

EIU DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

# AN EVENING *with* **CHAMPIONS**



**Mike Shanahan**  
EIU Football Coach  
1978



**Sean Payton**  
EIU Quarterback  
1983-1986



**Tony Romo**  
EIU Quarterback  
1999-2002



**Jimmy Garoppolo**  
EIU Quarterback  
2010-2013

ALL FOUR EIU FOOTBALL LEGENDS BACK FOR ONE EXCITING EVENING

**SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2024**

*presenting:*

## The “**EIU ROAD TO SUCCESS**”

A casual conversation amongst friends  
with Mike, Sean, Tony *and* Jimmy *on stage*.

[ *Emcee:* **Bret Behrens**, WCIA Sports Anchor ]

## **LIVE AUCTION**

[ *Auctioneer:* **Trent Duckett**, Local Celebrity ]



**EASTERN ILLINOIS**

HELD IN GRONIGER ARENA, LANTZ COMPLEX AT EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY.

## EASTERN ILLINOIS ATHLETICS AND THE PANTHER CLUB WELCOME YOU TO AN EVENING WITH CHAMPIONS

All proceeds from this event directly supports Eastern Illinois University's 450 student-athletes.

### *Itinerary*

#### **4:30 PM**

Registration opens in the main concourse of Groniger Arena in the Lantz Complex for pre-event photo opportunity participants (opportunity paid in advance). **SOLD OUT**

#### **5:00 PM**

Registration begins (main concourse) for non-photo op participants. Cocktail hour and hors d'oeuvres will be available on the First-Mid Court. Drink tickets will be available for purchase for \$3 each and will be sold at registration and during the event in the southwest corner of the arena.

#### **6:15 PM**

### *Welcome*

Buffet style dinner will be catered by the Keller Convention Center, Effingham. Dessert will be catered by a local favorite, and dessert sponsor, Kathy's Cookies, Charleston.

#### **7:15 PM**

The "EIU Road To Success" - entertaining stories as told by Mike Shanahan, Sean Payton, Tony Romo and Jimmy Garoppolo

### **Q&A PORTION FOLLOWS**

Included in your registration packet will be a card to write a question for one of the legends. The cards will be picked up at the end of the dinner portion of the evening.

The "EIU Road To Success" as told by student-athletes  
Tre'Jon Lewis (FB) • Addison Brown (WTN) • Kolten Poorman (BSB)

#### **8:15 PM**

Live auction begins including once-in-a-lifetime weekend experiences from the NFL legends, St. Louis Cardinals - suite and first pitch opportunities (always a fan favorite), vacation packages, legacy jerseys and more...

Fund-a-Need for the general support of Panther Athletics / Paddle Drop

*Thank you for attending!*



**EASTERN ILLINOIS™**

# Thank you from the Director of Athletics

When I reflect on the many positive moments during my career in athletics, tonight, most certainly, will be one of the most memorable. Never before in Groniger Arena, or in EIU Athletics history, has an event like this taken place, and I feel very grateful to be a part of such an incredible evening.

I would like to personally thank each of our special guests tonight. Thank you, Mike, Sean, Tony and Jimmy for taking a weekend out of your extremely busy schedules to share your "EIU Road To Success" stories with so many of your fans and EIU alumni to promote the importance of giving back to this great university and investing in the future of current student-athletes.

Thank you Bret Behrens, emcee extraordinaire, and Trent Duckett for sharing your many talents, including auctioneering, to help raise money for our 450 plus student-athletes.

I would be remiss if I didn't give a huge shout out to this evening's sponsors who so generously provided an opportunity to create this once-in-a-lifetime event for so many.

Thank you for attending and please enjoy the evening.

Go Panthers!

Tom Michael  
Director of Athletics



**EASTERN ILLINOIS**

**LIVE AUCTION ITEMS ARE LISTED ON PAGES 12, 13, 14.**



**WHAT TO DO AFTER YOU'VE WON AN ITEM OR EXPERIENCE? PLEASE SEE PAGE 31.**



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All proceeds from this evening's event will go towards the support of the Panther Club LAIR Fund.

The LAIR Fund provides annual funding for scholarships, academic support services, and leadership programs for more than 450 Eastern Illinois student-athletes.

*Thank you*



## MEET OUR GUESTS

Tonight's lineup will be highlighted by the Who's Who when you think of Eastern Illinois football and its success both at O'Brien Field but also in the National Football League.

There are countless Super Bowl Rings and appearances among this group with all four elected to the Eastern Illinois Athletic Hall of Fame.



**MIKE SHANAHAN** began his career on the EIU football team but following an injury in spring practice, his football life and fortunes changed as he was provided the opportunity to grow and display his talents as one of the top offensive minds in the game. Shanahan returned to EIU as an assistant coach guiding the team to the 1978 NCAA Division II National Championship. He went on to a successful career as an NFL head coach, most notably with the Denver Broncos where he won two Super Bowls. Shanahan was a semifinalist for induction into the NFL Hall of Fame last year and his coaching legacy can still be seen today with several former assistant coaches currently leading NFL franchises.



**SEAN PAYTON** was the pilot on the Eastern Airlines offense of the mid-1980's that led the Panthers to the FCS playoff quarterfinals. He would set nearly every EIU passing record during his time under center for the Panthers earning second team All-America honors. Following a professional career as a player, he made his name as a brilliant offensive mind as an assistant coach before becoming the head coach of the New Orleans Saints. Payton would lead the franchise to a resurgence following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina with his success and philanthropic giving earning him the NCAA Silver Anniversary Award. The Saints had great success under Payton's leadership including winning their lone Super Bowl.

He currently is in his second season as the head coach of the Denver Broncos.



**TONY ROMO** became the face of Eastern Illinois football in the early 2000's becoming the only player to ever win three straight Ohio Valley Conference Player of the Year awards. He led EIU to three straight FCS playoff appearances each of those seasons setting both EIU and OVC passing records. He capped his career in 2002 becoming the school's first winner of the Walter Payton Award given to the top FCS offensive player in the nation. Romo would sign with the Dallas Cowboys as an undrafted free agent and go on to have success as the Cowboys signal caller setting franchise records while also earning Pro Bowl honors. Following his playing career, Romo was hired as the color commentator by CBS serving on the network's top broadcast

team with Jim Nantz with the pair already calling several Super Bowl broadcasts. Romo became the first EIU player to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.



**JIMMY GAROPPOLO** was the latest in a string of success stories by Eastern Illinois quarterbacks as he smashed his way through the EIU and OVC record books. Garoppolo led the Panthers to back-to-back FCS playoff appearances reaching the quarterfinals as a senior with the team ranked as high as No. 2 during the regular season. He would go on to become the second winner of the Walter Payton Award from Eastern Illinois in 2013 and in the spring of 2014 became the school's highest NFL Draft selection as the second-round pick of the New England Patriots. Garoppolo would collect Super Bowl rings with the Patriots behind Tom Brady and then lead the San Francisco 49ers to his own Super Bowl appearance as a starter. During this

past off-season Garoppolo signed a free agent contract with the Los Angeles Rams to play for head coach and former Mike Shanahan assistant – Sean McVay.



# Welcome Back



ROMO '02



SHANAHAN '78



PAYTON '86



GAROPPOLO '13

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*and*  
**MARLENE BROTHERTON**  
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**EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY**  
*and* **THE PANTHERS.**

*Go Panthers!*



**EASTERN ILLINOIS™**

NOV. 20, 2023

## **LANTZ ARENA RENAMING**

Eastern Illinois Athletics with approval from the Eastern Illinois Board of Trustees has announced the renaming of the home of Panther Basketball and Volleyball as Groniger Arena at Charles P. Lantz Complex.

The naming comes following a seven-figure estate gift from Jerry Groniger, who is an EIU Athletic Hall of Fame member and long-time supporter of both the University and Athletic Department. The gift is the largest single gift to EIU Athletics in school history and will be utilized for enhancements in the current arena and additional athletic spaces.

Groniger Arena will be the official name of the current basketball/volleyball arena while the academic use of the current building, athletic offices, the Ray Padovan Pool and Indoor Fieldhouse will fall under the umbrella of the larger title of Lantz Complex.





## WEEKEND OF CHAMPIONS SPONSOR



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#### HISTORY

PSI was founded in 1991 by Dale Piggush and Jon Simoneau. Both Dale and Jon had served in the construction industry for the previous 20 years. In 2020 Dale and Jon retired and sold the business to Justin Goselin and Joda Crabtree. PSI takes great pride in completing projects on time and to our clients' exact specifications. PSI completes a wide range of work — factory maintenance, remodeling, suite buildouts, multi-story office buildings, and academic and institutional buildings. Even though it's cliché, there truly is no project too large nor too small.



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*Awarded Tonight!*

### The Glen Hesler Award

The Glen Hesler Award is the most prestigious honor that the athletic department bestows upon an individual each year. It is named for Glen Hesler, a long time benefactor for the University, a distinguished alumnus and a former football player in the 1920s. Hesler loved Panther Athletics and its coaches. He helped raise money to support EIU student-athletes and attended countless events. His positive attitude increased the public's perception of Panthers Athletics.

*Congratulations!*



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# LIVE AUCTION



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## Get That Firefly Feeling

Win this package and you'll see why Firefly Grill was voted "Best Restaurant" by Restaurant Guru this year.

Enjoy a six course tasting with wine pairings for six people in the Firefly Grill private wine room as Niall Campbell, owner & executive chef of Firefly Grill introduces your taste buds to culinary nirvana. This tasting must be experienced by December 30, 2024.

**Firefly Grill**



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## Bourbon and a View

Enjoy a five night's stay and bourbon tasting for four in this guest house located in beautiful Scottsdale, Arizona... a desert oasis known for its upscale charm, vibrant arts scene, and luxurious lifestyle. Experience and discover the "West" with a vacation filled with incredible scenery, fine dining, and exciting outdoor adventures.

**Randy Johnson, EIU Alum**



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## Mountain Wonderland

Spend a week in a mountain wonderland with beautiful views of Pikes Peak in picturesque Florissant, Colorado! This four bedroom mountain home has ample sleeping accommodations for up to ten guests and sits on 2.8 acres, nestled among the pine and aspen trees - perfect for family gatherings, relaxation, and viewing wildlife. Picture your favorite people gathered around a fire and experiencing hiking, rafting, fishing, and once-in-a-lifetime adventures! Winner chooses dates for one-week stay based on property availability.

**Sc3F Wealth Management - Gary Swearingen**



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## Batter Up!

Throw out the honorary first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals game (2024 regular season game - date to be mutually agreed upon). Package includes pre-game, on-field visit during batting practice, four field box tickets, and a photograph of the group on the field.

**Joe Strohm & St. Louis Cardinals**

# LET'S GO PANTHERS!

# LIVE AUCTION



## Feel a Need for Speed?

The qualifying sessions for the 109th Running of the Indianapolis 500 are scheduled to take place on Saturday, May 17, 2025 and Sunday, May 18, 2025 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway<sup>1</sup>. During these two days, NTT INDYCAR SERIES drivers and teams will attempt to qualify. On day one (Saturday, May 17), the top 12 qualifying positions (final order of positions 7-12) will be determined. On day two (Sunday, May 18), the Firestone Fast Six (final order of positions 1-6) will be established, and if necessary, Last Chance Qualifying (positions 31-33) will also take place. It's an exciting time for racing fans as they eagerly await the pole winner and the starting lineup for this iconic race! Tickets to Carb Day on Friday: last practice laps before the race, ends with a concert. Includes two nights hotel stay.

**Indianapolis 500 and Panther Club**



## Let's Go To Towne...

Rich with Towne Square Jeweler style and elegance this 14k yellow and white gold pave link 7in diamond bracelet is sure to please. This package includes a Hamlin stylish and functional premium leather dark navy purse and clutch.

**Towne Square Jeweler**



## Elite Play 'n Stay

Complimentary two night stay for four people (2 rooms-double occupancy) at the French Lick Springs Hotel. Includes a round of golf for four people on the Pete Dye Course and a round of golf for four on the Donald Ross Course, (caddie not included).

**French Lick Resort - Brendan Sweeney**



## How "Suite" It Is!

Enjoy watching the Cardinals play from a suite at Busch Stadium. Central Illinois baseball fans, this is your chance to cheer on your favorite team in the Midwest in a suite that seats 40 people with all-you-can-eat food and drinks.

**Joe Strohm & the St. Louis Cardinals**

# LET'S GO PANTHERS!

# LIVE AUCTION



## Enjoy the Club Life at Levi's Stadium

Incredible gameday experience for four to a mutually agreed upon game at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, during the 2024 regular season, including: four Club tickets, four pregame field passes, pregame Meet and Greet with John Lynch, one of the most respected players to ever play the game of football, and a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame's Class of 2021. Gameday parking pass is included.

**John Lynch, GM & the San Francisco 49ers**



## A Weekend with the Broncos

Spend a weekend at Empower Field at Mile High with Sean Payton and the Denver Broncos. You and three of your closest friends will spend two nights at the Broncos hotel (two rooms for four people), and will attend a home game of the Broncos that also includes four pregame sideline passes. Your group will also tour the Broncos practice facility and attend the pregame practice.

***This weekend is PRICELESS!***

**Sean Payton & the Denver Broncos**



## Legendary Autographed Banner

Larger than life and in front of your very eyes tonight, Mike, Sean, Tony and Jimmy autographed the largest display banner ever to be auctioned at an event like this. You will have all the bragging rights with this win tonight! This item is perfect for any office or establishment who is proud to support the Panthers. *(Frame excluded.)*

**Panther Club**



## Once in a Lifetime EIU Legends Jersey Set

Autographed and in the hands of our greatest football alumni. This priceless set includes an autographed jersey from Mike Shanahan, Sean Payton, Tony Romo and Jimmy Garoppolo.

*(After event, EIU will custom frame each jersey and return to winner.)*

**Panther Club**

**Thank you to tonight's emcee,  
Bret Behrens, from WCIA Sports and  
auctioneer, Trent Duckett, local celebrity.**

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Eastern Illinois University and the Panther Club have endeavored to catalog and describe the items and services correctly; however, everything is sold “as is.” Certain auction items and/or services may have restrictions and other qualifications which may affect value, application, or use of the item. Some items are non-transferable. Purchases are bound by the price restrictions specified by the donors. The terms are not negotiable. Please carefully read the specifications and limitations. Items may not be returned or refunded.

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Values of items being auctioned are donor’s estimates and are not warranted by Eastern Illinois University or the Panther Club for tax purposes or general value.

Use of trips, hotels, tickets, vehicle use, and services are subject to donor’s availability. Please make arrangements well in advance.

Please note expiration dates. Items, services, etc. not redeemed within one year, unless otherwise noted, will no longer be valid.

Eastern Illinois University and the Panther Club reserves the right to change, add or remove any item it deems appropriate even though the item may have been advertised, listed in the auction printed program, or verbally indicated as being offered for auction.

We have made every effort to assure the accuracy of the catalog. Because of the complexity of the event and the number of people involved, some errors may occur. If we have made a mistake or slighted someone, we hope that you will accept our apology and inform us of our error.

**Donors and/or purchasers of auction items or services should consult their own tax advisor(s) regarding any questions concerning the possibility of tax deductibility.**

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOU’VE WON...

- Full payment is required on event night via credit or debit card.
- Your credit/debit card must be on file (recorded at registration) to bid and win the auction item, experience, or vacation package.
- Your credit/debit card transaction is verification of a completed payment.
- You may pick up your certificate at 2018 Groniger Arena after Tuesday, June 5, 2024, or your certificate will be mailed to you at address provided at registration.
- Donation receipts, minus premiums, will be mailed to you after the event has taken place.

If you have any questions regarding payment, receipt of item, experience, or vacation package fulfillment, please contact **Seth Higgins at 217.218.2265**.



## DRAKE HOMES SALUTES

TONY ROMO  
MIKE SHANAHAN  
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AND ALL PANTHER ATHLETES  
**GO BIG BLUE**