



**THE GOPHER-WARRIOR BOWL**  
**101 High School Drive**  
**Site Medallion No. 56**

The history of The Gopher-Warrior Bowl is intricately tied to the growth and development of Grand Prairie. Grand Prairie in the 1950s had a population of approximately 27,500 and flourished with growth buoyed by construction, prior to World War II, of the North American Aviation plant and the influx of workers it brought from throughout the United States.

The original name, Gopher Bowl, was changed on July 8, 2004, with the Board of Trustees' decision to rename the Gopher Bowl to The Gopher-Warrior Bowl in recognition of Grand Prairie's two high schools. The colorful history of The Gopher-Warrior Bowl will never be forgotten nor will the special memories of long-ago events soon fade.

The Grand Prairie Independent School District Board of Trustees approved construction of the 7,500-seat stadium on February 13, 1956. Smith & Warder Architects & Engineers was selected to draw plans for the new football stadium. General Contractor Lewis C. Krodell was awarded the construction contract in May 8, 1956.

Dirt work began May 1956. The stadium quickly became known as the Gopher Bowl: the gopher being the high school mascot and "bowl" because the stadium was carved from a natural ravine on the north side of Grand Prairie High School. Cost of construction was \$200,000. Construction of the Gopher Bowl was completed in four and one-half months. School Superintendent H.H. Chambers boasted that the Gopher Bowl was paid for "with cash." There are existing copies of an 8 mm film of the actual construction.

Though school district officials have searched, there appears to be no factual information pertaining to how the name "Gopher Bowl" actually came to be other than a Sunday, February 12, 1956, news headline that reads, "Trustees to Consider New GPHS Grid Bowl." The same article includes mention of "plans for a new 7,500 seat, bowl-type football stadium."

Mr. Clarence Brown, Mr. Benton Ford, Mr. Wayne Henslee and Mr. Bruce Bean all related the same information regarding the ravine behind the high school, but they had little clue as to naming the Bowl. Originally, the ravine was filled with mesquite trees and used as a dump by residents of several homes that were along what is now know as Stadium at Tarrant Road. (This would be the Scheppler family that sold the land to the school district.) Superintendent H.H. Chambers and Mr. Lloyd Boze had the land cleared and used the ravine for a practice field to save the Gopher Field for regular games. Gopher Field was located on the west side of the high school and was demolished in preparation for the construction of Turner Gym.

In speaking with Mr. Bean, Mr. Brown and Mr. Ford, who all worked for Superintendent Chambers, the gentlemen related that it would not have been out of character for Superintendent Chambers to assume responsibility for naming the stadium the “Gopher Bowl.” The superintendent had “more latitude in those days.”

Board minutes from 1955, 1956 and 1957 do not indicate that the Board took action in naming the Gopher Bowl. Minutes from February 13, 1956, indicate a motion was made to authorize the building of a football stadium and call Smith & Warder to complete plans. On March 5, 1956, the building of a football stadium was authorized. The same motion was made at the May 1956 meeting authorizing the building of a football stadium and awarding of the contract to Lewis Krodell. The motions were all the same. The first motion set Smith & Warder to draw plans, the next motion set Medart and Sneed to do excavation, and the third motion set Lewis Krodell to do actual construction.

The *Dallas Times Herald*, in an August 8, 1956, headline, publicized the new athletic facility at Grand Prairie High School as “Grand Prairie’s Little Cotton Bowl.” Board of Trustees President Ralph Clark declared the Gopher Bowl “A Texas Showplace” as the Bowl neared completion.

The first game was played on September 28, 1956, against Waco’s University High School. The Gophers were victorious in their first game in the newly dedicated Gopher Bowl.

Through the years, The Gopher-Warrior Bowl has undergone many renovations, but the March 1, 2003, bond referendum changed the appearance of The Gopher-Warrior Bowl forever. The referendum included funds to complete much-needed improvements including the addition of new reserved chair-back seating, synthetic turf, essential drainage upgrades, new lighting, restrooms, concession stands and a state-of-the art sound system. A highlight of the upgrade included the addition of a signature three-story press box located above the home stands.

New construction and retrofit work provided through funds from the 2003 bond referendum again placed The Gopher-Warrior Bowl among the premiere sports facilities in the state of Texas.