Good evening. For those of you who are new to the program, my name is Tim Grimm and I'm the fellow that writes those 3,000 word essays every weekend during football season about the exploits of the North Huskies. I have operated www.nhsrecords.com for a decade and served as the statistician for the basketball and football teams since 2007.

On this night each season we come together to celebrate and reward the highest accomplishments of the recently completed season. We pay special attention to the seniors who have most contributed to the success of the team over the course of their careers and honor their accomplishments.

The season just concluded was one which contained many new firsts for the program. For the first time in 25 years, we welcomed a new head coach to the program and we also welcomed a new athletic director. For the first time in 30 years, we opened the season against a school other than Bosse. For the first time since 1982, we played a Terre Haute school and for the first time in 40 years, we played both Terre Haute schools in the same season. For the first time since 2000, the program won a game in the month of November and won its first Sectional game since 2007.

After a season in which we graduated a huge senior class, it was expected that the 2013 Huskies would take some time to find their balance and mature into a competitive ball club. As it turned out, nothing could have been further from the truth. Right out of the gate, the 2013 Huskies surprised a lot of people with the competitive level of their play. As I mentioned earlier, we typically use this evening to honor first and foremost the seniors who contributed to our success, but it's impossible to discuss the successes of this season's Huskies without also mentioning the outstanding efforts of many of the underclassmen.

Perhaps no single performance of the season was more outstanding than the huge game that junior Chase Whitler had against Terre Haute South on opening night. To say that Chase "blew up" the Braves' secondary is an understatement. After leading the Huskies in receiving as a sophomore, Whitler nearly equaled his 2012 season numbers in the first game of the 2013 season. He caught six of the seven passes thrown his way for 216 yards and had the single "best looking" play of the year on a second quarter 62 yard touchdown reception.

Streaking down the right hand side of the field on a fly pattern, Chase simply outran the defense, took the pass in stride at the 20 yard line, and put distance between himself and the defenders before he hit the goal line. Chase's night against Terre Haute South ranked 2nd All Time for most receiving yards in a game and 1st All Time for average yards per reception. He followed that performance up a few weeks

later with a "Top 5" All Time performance against Harrison with 144 yards receiving. His 40 receptions in 2013 were just two off the All Time record of 42 and his 606 yards receiving rank 4th All Time for a season.

North is fortunate to have him for another season and as he exits his junior year he ranks #7 All Time in Career receptions and 8th All Time in Career receiving yards. Barring injury or a change of circumstances, it is likely that he will rank alongside North's greatest receivers—Brandon Stewart and Deke Cooper (both of whom went on to Division 1 NCAA Football careers).

Another junior who 'served notice' on Opening Night that he would be a force in the coming season was middle linebacker Ryan Wargel. Early in the game, with the Braves penned back within their 10 yard line, it was Wargel who sent a message that the young Husky defense could be a force to be reckoned with.

On second down and five, Wargel chased the opponent running back down from behind the line of scrimmage as the runner sprinted to turn up field. Ryan's speed was apparent again on the next play when even though he delayed his blitz, he made it to the quarterback in time to sack him for a nine yard loss before he could throw. Wargel had single handedly taken any steam out of the Braves' offense and forced them to punt from their one yard line. It was the type of plays that the Husky faithful would see repeatedly throughout the 2013 season.

When the dust on the season settled, Wargel had played one of the GREAT seasons in North defensive history. Only the Huskies won-loss record kept him from receiving more post-season honors from the community.

For over 30 seasons, North has awarded a point system on defense to keep track of individual contributions. A solo tackle, a tackle for loss, a fumble recovery, an interception, a quarterback sack, and a blocked kick are all worth two points each. An assisted tackle is worth one point as is a caused fumble. In the thirty plus seasons that the system has been used, Ryan's 207 points in 2013 were the second highest total ever. He finished 7th All Time in solo unassisted tackles and 5th All Time in tackle assists.

Having been a starter at linebacker for the last half of the 2012 season, Wargel will enter his senior season on a similar trajectory as Chase Whitler: poised to join the greatest names in Husky history. He

is already ranked 11th All-Time in career unassisted tackles and needs just 25 more to set the record—he managed 67 such tackles in 2013 alone.

Another junior who showed some "lightning" in 2013 managed to set a school record for most field goals in a game, most field goals in a season, and most field goals in a career. Zac Turi completes his junior season as 2nd All-Time in career kicking points with 104, the All-Time career leader in Field Goals with 10 (twice the second highest total), and is the only player in the school's history to have two games with two field goals. His 45 yarder against Memorial was the third longest All-Time.

Underclassmen statistics are not always as easily quantifiable as Chase, Ryan, and Zac's. Of the underclassmen who helped to provide the strength of this season's team, many of them toiled in the trenches of the offensive line. The offensive line is one of those areas where it is hardest to quantify an individual's performance, but ask any coach at any level what the most important "unit" is of any football team and you will likely hear the words, "The O-Line" without a moment's hesitation.

That same coach will also tell you that it is the unit that takes the longest time to become a cohesive force. The offensive line takes time to become a "Band Of Brothers". Having graduated four starters in 2012, the 'O-Line' was the group of players most people were looking to for indications of North's potential success.

It all starts up front.

And sometimes it is what doesn't happen that matters most.

As the unit came together during the course of the season, one statistic bore out that this group of four underclassmen and one senior had gelled into an effective unit. Over the season's final six games, North suffered just two quarterback sacks.

Two.

During that same period, North threw the ball 127 times and gained 805 yards through the air.

In past seasons, the Huskies have sometimes suffered two quarterback sacks on a single possession let alone over a span of six games. With juniors Riley Draper, Buddy Waelde, and Cody Smith along with sophomore Bryce Brown returning next season, a collective sense that the O-Line will be in good hands should permeate the program.

The fifth member of that group was senior Dylan Powell. A three year starter for North, he concludes a career with a very unique distinction. In the 56 years that North has been competing in varsity football the Huskies have played over 560 games. One of the hallmarks of Husky football over the decades has been the image of a fleet footed tailback clad in the beloved Green and White down the sidelines toward the end zone. Running the football has been a program priority.

During those 560 plus games, the Huskies have managed to compile 15 games in which they posted 400 or more yards rushing. That's fewer than 2.5% of the games played. 400 yards is a standard of excellence for an offensive line.

Dylan Powell was part of ONE-THIRD of those games. Five times during his three season varsity career he has been part of a line that opened holes for the "ultimate" rushing numbers of over 400 yards gained on the ground. A two way starter as a senior and a Team Captain, Dylan also posted 24 tackles on defense along with a pair of quarterback sacks. He has been a devastating force up front, a crushing tackler, and a leader on-and-off the field. His contributions to the program will be sorely missed next season.

Another senior who saw his role increase steadily 'up front' has been Conner Rausch. Over the years he has grown into the role of a defensive end as his frame filled out and his skills were never more apparent than on a warm September night against Harrison. Having already recorded a pair of solo tackles, three assists, a quarterback sack, and two thrown-for-losses, it fell to Conner to "save the day" on the Husky one-foot line. On third and goal, it was his fumble recovery that set the stage for the most dramatic nine minutes of football of the season.

Trailing 13-9 with 9:30 to play, thanks to Rausch's recovery the Huskies had the ball back but 99 yards remained between North and their first loss to the Warriors in nine games.

What followed was the stuff of legends.

The Huskies orchestrated a 17 play 99 yard drive that ate up 9 minutes and 23 seconds and extended North's string of victories over Harrison. They converted a handful of third downs as well as a fourth down attempt. The work was distributed over the entire team and it exemplified the spirit of "team" that the 2013 Huskies have come to exemplify.

Three members of the defense quietly and effectively contributed to that sense of "team". Senior Justin Lockett repeated his role as a starting defensive back and completed his career as one of the most

reliable tacklers and pass defenders of the last several seasons. He finishes with 83 tackles of which 49 were solo tackles made in the open field when runners had passed the line of scrimmage and he represented North's last opportunity to prevent a long gain or score. Likewise senior De'Oshay Johnson manned the cornerback position with style and an attacking mentality. He recorded 25 solo tackles and his skills in run support were further evidenced by his three tackles for loss and a quarterback sack. De'Oshay recorded an interception against Harrison that helped to keep the Huskies within 'striking distance' with one more score.

The third senior is a young man who truly brought his 'best' whenever and wherever the coaches assigned him to play. Austin Payne seldom touched the ball compared to other players during his career. But his comparatively 'few' touches belie his ability to impact games with big plays. Dating back to his junior season when he picked off passes against Harrison and Reitz, Payne's name has become synonymous with game-changing plays from whatever position he plays. Playing linebacker, defensive back, receiver, and returning kicks, he displayed a knack for making things happen. In the second half against Henderson County he came up big on a blitz to stop a drive and then on the ensuing North possession, he caught a 40 yard pass that effectively put the Huskies "back in the game". His 30 yard run against Castle was the principle play in a drive that allowed North to tie the game early. He managed four quarterback sacks on defense—even though he is considered small in size for a linebacker. It was simply the position his team needed him to play. He finishes his career with over 80 tackles and an average gain of over 20 yards every time he touched the ball on offense.

Perhaps no player saw his role grow more over the course of the season than senior Maalik Butler. Having been a spot player on both offense and defense during his junior season, Butler entered his final season having shown flashes of great speed and promise. Most of that flash had come on kick returns—an ability that earned him fear from opposing football coaches. So much so that the "squib" kick became common place against North.

Maalik returned 18 kickoffs for a total of 459 yards in his career—an average of 26 yards per return. One third of his returns were 35 yards or longer in length. As a result, teams would simply quit kicking to him and conceded North good field position with short squibs.

His role in the offense became more pronounced down the season's final stretch. He scored eight touchdowns in North's final four games—a stint in which he rushed for 250 yards and averaged over 5.5

yards per carry. He recorded four touchdowns that were thirty yards or longer (two rushing and two receiving) and generated much of the "lightning" for the Husky offense.

But when it comes to discussing the 2013 North Husky football team, one player was at the center of the discussion. Quarterback Jesse Millikan had transferred in from Bedford-North Lawrence where he had compiled over 2,700 yards passing and 27 touchdowns as a two year starter. North had just graduated two year starter Max Mooney and there was no incumbent senior quarterback groomed to replace him. Millikan stepped into the role and led the Huskies without missing a step.

Any questions regarding the Huskies transition to a new quarterback were answered in week one when Millikan had one of the best nights throwing the ball that any North quarterback has ever had. He essentially played "pitch and catch" with Chase Whitler and at game's end, his yardage and completion percentage and number of completions all ranked in the school's All-Time Top 10. He threw for over 100 yards passing in each of the season's first four games—the first player to record four-in-a-row over 100 since Cameron Whitler in 2008.

The Husky faithful were also treated to watching his skills at managing long drives. Perhaps no quarterback in recent memory has successfully driven the ball downfield and sustained long, time consuming drives as Jesse Millikan. Poised at the line of scrimmage, scanning the defense, barking out signals, manufacturing calls designed to capitalize on defensive weaknesses, Jesse carved an image of a leader in control of his team's destiny.

NINETEEN times the Huskies churned out drives of ten plays or longer over the course of the season. Eleven of those drives produced touchdowns and four generated field goal opportunities. Many times it was Millikan's own runs that sustained the drives when facing third down. His ability to gain 'just enough' yards to move the chains with his own feet became a hallmark of the Husky offense. If Maalik Butler and Chase Whitler provided the "lightning" to the offense, it was Jesse's innate 'toughness' that produced the "thunder".

TWENTY-NINE times Millikan ran for first downs in 2013 and a large percentage of those came on third and three or fourth and two. Facing lines stacked to stop the run, North's quarterback found the weakness more-often-than-not that allowed the Huskies to sustain drives. Combined with his NINE touchdown runs, it means that 25% of the time that Jesse ran with the ball he either garnered a first down or a touchdown.

No single player has been more vital to the Husky offense in the last decade.

His final season numbers rank him fifth All-Time in passing yards for a season with 1,354 and number six All-Time in completion percentage at 55%. Despite playing only one varsity season, he ends up among the Top 20 All-Time in Career Total Yardage with 1,828 and he set the school record for passing attempts in a game with 43 against Terre Haute North and came within one of the completion record in the same game with 22. His four games over 150 yards passing rank fourth All-Time for a career and tied for the most in a single season.

Most of all his dedication to giving everything he had was typical of the team he led. With four of the season's losses coming by a combined SIXTEEN points, the final season record could have easily been 7-4 and ranked with the best seasons of the last ten years. Games were not "given away"—they were contested until the final seconds. The 2013 Huskies battled and contended and displayed a far better measure of what it means to be a "Team" than their record would imply. In large part, that grit and determination was best displayed by their quarterback.

This team will be remembered as Coach Szabo's first North squad. Those that watched them play will remember them as a club that battled and refused to lay down. They laid the foundation for what look to be successful years ahead at the hand of a talented staff and a school that is now deep in resources.

"Onward and upward" should be the battle cry of the Husky Nation.

And now it is my pleasure to introduce to you for the very first time at these proceedings, the head coach of the Huskies, Mr. Bret Szabo.