



Donald G. McPherson
Author, Speaker, Feminist
College Football Hall of Famer

Don McPherson is the 2021 recipient of the *William Pearson Tolley Medal for Distinguished Leadership in Lifelong Learning*, presented by Syracuse University's School of Education and, the 2020 National Football Foundation's *Outstanding Contribution to Amateur Football*. These honors signify a lifelong mission to use a unique social position to serve the greater good.

In 2019 McPherson published *You Throw Like a Girl: The Blind Spot of Masculinity*, which chronicles 36 years of harnessing the power and appeal of sport to address complex social issues and focuses on a quarter century of work on gender-based violence prevention.

McPherson was an All-America quarterback at Syracuse University and is a veteran of the NFL and Canadian Football League. As captain of the undefeated 1987 Syracuse football team, McPherson set 22 school records, led the nation in passing and won more than 18 national "player of the year" awards, including the Maxwell Award as the nation's best player, the Davey O'Brien National Quarterback Award and the inaugural Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award. He was second in the Heisman Trophy voting. In 2008 McPherson was elected to the *College Football Hall of Fame*. In 2013 Syracuse University retired his **#9 jersey**.

Since 1984 McPherson has delivered school and community-based programs addressing issues such as drunk driving, alcohol and substance abuse, bullying, youth leadership and mentoring. Upon retiring from pro football in 1994, he joined Northeastern University's *Center for the Study of Sport in Society* as national director of Athletes in Service to America. In 2002 he founded the *Sports Leadership Institute* at Adelphi University, for which he served as executive director until 2007.

In 1995 McPherson turned his focus to the issue of "men's violence against women," as director of Sport in Society's Mentors in Violence Prevention Program, taking over for the program's founder, Jackson Katz. McPherson emerged as a national leader and advocate for the prevention of sexual and domestic violence. He has conducted workshops and lectures for more than 375 college campuses, community organizations and national sports and violence prevention organizations. His programs and lectures have reached millions.

Don has twice testified before the United States Congress and has worked closely with the U.S. *Departments of Education and Defense* on issues of sexual violence in education and the military, respectively. He has provided commentary on numerous national news programs and was featured in *O Magazine* and appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. Don also created and hosted "*Training for Life*" on MSG Varsity, a life-skills TV show that examined a myriad of social issues and sports. In 2012, *Training for Life's* episode on "Sports Parenting" was nominated for an *Emmy Award*.

McPherson has worked as a college football analyst for ESPN, BET and NBC and spent six seasons as the lead studio analyst for Sportsnet New York's coverage of Big East and American Athletic Conference

football. In 2000, while a board member of the Nassau County Sports Commission, McPherson created the *John Mackey Award*, which recognizes college football's outstanding tight end.

Don McPherson has received several honors in recognition of his service, including the *Frederick Douglas Men of Strength Award*, given by Men Can Stop Rape, *Champions for Change*, presented by Lifetime Television, The *Creative Vision for Women's Justice*, presented by the Pace University Women's Justice Center, and a Leadership Award from the National Center for Victims of Crime. Most recently Don received the *George Arents Award*, Syracuse University's highest alumni honor and "*Letter Winner of Distinction*," the highest honor bestowed a former student-athlete.

Don McPherson has served as a board member, consultant and advisor for several national organizations including the *Ms Foundation for Women*, the *US National Committee for UN Women* and the *National Football Foundation*. McPherson was a member the *NCAA Task Force on Sexual Violence* and the *NCAA Board of Governors Commission to Combat Sexual Violence*. Currently he serves on the board of directors of the *Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape*, *NYC Chapter of the National Football Foundation* and, is a member of the advisory board of the *Center for Ethical Leadership in Media* and *the Solidarity Council* of Vital Voices.