019. Working conditions in U-Hall grew so cramped that, in the ’80s, Welsh and his staff moved into construction trailers next to the arena. The opening of the McCue Center in 1991 put the Hoos on equal footing with many of their rivals, but the college football landscape has changed dramatically since then.

A new building, Mendenhall said, is “essential if a program wants to compete at the highest level of college football, which is amazing for a community, amazing for an institution, an amazing growth vehicle for young people and also an amazing resource for an entire community.

“And so a football operations center isn’t an optional part of becoming an exceptional athletic department. A football operations center is just simply a requirement that says that you mean business and that your intention is to become exceptional.” 

Capone (left), who has been at UVA since joining legendary head coach George Welsh’s football staff in 1982, and Moore (right), who was a three-year starter at quarterback for the Cavaliers from 1988-90, have been tasked with accelerating fundraising for the Master Plan, with an immediate focus on a new football operations center.

PHOTOS COURTESY UVA

