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Dwyer athlete gets scholarship that honors performance on, off field

For parents, losing a child at any age is likely the most unnatural sorrow they'll ever face. But Singer Island residents Lou and Kathy DiCocco have helped turn that loss into a gain for others to echo the work of their late son.

Connecticut-born Frank DiCocco died in April of 2013 at age 29 from bone marrow failure after coaching high school and college football teams in his native state, Massachusetts, Alabama, and locally at Dwyer High School in Palm Beach Gardens. But rather than just instruct young players in the game, DiCocco taught them life skills illustrated within the books he'd written, "The Real Man Program" and "Playbook for Manhood."

He created the H.O.P.E. Foundation (www.hopefoundation.us) in 2011 to further these ideals, and since 2013, his parents have offered its H.O.P.E. Foundation for a Better Tomorrow award and Frank D.B. DiCocco Memorial Scholarship to student-athletes at a growing number of institutions that utilize these teachings. That list includes men's and women's sports programs at colleges like the universities of Alabama, Mississippi, Connecticut and Miami.



Lou DiCocco (from left), Kathy DiCocco, Coach Jack Daniels, Chase Yearty, his mom Joelle Yearty.

\$2,500 scholarship check from the DiCoccos. The Palm Beach Gardens resident was the second annual Dwyer recipient after Gerald Hearn, now a student-athlete and youth leader at Florida A&M University.

On Feb. 4, during the national signing day

ceremony at Dwyer, Panthers senior

offensive lineman Chase Yearty was

surprised to find he'd been selected by head

coach Jack Daniels to receive the award and

"I was very surprised," said the 17-year-old Yearty while driving back from a visit to Webber International University in Babson Park. "I'm honored and blessed."

The 6-foot-2, 270-pounder was chosen by

coach Daniels for a variety of on-and-off-field

reasons that display why multiple

Florida-based colleges are interested in him.

Jacksonville University is another possibility,

and Yearty had a visit to Warner University in

Lake Wales scheduled at press time.

All are intrigued by his on-field intelligence and versatility — he plays center, both guard and both tackle positions — not to mention

his 3.5 grade-point average, work ethic (he's

employed at the Thirsty Turtle Seagrill in Juno Beach), and volunteer duties at various clubs, camps and ministries.

"Chase was very appreciative," said Kathy DiCocco. "He showed up wearing a 'Real Man' wristband, so we knew he'd been taught Frank's program."

Yearty was a starting offensive lineman as a junior during the Panthers' undefeated 2013 state title run, and as a senior for the team that faded late in the 2014 season to finish 7-4. But his comparison of the two illustrates why Daniels (who worked with DiCocco for several years, and continues to employ his methods) chose him.



Dwyer Principal Glenda Sheffield (from left), Chase Yearty, Kathy DiCocco and Lou DiCocco.