



## Bart Starr's Significance in Green Bay Continues Well After His Career

The legendary quarterback helped start a home 45 years ago that to this day helps troubled young men.

### Los Angeles Times



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New London, Wis. - At Lambeau Field in Green Bay, you won't uncover the full measure of Bart Starr's extraordinary legacy.

To bring into focus a more vivid picture of this gracious, benevolent man you'll need to look beyond the Hall of Fame career with the Green Bay Packers, the nerveless leadership and the championships won under Vince Lombardi.

You'll need, perhaps, to drive about an hour west of Green Bay to a wooded oasis known as the Rawhide Boys Ranch.

Co-founded by Starr, wife Cherry



Bart and Cherry continue to represent Rawhide 45 years later at many events.

and a similarly generous couple, John and Jan Gillespie, Rawhide for 45 years has reshaped the lives of thousands of troubled young men.

Starr, 76, helped put Rawhide

on the map at the height of his Packers popularity in 1968, when he donated the red Corvette Stingray convertible he'd won as the most valuable player in Super Bowl II. The resulting raffle generated invaluable publicity for the ranch and a major financial windfall for its preservation.

Nearly five decades later, the NFL icon remains an active spokesman, fundraiser and inspiration.

"I'm thrilled and honored to have been a member of the Green Bay Packers," Starr says from his office in Birmingham, Ala., "but on another plateau is the Rawhide Boys Ranch because of what it has meant ... to so many youngsters who need this type of facility to change, grow, mature and expand their lives."

"Rawhide," Solberg tells a visitor to the 576-acre property by the Wolf River in central Wisconsin, "would not be what it is today without Bart and Cherry's involvement."

Starr modestly calls his commitment "a privilege."

He's grateful for the hopeful naivete of Jan Gillespie, who in 1966 harangued her husband into cold-calling the Packers quarterback, insisting that Starr's phone number in Green Bay might actually be listed in the directory.

Never mind that Starr at that time was perhaps the best-known player on the NFL's most prominent team.

A 17th-round draft pick from Alabama in 1956, Starr had found an ally in Lombardi, who discovered that he could rely on the quarterback's intelligence and leadership abilities.

Together, they won five championships in seven seasons, Starr honored as MVP of the first two Super Bowls.



Bart and Cherry are seated in the Corvette that propelled Rawhide.

Meanwhile, Gillespie realized he needed a partner to help him fulfill his dream of aiding wayward youth. Through the grapevine, he heard that Starr and his wife were like-minded in their concern for at-risk teens and might be willing to get involved.

But, he notes, "Bart was very, very popular at that time. I was trying to find somebody that could introduce me and Jan said, 'Why don't you just call him?' I said, 'You can't do that.'"

Actually, you could.

Finding that Starr's number was listed, Gillespie called and asked whether they could meet.

They met that night, Starr and his wife inviting the Gillespies to dinner at their home in Green Bay. After only about a 10-minute pitch, Gillespie says, the quarterback was sold.

Starr says he was intrigued by the project's enormous potential. "John and Jan did a marvelous job of telling us what their hopes and dreams were, and my wife and I were just overwhelmed by it," he says. "I don't think that we as adults can do anything more

[continued on next page](#)

continued from front page

important than helping youngsters in need." Two years later, Rawhide was still struggling to make ends meet when Starr and his wife proposed raffling the car.

Raffles were illegal in Wisconsin at that time, Gillespie says, so Rawhide had to get a special dispensation from then-Gov. Warren P. Knowles, who of course was a Packers fan.

With tickets priced at \$1 - a Corvette Stingray convertible at that time sold for about \$4,300 - the raffle raised \$65,000.

"It was astronomical," Gillespie says, noting that the proceeds nearly matched the cost of the property. "That got Rawhide on its feet. The finances were under

control after that."

(The car, locally owned, is returned to Rawhide for special events.) Starr's involvement, however, did not end there.

Many of his fees for speaking engagements and card-show appearances are donated to Rawhide, which houses the court-appointed teens for stretches of four months to two years and has enriched the lives of about 3,000 youth through a program focused on academics, work experience and faith-based moral training.

"The work they do really is life-changing," says Ryan K. of Madison, Wis., a financial advisor

who as a teen spent four months at Rawhide. "It makes a difference."

As was its founders' hope. Says Gillespie, "We really believe that if our hearts are right, God intervenes ... and we just feel this was a God thing that put Bart and Cherry and Jan and I together."

"It's such a thrill to see what has grown and developed over the years," the Packers legend says. "We had a reunion a few years ago and a number of the youngsters who came back were officers in the military. We were in the field house, listening to their stories, and there was not a dry eye in the house."

He vows to stay involved.

"We can't ever do enough," he says.



Ryan K.



Rawhide recently received a \$16,000 tool donation from Snap-On Tools to assist the students in the Beat the Heat Work Experience elective through Starr Academy. The class is currently working on a 1974 Chevrolet Nova and a 1979 Ford Fairmont. The Nova was raced at the Wisconsin International Raceway over the summer and the Fairmont will be a promotional car that will eventually be sold to help finance future classes. This program provides our youth with practical, hands-on experience in the automotive field and allows them to gain valuable job training skills.

## Chet Krause, Lifetime Philanthropist

The Northeast Wisconsin Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals presented awards in recognition of area philanthropists at its National Philanthropy Day luncheon in November. Longtime Rawhide friend and donor, Chet Krause was the recipient of the 2010 Outstanding Lifetime Philanthropy Award for his contributions made to Rawhide and to many other organizations such as the Marshfield Clinic.

In fact, Chet epitomizes the role of lifetime philanthropist as he's given generously to over 105 charities during his lifetime. "Chet's financial contributions have enabled hundreds of young men's lives to be affected in a positive way," stated John Solberg, Rawhide's Executive Director. "Probably one of the most used facilities on the ranch is the Krause Fieldhouse and it was his vision that provided this for our youth."



Chet Krause (left) pictured with John Solberg received the AFP Lifetime Philanthropy award.

### Congratulations Chet!

Thank you to those who chose to remember Rawhide in 2010 upon the death of their loved ones

#### Memorials

Edwin Adamczyk  
Doug Ahsmann  
Leonard Bruskiwitz  
Liam Campbell  
Tom Cihla  
Lawrence Dietrich  
Kenneth Donovan  
Vaughn Gehrt  
Ruthe Gerharz  
Robert Giering  
William Johnson  
Traci Klinkerfuss

Janet Leach  
Robert Leekley  
Kenneth Luell  
Carol McCleod  
Tony Mindiola  
Robert Minroth  
Ken Nelson  
Leah Price  
George Prijic  
Frank Scannell  
Ellen Schneider  
Mike Schwister  
Jerry Splittsboersch

Nancy Tetzlaff  
Cecelia Varick  
Jake Ward  
Randall Ward  
Phyllis Werner  
Eileen Williams  
Duane Wilson  
Delores Wirt  
Charlie Zimmermann  
Estate Gifts  
Robert W. Boniface  
Geraldine V. Bosch  
Claude Carpenter

Steven R. Colt  
Norman P. Cripe  
Helen M. Faas  
William F. Heckrodt  
Ronald E. Mason  
Evelyn E. Radke  
George and Jessie Rushton  
Ozzie and Irma Tews  
Royal G. Thern  
Mary J. Uschan  
Robert Vanevenhoven  
Phyllis Werner