



# HOWARD'S LIFE REMEMBERED IN LECTURE SERIES

## Howard Soifer Memorial Lecture Series

For WMU-Cooley Law School's 10th Annual Howard Soifer Memorial Lecture in Sports and Entertainment Law, Todd "T.J." Duckett, Michigan State University standout and former National Football League running back, and Joseph Bellanca (Sharpe Class, 2008), entertainment and media attorney at Hertz Schram PC, spoke at the Lansing campus.



(Left-right) Todd "T.J." Duckett, MSU standout and former National Football League running back; Sandy Soifer, widow of the late Howard Soifer (Christianity Class, 1977); Joseph Bellanca, entertainment and media attorney at Hertz Schram PC.; and James Robb, WMU-Cooley associate dean of external affairs.

### MICHIGAN: MSU STAR AND NFL GREAT TODD DUCKETT SPEAKS IN LANSING

Duckett was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan and attended Loy Norrix High School where he was named a *USA-Today* All-American. Duckett was drafted in the first round of the 2002 NFL draft by the Atlanta Falcons. In addition to the Falcons, he played for the Washington Redskins, Detroit Lions and Seattle Seahawks during his seven-year NFL career. During the Nov. 18 event, Duckett discussed the importance of a trusting relationship between the athlete and their agent.

At Hertz Schram PC, Bellanca advises entertainers, musicians, athletes, writers, and media companies, and works on issues related to contracts, licensing, trademarks and copyrights. He is an adjunct professor at the Detroit Institute for Music Education, the treasurer of the State Bar of Michigan Arts Communication, Entertainment and Sports Section and is the recently elected secretary of the Italian-American Bar Association of Michigan. Bellanca discussed how to handle issues in sports and entertainment law.

"We are very fortunate to have hosted the Howard Soifer Memorial Lecture for 10 years," said WMU-Cooley President and Dean Don LeDuc during the event. "The Soifer family

has allowed WMU-Cooley Law School to continue to honor Howard's passion for law, sports and entertainment by connecting our community to influential business and sports professionals that share those same passions."

Previous Soifer Memorial Lecture speakers include Tom Izzo, Michigan State University men's basketball coach and member of the Basketball Hall of Fame; Kevin Poston, president and CEO of Detroit-area based DEAL Elite Athletic Management; Steve Smith, broadcaster and former MSU and NBA all-star basketball player; and Steve Garvey, former MSU and Major League Baseball all-star and MVP.

Howard Soifer was born in the Bronx and moved to Monsey, New York in 1963. Following graduation from the Spring Valley High School Class of 1967, he attended the University of Toledo for two years and received his undergraduate degree from Long Island University in Brooklyn. He was a proud 1977 graduate of WMU-Cooley Law School and an accomplished lawyer and a shareholder in the firm of Loomis, Ewert, Parsley, Davis &

Gotting, P.C., until the time of his death on January 29, 2003 at the age of 53.

Howard's passion for basketball, baseball, and football led him to represent several prominent professional athletes during his career. He was a dedicated family man, devoted to his wife and friend of more than 30 years, Sandy Kirsch Soifer. He was very proud of his two daughters, Marci and Halie. All who were part of Howard's life remember him for his great sense of

humor and his extreme loyalty, integrity, and strength.

It is Howard's great passion and loyalty that the Soifer Committee created the Howard Soifer Memorial Lecture Series in Sports and Entertainment Law. The Committee feels strongly that the event is a meaningful way to honor Howard's memory and to endow the lecture series for perpetuity.

### TAMPA BAY: HEISMAN TROPHY WINNER, NBA STAR CHARLIE WARD

On Feb. 17, WMU-Cooley Law School, Tampa Bay campus hosted its first Howard Soifer Memorial Lecture. Featured speakers were college football Heisman Trophy winner and retired NBA player Charlie Ward, along with president of the Sarasota Bar and college football standout Keith DuBose.

The speakers gave advice on financial, ethical and other legal matters related to professional athletes. DuBose, a shareholder at the law firm of Matthews Eastmoore, shared the lawyer perspective while Ward spoke of his experiences as an athlete during the Q&A style discussion.

The lecture began with questions about what athletes could do to

find someone to assist them as an agent. Both DuBose and Ward said it was important for young athletes and entertainers to build a trusted network when they start their careers. They spoke of how adjusting to life after college may be daunting for athletes who become solely focused on playing their sport and graduating unless they have a support system.

Ward stressed how athletes should be open to collaborating with professionals outside of the sports law team they might have established for themselves. He also said athletes should never burn bridges with connections.

"It's important that when you are on a team and you're a part of a team, you understand that if you need to work with someone else, it's OK," Ward

said. "It's good to work with other people because you can learn a lot from others."

Throughout the discussion, the speakers emphasized trust and integrity between athletes and agents as being two key factors in sports and entertainment law. DuBose called on fellow and future professionals to stay ethical and true to themselves.

"You may lose business, you may lose opportunity

but one thing you cannot do is compromise your integrity. If you don't have integrity and people can't respect you, it doesn't mean anything in the end," said DuBose.

Howard Soifer (1949-2003) graduated from WMU-Cooley Law School in 1977. He was an avid sports fan and represented several prominent professional athletes during his career as a shareholder with Loomis, Ewert, Parsley, Davis & Gotting, P.C.



(Left-right) James Robb, WMU-Cooley Associate Dean of External Affairs and General Counsel; Charlie Ward, retired NBA player; Sandy Soifer, widow of the late Howard Soifer; and Keith DuBose, shareholder at the law firm of Matthews Eastmoore.

Howard was grateful for his legal education at WMU-Cooley Law School. The Soifer Committee endowed the Lecture Series in his honor.