



## HUSKY PROFILE: JEREMIAH PHARMS



# Putting Phamily Phirst

By Brian Beaky

**O**n a late October evening, with the sun setting early behind the west end bleachers at Husky Stadium and a crisp breeze blowing off of Lake Washington, the Husky players hurry up the tunnel after practice to escape the cold, but Jeremiah Pharms remains.

Is he putting in some extra work at outside linebacker, where Pharms has shined as a starter for the Huskies since 1998? Or maybe giving some one-on-one advice to sophomore backup Anthony Kelley, the most likely candidate to fill Pharms' shoes when he graduates this spring?

Pharms is doing neither of these things. Instead, he sits cross-legged on the stadium track, staring with frustration at his tiny metal scooter and wondering aloud why it doesn't work.

It is not an unusual sight to see Jeremiah - that is, Jeremiah, Jr., toddler son of the Husky senior linebacker - at practice tinkering with his scooter, or lining up against one of his equally pint-size sisters, Jasmine and Angelique, in a three-point stance, mimicking the cat-quick moves of their father and providing a rare glimpse of Montlake Monsters in the making.

"Being a father has changed me dramatically," the elder Pharms says, "like it would change anybody. I think about them before I think of myself, so everything I do is in steps toward building them a positive future."

Growing up in Sacramento, Calif., Pharms never knew his own father, so it was his mother, Arrie, who was left to build a positive future for Jeremiah and his brothers, working ceaselessly to provide for the family and ensure that her children had everything they needed to be successful in their lives.

"My mother was so special to me," the 6-1, 250-pound Pharms says. "She is the most special lady to me in my whole

*Pharms, senior linebacker, has played in 39 consecutive games overall, since the beginning of the 1997 season. He credits the University of Washington program for providing a positive environment for him to further himself as a student and an athlete.*

*Joanie Komura photo*

life. Watching her when I was growing up, watching how hard she worked to raise me and my brothers, never giving up even when we had nothing - she's an inspiration. She gave me guidance, and taught me the love that I have about family.

"She was so much mother, that I needed no father."

Pharms challenges himself daily to live up to his mother's work ethic fulfill-

ing her expectations, keeping his family foremost in his mind in everything that he does.

"As hard as she worked, I try to work that hard in the weight room, or out on the field," he says. "My three kids motivate me the most, and my mother. I have to take care of them, so that's what motivates me to go hard on every play."

If thinking about family is what motivates Pharms, then maybe every player should try the same approach. In three years as a starter, Pharms has never missed a game, and through this year's Oregon contest, had played in 37 consecutive games overall dating back to the start of the 1997 season.

In that time, Pharms has established himself as one of the Huskies most reliable defensive stars, racking up 14 sacks and 128 tackles, remarkable totals considering that Pharms traditionally lines up on the defensive line, and is matched up against an offensive lineman or blocking tight end.

"I want to work hard and do the best that I can," Pharms says. "I don't want to leave anything out there on the table. As long as I work hard every day, and put 110 percent into everything I do, then most likely something positive will come from that."

Since arriving on campus in 1996, Pharms has dedicated himself to utilizing the tools at his disposal, including coaches, weight-training facilities, and professors, to make himself into the most well-rounded player - and person - he can be.

"This program puts us in a situation where we have everything we want or need, so

if we want to get better or not, it's on us," he says. "The University of Washington has been a positive thing in my life."

One of the most positive influences on Pharms has not been a coach or teammate, but rather a professor of sociology, Dr. Al Black, who has met with the senior on many occasions to discuss academics, or anything else for which

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Pharms needed an attentive listener. Pharms calls Black one of the people he would most like to thank at the University of Washington.

"Dr. Black has been so much more than just a tutor for me," he says. "I've talked to him a lot over the years, and worked with him on on-campus projects and off-campus projects. He's been more like a mentor, a father figure."

Now in his final season at Washington, Pharms tries to find the time to thank those who have made a positive influence in his life, soaking in the atmosphere around him so as not to forget a single moment of his time with the Purple and Gold.

"Everyday, coming out here, I'm going to remember everything when my time is done," he explains. "I know I am going to think about it a lot when I leave, so everyday I just imagine the field, and the different things that happened at practice and on campus. Every game I line up, I know that this is the

last time I am ever going to face so-and-so, so I just leave nothing on the table, because once it's over, then it's over. I just try to love it while it's here."

Pharms' love for football and for his family is so overwhelming that



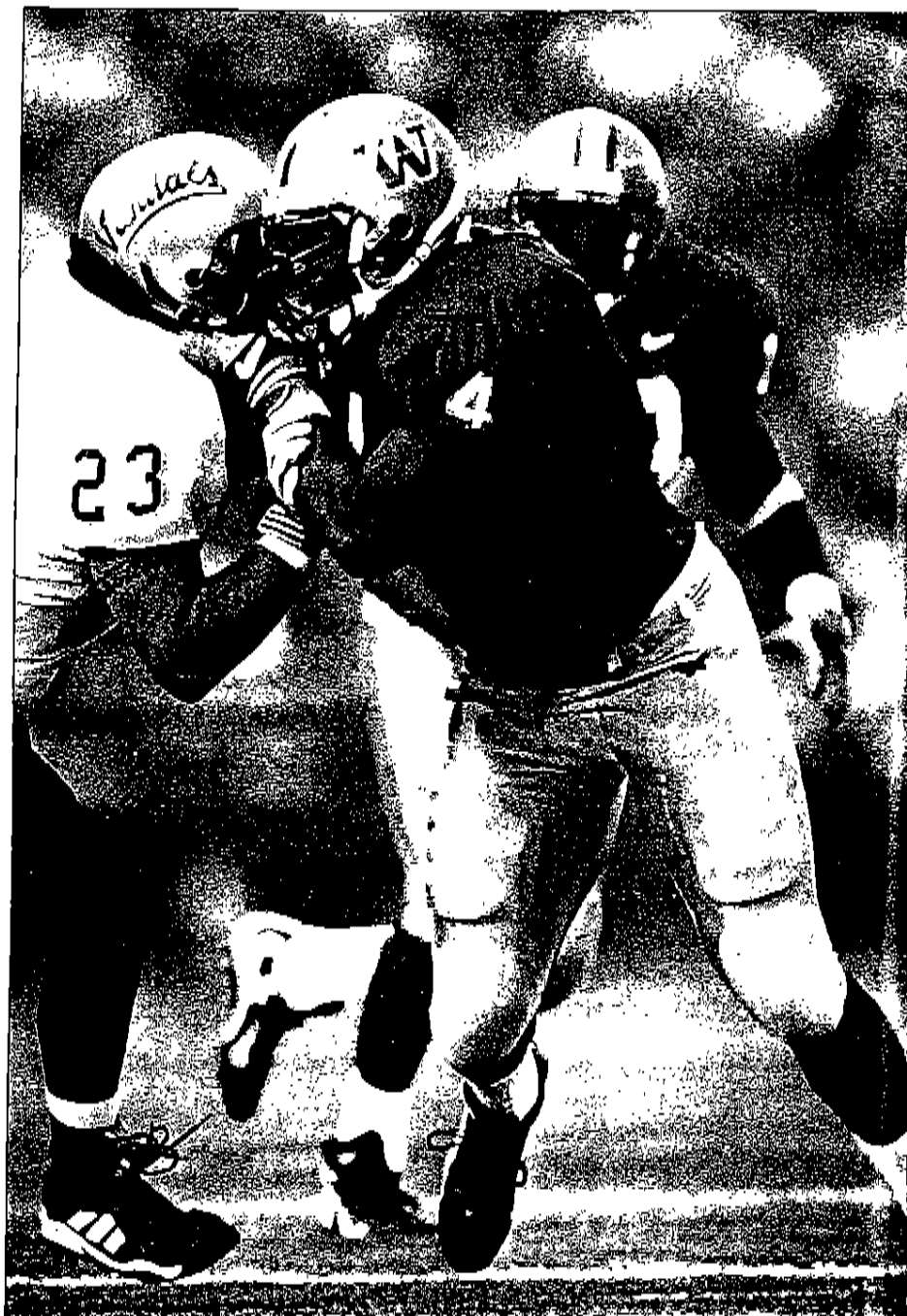
Jeremiah Pharms

it often extends to his teammates, who this season have been constantly reminded of how much they are appreciated.

"I tell these guys every day, 'you guys don't know how much I love you all,'" he says. "The biggest thing I'll miss is all the love out here on the field. Football is really important to me, but when you have people that you really love and really care about along in it with you, that makes it even better."

On Nov. 11, Pharms will come down the tunnel underneath Husky Stadium for the last time in Husky uniform. His love for this program, his teammates, and the fans is so great that he can hardly anticipate what his emotions will be.

"I've thought about that a lot," he says. "I can't even imagine the emotions that will be going through my body. I guarantee that I love this team as much as [the fans] do, and like anything, if you love something and are seeing it or doing it for the last time, it's going to be real emotional."



When not leveling opponents on the football field, Pharms is a devoted husband and father, dedicated to raising his children in a loving environment.

When the game ends, Pharms will change his clothes and exit the locker room, into the smiling faces and open arms of his wife, Franquell, and his children. Win or lose, the game is only secondary to Pharms, who understands the value of family, of the love a mother - or father - can share with their children, and pass on to future generations.

"There is no more important thing in life than family," he says. "No matter what happens to a person, no matter what kind of downfall he goes through, family

is always going to be there to pull you through when you really need them."

The father looks down at the scout er and immediately detects the problem - a flat rear tire. Jeremiah, Jr. smiles, knowing that he'll be back in action before long.

Pharms smiles, too, echoing a gift of love from a child to his father, from a mother to her son, a love that knows no bounds, and - like the Husky senior in whom it overflows - can never be contained.