

## **Alumni Pride: Christl a hit with sports-writing career**

**by Natalie Johnson - Monday, August 24, 2009**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2138/alumni-pride-christl-scored-successful-sports-writing-career/>

For more than three decades, award-winning journalist Clifford Christl '70, of Green Bay, “didn’t care a lick” whether the Green Bay Packers won or lost. He just wanted to report the story.

Christl, who majored in political science, is one of nine University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumni to be honored during Homecoming weekend Oct. 16-17. He will receive the UWO Alumni Associations’ highest honor, the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Described as a “walking encyclopedia of Wisconsin sports,” Christl spent much of his career covering the Packers for the Green Bay Press-Gazette, Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter, Milwaukee Journal and Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

“Prior to Cliff becoming the Packers’ beat reporter for the Green Bay Press-Gazette, Packers’ coverage was like reading a press release from the team itself — long on rah-rah, short on substance,” said Larry McCarren, a former Packers player who now works as WFRV’s sports director. “Cliff changed all that and started reporting things as they were, not as the team wanted them to be. This was a dramatic change of pace, and it rankled quite a few feathers.”

Christl said he is proud that he set high standards for integrity and fairness in his reporting and that he never compromised. “I think I was in the vanguard among media types who changed the tone of Packer coverage from almost obsequious to much more hard hitting.” he said.

His efforts paid off. Christl earned seven Wisconsin sportswriter-of-the-year awards. In 1999 and 2001, the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters honored him for writing the best national sports story.

Christl credits a good start in his career to UW Oshkosh journalism professor emeritus Gary Coll.

“More than anyone else, he taught me the basics of news writing,” Christl said. “Nothing is more important than having a good understanding of the basic fundamentals of your job. He essentially provided the blueprint for my career.”

Outside the newsroom, Christl has coauthored four books: “Bicycling Wisconsin,” “Sleepers, Busts and Franchise-Makers,” “Mudbaths & Bloodbaths” and “Twenty-Five Greatest Moments in Lambeau Field History.”

He also has coached youth sports, mostly baseball, and has volunteered to speak at schools, libraries and other civic functions. He spends many hours doing research and conducting living history interviews for future books.

As an alumnus, Christl is proud of the opportunity UW Oshkosh provides northeastern Wisconsin.

“Any able and willing student can come here and then leave with all the tools it takes to become successful in just about any field,” he said.

### **More Alumni Pride**

- [Spearman inspires students and community](#)
- [King dedicated to ‘common good’](#)
- [McGrath ranks high in service](#)
- [Moon’s art brightens community](#)
- [Weber finds lifelong pursuits at UWO](#)
- [Christl a hit with sports-writing career](#)
- [Mueller never lost love of learning](#)
- [Ward is diplomat for dental care](#)
- [Zibung brings humor to Cubs fans](#)