



JOHN M. MORROW, JR., SMA '52

John Melville Morrow, Jr., was born in Port Huron, MI, in 1933 and entered Staunton Military Academy (SMA) from Ann Arbor, MI, in the fall of 1951 as a postgraduate after graduating from Ann Arbor High School. He played varsity football and basketball, and was a member of the Blue Knights (trombone.) He completed his studies at SMA in 1952 and entered the University of Michigan that fall.

At the University of Michigan John played for Bennie Oosterbaan's Michigan Wolverines football teams from 1953 to 1955, playing center and tackle. Morrow's younger brother, the late Gordon Morrow, *SMA '54*, played at the end position for Michigan from 1955 to 1958.

Jim Cnockaert was a long time reporter for the Ann Arbor News, covering the Michigan football beat, until his departure in September 2003. In his book, *Michigan: Where Have You Gone?*, he wrote that "Because few scholarships were available, Morrow, like most of his [University of Michigan] teammates, took on just about any job he could to make ends meet. As a freshman, he sold programs at the stadium. Later he ran the kitchen for his fraternity and scraped the ice at the Coliseum in preparation for and between periods at Michigan hockey games.

"After senior captain Dick O'Shaughnessy was hurt during the '53 season, Morrow stepped in to play center in Coach Bennie Oosterbaan's single-wing offense, as well as linebacker on defense. 'Playing center was a difficult challenge,' Morrow said. 'You're making a direct snap and there are 5 different spots you can put the ball, so you couldn't keep your head up,' he explained. 'The center was sort of lost at the start of a play, because you were a second or so behind a shifting defense. It was a slight disadvantage in terms of blocking.'"

John Morrow was selected by the Los Angeles Rams in the 28th round of the 1956 NFL Draft. He played three seasons and appeared in 35 games for the Rams, principally as a center, during the 1956, 1958, and 1959 NFL seasons. In 1960, however, prior to the start of the season, he was traded by the Rams for Art Hunter, the Browns' Pro-Bowl center. Morrow played seven seasons with the Cleveland Browns from 1960 to 1966. He was selected to play in the Pro Bowl

in 1961 and 1963 and was the starting center on the 1964 Cleveland Browns team that won the 1964 NFL Championship Game

“Center John Morrow was a superb pass blocker, who could open holes up the middle for the Browns' running game and had the speed to get outside and downfield to help spring Cleveland's backs.

“Morrow didn't miss a game for the Browns until he suffered a leg injury in the eighth game of the 1966 season. At age 33, he didn't play again.

“[With Morrow at center] the Browns' great running back, Jim Brown, led the NFL in rushing in eight of his nine seasons, playing his last six campaigns. *In a countdown of the top 100 players in Cleveland Browns history, John Morrow as a center was ranked number 64. Players must have spent at least four seasons with the Browns. The ranking is based only on players' careers with the Browns.*

“Morrow was just as good a player in 1964 -- when the Browns won their last championship with a 27-0 rout of the Baltimore Colts -- and in 1965 -- when Cleveland again got to the title game but lost, 23-12, to the Green Bay Packers.”

John retired from football after the 1966 season after 10 rough years as an NFL center.

Source: Jim Cnockaert *Michigan: Where Have You Gone?*, Wikipedia, and cleveland.com/browns/index.ssf/2012/10/cleveland_browns_100_best_all-_2.html
All edits by Kelly McGavock, SMA '59