BLACKSBURG—Paul (Bear) Bryant, a living legend in college football, will be guest speaker for Virginia Tech’s annual football banquet, Thursday, May 22, at the newly renovated Cassell Coliseum. (The banquet will be open to the public $8.50 a ticket).

Registration may be made through three outlets in Salem (Trelpy’s, Security National Bank, and Tyler’s Burn) and several in Roanoke, including Holiday Inn, Airport, and a number of hotels or through members of the Tech Student Aid Board of Directors.

The buffet style meal will be served at 7 p.m. The program will include Bryant’s talk, plus introduction of Tech’s football squad.

He is a member and co-author of a current best-seller book, "Bear," has had a winning coaching record at Tech during his career, first was his first loss as a head coach at Georgia Tech in the Cotton Bowl here in old Mile Stadium.

He has no previous association with Hokeland of course is that Tech head coach Frank Sharpes., and coached under Bryant before coming here in 1974.

"Tech’s football squad intends to have our annual banquet shortly after the end of the football season," Sharpes said, "but for this particular time I can think of a more appropriate time which was our football season, honor our 1974 seniors and to show appreciation for what we have accomplished in the season and what we expect in the spring practice."

"Coach Bryant is not only a man with a message of college football, but he is also a philosophical motivator for all of us," Sharpes said. "He has been the greatest...one of the most moving people I have ever been around."

BRYANT, whose football coaching record is as well known, has made several visits to the Tech campus, including that of his first appearance before an official Tech football function.

Tech’s football banquet was held for several years in Roanoke, became limited to Blacksburg, and finally was cut out completely in 1970 when funds for that purpose were discontinued. It is a contribution to a special fund at Marshall University after a tragic fire in which four of that school’s football team and coaching staff, (Rick Pollock, head coach, and one of his assistants, Frank Loria, were former Tech players who were killed in the fire.)

The banquet is being resurrected by Roanoke Valley members of the Tech Student Aid Council.

"We’re very pleased that Roanoke Valley supporters would want to be involved with and to recognize Virginia Tech football, and that they want to put it back on an annual basis," Sharpes said.

"It’s a great opportunity which has been building here, and it will be a great opportunity for the fans to come out for the football season for next fall."

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