

## **Byron Paul Franklin Sr. Registry of Honor 2008**

Byron Paul Franklin Sr. was born on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1958, in Florence, Alabama, and was reared in Sheffield. He is the son of Milton Franklin, a life long educator of 41 plus years in the Franklin and Colbert County school systems, and Ida Franklin, who established a nursing career with what is now Helen Keller Hospital. Byron participated in sports in the Sheffield recreational leagues as a child and began school in the Sheffield School System at Southeast Elementary School. At Sheffield High School he was actively involved in sports where he achieved high school All American status in both football and track and field, and also lettered in basketball. He still holds school records that are unbroken today. Upon graduation in 1977, Byron accepted a scholarship to Auburn University where he became the leading receiver for the Tigers and also participated in track and field. After his four years at Auburn, Byron was drafted in the second round to play for the Buffalo Bills. He spent 4 years there, becoming the leading receiver before moving on to Seattle, where he ended his career of 7 years in the NFL. Byron returned to Auburn and obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Adult Education, and after graduation became the Assistant Director of Athletic Development. During that time he also worked as a volunteer assistant with the Women's Basketball program which made 2 Final Four appearances under Head Coach Joe Ciampi and captured two SEC Championships. Byron has been a very active member of the mentorship program established to support student athletes on Auburn's campus.

Other honors bestowed on Byron are: Mr. Sheffield High School 1977; All-SEC Freshman Football Team 1978; Blue-Gray Game 1980; Senior Bowl 1980; All-American Track and Field 1980; Byron Franklin Day Celebration, Sheffield, Alabama 1981; Project Corporation Leadership Graduate; Birmingham Metro NAACP Award 1998; North Alabama Sports Hall of Fame Induction 2000; and Leadership Alabama Graduate 2007.

For the past 15 years Byron has been employed as the Corporate Director of Special Markets and Public Relations for the Buffalo Rock Co. in Birmingham, Alabama. In 2000, Byron was appointed to the Auburn University Board of Trustees where he is serving an 11 year term. He is a member of the Alabama Beverage Association Board which oversees the soft drink industry for the entire state of Alabama, and he is vice president of BBC Foods, the parent company for a restaurant concept called the Buffalo Connection of which he is co-owner. He is president of Whirlwind Inc., a consulting company for business development and marketing and he is currently on the Board of Directors for United Way of Central Alabama, Inc.

Byron has spent much time coming back to Sheffield and other schools in the area, speaking to and encouraging our youth in continuing their education and developing and growing spiritually. He is deeply involved in Christian service, and in 1998 accepted the call to the ministry. He is a graduate of The Leadership Development Institute for Christian Leaders and is licensed in both the Baptist and Non-Denominational setting, and in 2006

was ordained for full time ministry work. He is now pastor of Living Word Church of Livingston, Alabama, a newly planted church in the West Alabama area.

Byron is married to the former Mrs. Meriam Louis Spencer of Enterprise, Al., a graduate of the University of Alabama Birmingham (Biology/Pre Med) and they have 4 children, Byron Paul Jr., Kelsie Nicole, Brandon Wesley, and Bradley Milton. Byron states, "I am experiencing abundant life because of God's kindness and mercy, my parents, my wife and children and because of all those who helped me. I am proud to be a product of the Sheffield School System."