

EPH LEGEND – SEAN KEENAN '00

by Dick Quinn, Associate Director of Communications/Director of Sports Information



JUST LISTING ALL THAT SEAN Keenan accomplished as a quarterback for the Ephs would fill this page. Please keep in mind that all of what you are about to read only came about because Keenan made the decision to give playing football one more go.

"I contemplated not playing football before my sophomore year in high school but ultimately did decide to play," said Keenan. "I was the backup on the varsity team and ended up starting the second half of the year after a senior QB got hurt. We made the playoffs and were a play or two away from making it to the state championship game. Funny how things work out."

After starring at Mount St. Joseph High School in Rutland, Vt., in football and basketball, Keenan elected to do a post-graduate year at Phillips Exeter Academy (NH) and play football and basketball.

Playing football and basketball at Exeter resulted in Keenan being offered an opportunity to play football and basketball at Williams. "I've always loved both sports, especially basketball, and it was very important for me to try and compete in both at Williams," Keenan noted. "In many ways, I used football as the gateway to a basketball opportunity."

Competing at Williams landed Keenan on Sports Illustrated's listing of the top 50 athletes all-time out of Vermont, made him the first Eph invited to the NFL Combine, and resulted in a one-year free agent contract with the NFL's Arizona

Two-Sport Standout Gave Football One More Shot, and It Landed Him in the NFL

Cardinals, where he was a teammate of fellow Eph Ethan Brooks '96.

At Williams, Keenan set or tied 13 Eph passing records in his senior year, and was named ECAC-New England and NESCAC Offensive Player of the Year. In November 2000, just before the NFL draft, he was the subject of a profile in Sports Illustrated written by Marty Burns: "Bledsoe of The Berkshires NFL scouts are intrigued by the skills of Williams quarterback Sean Keenan."

By his sophomore year Keenan was playing at least one quarter of every football game and learning the offense from starter Peter Supino '98. Keenan's breakout game came at Hamilton that year when he led the Ephs to a 21-14 comeback win with three fourth-quarter touchdown drives. He hit on 13 of 20 passes for 182 yards, threw one TD pass, and ran four times for 17 yards and one TD. Prior to that game Keenan had thrown just eight passes at Williams, completing three.

"Those were the first meaningful minutes I played at QB," Keenan said, noting he has many wonderful Williams sports memories. "Being on a football team that was 8-0 junior year, beating Amherst all four years, and especially coming from behind to win at home in the last game as a senior are all at the top the list." In football Keenan and his Eph teammates logged a record of 28-4.

Keenan, who's 6'3", possessed a strong and accurate arm, had a quick release, and read defenses well. All of the dozen or so NFL scouts who came to Williams to see him were impressed. The scouts also liked that Keenan was a proven leader, too; he'd been elected a co-captain in both football and basketball his senior year.

Keenan was a significant role player as a defensive specialist on four Eph hoops

teams that compiled an overall record of 97-16, finished third twice in the NCAA Division III Tournament, and won the 2000 ECAC-New England title. He could play the quickest of guards and he could handle players who were several inches taller. He was known as a battler, one who loved to compete.

"Starting the basketball season late every year, I was often playing catch-up and tried to work hard to earn playing time in any way I could," recalled Keenan. "That evolved into playing several positions and focusing on multiple ways to impact a game. It was a different role for me than football but one that I enjoyed just as much. I'm honored and humbled that I was recognized as a leader in both sports and have so many great memories of time spent with amazing teammates and coaches."

"My time at Williams was a wonderful experience that provided a strong foundation for the rest of my life," Keenan said. "The lessons that I learned in the classroom and on the field/court are invaluable and still with me to this day. I was fortunate to meet so many great people from diverse backgrounds who are lifelong friends. I'm especially thankful to have met my wife Liza ('01) at Williams, and we will always share that bond and with our three daughters."

He and Liza live in East Amherst, N.Y., with daughters Avery, Hayley, and Addison. Keenan is a vice president at Walsh Duffield Companies in Buffalo, where he oversees sales and account planning.

"[Head Coach] Dick Farley taught us all so much about hard work, discipline, and teamwork that has carried over to my post-college days," Keenan said. "I've especially tried to emulate his style in leading by example and with humility in all that I do."