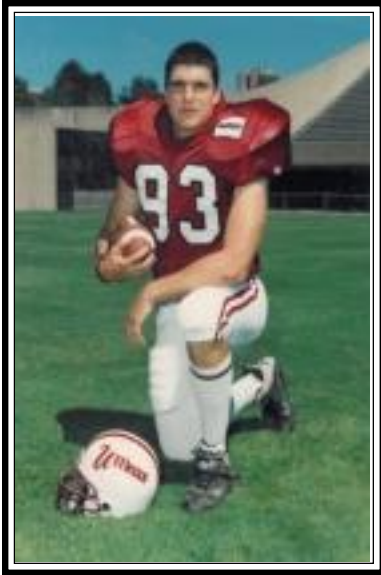


## Daniel Schneider - 1996



In the early 1990's Fitchburg High School received a wonderful gift from America's Midwest when the Schneider family of Iowa arrived in the "burg" and enrolled their two oldest sons at the school on Academy Street. Joel and Matt were both outstanding students, who immediately became involved with athletics at FHS. The two brothers impressed one and all with their work ethic and their commitment to the team and winning. In the fall of 1992 the youngest of the Schneider's clan, Danny, arrived at FHS, thus was begun a Fitchburg High School Hall of Fame Career. Coaches Ray Cosenza and Doug Grutchfield were both drawn to this big kid with a great work ethic and intensity, which was obvious when Dan Schneider set foot on Crocker Field and the Brickyard of Academy Street. This biggest of the Schneider would soon become one of Fitchburg High School's all time athletic greats on his way to the Hall of Fame.

By the mid-1990's Coach Ray Cosenza had created a football juggernaut at FHS, which was capable of handling any football team in the state of Massachusetts, and by the beginning of his sophomore season Dan Schneider had become an integral cog in that gridiron machine. Standing six foot and three inches tall and weighing two hundred thirty pounds in his sophomore season, Dan Schneider was an offensive line coach's dream, and remembers Ray was a lineman from the old school. Dan was almost immediately installed in the offensive and defensive tackle positions, and he gave the Red and Gray toughness unmatched by any of their gridiron opponents.

During Dan Schneider's three-year varsity career, the Red and Gray running attack led by the likes of Ryan Keenan, Mike Beaulac, Chris Roy, Ricky Morales and Lawrence Yarbrough was dominant throughout Central Massachusetts. It did not hurt these elusive backs that they were running behind the bone crunching blocks of number seventy-four, Dan Schneider. Two other individuals who were consistently aided by those bone crushers were quarterbacks Todd Steffanides and Devin Gates, they dropped into the pocket and they prepared to launch their passes downfield. Dan Schneider was a wonderful security blanket for his QB's. During Dan Schneider's years at FHS, the Raiders had a 23-10 record, never lost to archrival Leominster on Turkey Day, and played in three Super Bowls.

Probably the greatest compliment that Dan Schneider ever received was from Bob Savatelli, one of LHS' greatest gridiron supporters when he turned to a sideline reporter during halftime of the 1995 Turkey Day Game and said, "Sully, Leominster just does not have kids like that #74 Schneider anymore. He is just too good for the Devils." FHS was leading 31-0 at the halftime contest and even a super Blue Devil fan like Bob Savatelli knew that they could not handle Dan Schneider, very few could!

Following his junior and senior seasons. Dan was honored by his selection to the Mid-Wach A All-Star squad, and in his senior season, he was unanimously selected to the Telegram and Gazette Super Team for his superb play in the 1995 campaign. Of greater importance was the fact that Dan's outstanding play had garnered the attention of various college football programs, and they were offering Dan full athletic scholarships to play football at their institutions of higher learning. After much deliberation Dan and his family decided to accept a full boat at the University of Massachusetts. Both parties would be extremely pleased with this arrangement as Dan received an excellent education at UMASS, and became an outstanding player on the excellent Minutemen squads of the mid 1990's, including the Division I-A National Championship squad which upset a heavily favored Georgia Southern squad to bring the title back to Amherst.

But there was more to Dan Schneider's FHS athletic career than football. During his sophomore through senior seasons Dan Schneider was a key member of the Raider basketball squad, which won nearly 80% of their contests, and made the District playoffs in all three campaigns. The highlight of this three year period was the 21-2 squad in Dan's senior season which reached the District finals only to lose to a strong St. John's squad 62-50. Dan was the type of kid who makes any basketball squad excellent; he did all the dirty work, which goes, unnoticed by the spectators, but not by the coaches. Dan was always against the opponent's big men, and he set great picks for scoring guards like Ricky Morales, Kevin Keenan and Todd Steffanides. Dan Schneider was a coach's player, who sacrificed the glory of scoring for the good of the team. Don't get the wrong opinion! Dan Schneider had excellent offensive skills, but he knew that his value to the squad lie in the other areas, so he made decisions which brought glory to the squad rather than the individual.

When New England's very short spring rolled around, Dan Schneider would be found at Crocker Field participating in the high jump and shot put which featured his agility and his strength. When Dan graduated in June of 1996 he had accumulated eight varsity letters which placed him in very exclusive athletic company.

Dan Schneider was known as a big strong tackle for the great FHS football squads of the mid-1990's and an excellent basketball player for the Grutchfield Fives of that same era, but to his teachers and counselors, Dan was known for something else altogether. He had a tremendous work ethic in the classroom. Playing football and basketball were rather easy to Dan Schneider, getting good grades was much harder. But like the workout in the weight room, Dan was willing to put the time into his studies. Some kids might get the assignment done in an hour, but Dan was willing to put in two or three hours to get that assignment completed. And got it done, he did. Throughout his years at FHS, Dan's name would be seen consistently on the FHS honor roll. Some of Dan's counselors felt that his classroom work ethic got him that football scholarship almost as much as his play on the field.

Athletic and academic excellence followed Dan Schneider to the University of Massachusetts where he was a key member of the Minutemen squads from 1996 to 2001. In his freshmen season the UMASS coaching staff decided to red shirt Dan so he could adjust to college life, and get bigger in the weight room for upcoming campaigns. That decision immediately paid dividends for the Minutemen as Dan played in all eleven contests in his second college season and was selected to the UMASS A.D.'s Honor Roll for his excellence in the classroom.

In 1998, Dan Schneider and the UMASS Minutemen under Coach Mark Whipple began a glorious season, which would culminate with their victory in the National Championship for Division 1- AA against a highly favored Georgia Southern squad. Dan started 14 out of 15 contests in that magical ride being a key component in their front seven on defense. He recorded fifty-five tackles and six sacks for which he was named to the Atlantic-10 All Academic team and also received the A.D.'s Honor Roll position for the second straight year. Notice that Dan Schneider had become a student-athlete with a tremendous effort on the field with great statistics in all the defensive categories as the Minutemen once again played in the Division 1-AA football tournament.

In Dan's final season he was named an Honorable mention All American, made the All New England football team and was named the Atlantic-10 All Academic football player and finally was named the Most Outstanding Academician by the UMASS coaches for their football squad. Dan Schneider had made his family proud, his university proud and his old high school extremely proud.

Today we honor Dan Schneider into our FHS Athletic Hall of Fame. Truly he was one of our very best.

Today Dan Schneider is a member of the Vermont State Police as a Senior Trooper. He has been an officer since 2004 serving the citizens of the Green Mountain State. His special interests today include running, weight lifting, surfing, but most important being a father to Evan Daniel Schneider. Welcome to the Hall of Fame, Dan!