

Mike Kudla Memorial Scholarship Application

This scholarship honors the hard work, determination, kindness and generosity for which Michael John Kudla was known and is remembered. Mike was a proud 2002 honors graduate of Highland High School and The Ohio State University. An honor student and four-year letter winner at both institutions, he was known for his strength on and off the football field. From overcoming the rare illness Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis in 2003 and resuming his career with Ohio State to transitioning successfully to the NFL and then succeeding as an entrepreneur, Mike credited his success to his core values and educational experiences.

In high school, Mike had over 500 career tackles and was named to several All-American teams. He finished his prep career at Highland with 495 tackles. He had 144 tackles as a senior, including 27 for loss. He was just as good at guard, where in 2000, his block led to a 2-point conversion run that gave Highland an overtime victory over Mentor Lake Catholic and the program's first playoff win. Playing with a cast on his hand and wrist, Kudla's Highland career ended when he blocked an extra point as the Hornets defeated Oak Harbor 21-20 in the first round of the D-III playoffs. Kudla hurt his hip flexor on that block and didn't play the following week when Highland fell 28-14 to Bellevue.

At Ohio State, he was a member of the 2002 National Championship Team, a two-time Big Ten Champion, First Team All-Big Ten, and 2005 Team Defensive MVP. Mike capped off his Ohio State career with a three-sack performance in a win over Notre Dame and ranks 14th in Ohio State history for career sacks. He held the record for the most sacks in a Fiesta Bowl (3 in 2006 against Notre Dame) and graduated as Ohio State's Strongest Man (610 pounds bench-press, 750 pounds squat, 430 pounds hang clean). Those records were set just seven months after surgery to rebuild his shoulder. Mike was inducted into the Medina County Sports Hall of Fame in 2012.

After his career in the NFL with the Pittsburgh Steelers, Mike embraced his entrepreneurial spirit. Using his degree, he began a career in insurance and risk management. After several years, the opportunity arose to join The Ohio State University and, in 2012, Mike was named Managing Director of Development for the Fisher College of Business. He went on to be the owner and CEO of Coreplex Enterprises, a highly successful company that built and developed medical facilities across the country. Mike was a 2017 recipient of the prestigious 40 under 40 award.

Mike Kudla was referred to by many as a man among boys. He was 6-foot-3 inches tall, weighed 265 pounds and could bench more than 500 pounds before he was old enough to drive. Mike was disciplined and had a determined work ethic. He was also kind, gentle and extremely friendly, off the field. He pushed himself, both as an athlete and as a person. His friends described him as kind-hearted and having a good sense of humor. He applied the same discipline and passion that made him a successful athlete to his business career and he was quick to give back to his community. Mike spoke at The Highland Foundation for Educational Excellence's first alumni event and was a generous supporter to the Foundation and many other organizations. In his own words: "I found that to grow and achieve your goals in life, you have to fall in love with the process of what it takes to become the best. It is not a once-in-a-while thing; it's an all-the-time thing. It is waking up early, staying late and pushing through all the obstacles that present themselves. All of these things will test you to see if you really wanted to reach your goals- or if they were simply just a thought."

The Mike Kudla Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to a college bound Highland student who is passionate in their life goals, has the qualities needed to persevere through life's obstacles and is determined to make a difference by helping others in the community.

Applicant Requirements:

- Must be an athlete who is involved in other extracurricular activities
- Must have a 3.0 GPA or higher
- Must have a need for financial assistance for higher education
- Must have a determined work ethic, focused on success and be highly-motivated
- Must lead by example
- Must have a strong sense of family and community
- Top applicants will be interviewed by the scholarship committee

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City, Zip: _____

Cell: _____ Email: _____

College you will attend: _____

- I require financial assistance to pursue my intended course of study at this institution.

Parents' or Guardians' Names _____

GPA at Highland: _____

Sports you participated in throughout high school: _____

Extracurricular activities: _____

INFORMATION FOR THE MIKE KUDLA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION COMMITTEE

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Applicant Questions for the Interview:

- What is your biggest passion in life and why?
- How do you handle adversity?
- Why is it important to you to give back to others in the community?
- How do you lead by example?
- Why are you the best candidate for this scholarship?

*** Other factors the Kudla family would like the selection committee to know:

- The recipient's intended course of study and their involvement in collegiate athletics are not factors.
- The recipient must represent the hallmark qualities that Highland exemplifies.
- The recipient should put others before themselves, have upstanding character and be willing to put forth the effort when others settle.
- The recipient must show compassion for others, honesty, integrity and a never quit attitude.
- The recipient **MUST** have the biggest heart and be an all-around good person!