

# Catching questions instead of footballs

By SHERRY KAHAN

school districts including Redford, Garden City, Westland, Livonia, and Plymouth.

**THE FACT** that his questioner was such a close observer of his football style clearly pleased Sanders. But his eyes really opened up when in a second classroom another student sitting down at his desk looked way up at the slender six-foot five football star and asked the same question.

"I can see this is a very observant group," Sanders smiled. "I speak at a lot of banquets, and no one has ever asked me that."

The famous Lions pass-catcher was featured speaker at a recent luncheon benefiting Children's Village. Appropriately enough, it took place at the Main Event at the Pontiac Silverdome.

Another student had a comment in reference to the falling down question. "I always thought you fell down because you didn't want to get hit," he said.

Sanders told him that wasn't the reason. "My main responsibility was to catch the ball," he said. "Lots of quarterbacks all down. But that's because they're valuable and we aren't. If we

fell like that the coach would think we didn't want to play."

**ANOTHER QUERY** directed to Sanders asked his feelings about retiring from the game which he had played in high school, college and 10 years as a professional.

"I enjoyed football," he responded. "It wasn't work to me. But I had 10 years as a professional and I prepared myself for leaving. It is something you have to prepare for. A lot of athletes feel it is the epitome of life. They have accomplished everything. But they should realize they will not be playing football forever. Some players never prepare themselves for anything. I say take advantage of the game, but don't let the game take advantage of you."

To an adult in the classroom who wondered if the owners of football teams ever offered counseling to the players about saving money and how to do it, Sanders said some do and some don't.

"The bad part of a professional organization is that business is its only concern. It is doing only that particular job. Some take an interest and some don't."

He told the students he had been planning to be an auto dealer. "Some eight years ago I started working in a dealership," he said. "So when I retired it was not a big shock. There was something else I wanted to do."

However, because the auto business was not good at his retirement time, he did not enter that business. Today he is a partner in an investment firm in Birmingham. He lives in Rochester.

His student listeners were particularly interested in Sanders' grade point average.

"My grades weren't A's," he grinned. "But my father believed that books were the most important thing. I had to prove I could do the book work in order to play sports."

**HIS BEST FOOTBALL** memories included two touchdowns in a game against Oakland which the Lions won 23-14. He also won't forget breaking a record for pass receptions in a game against New Orleans.

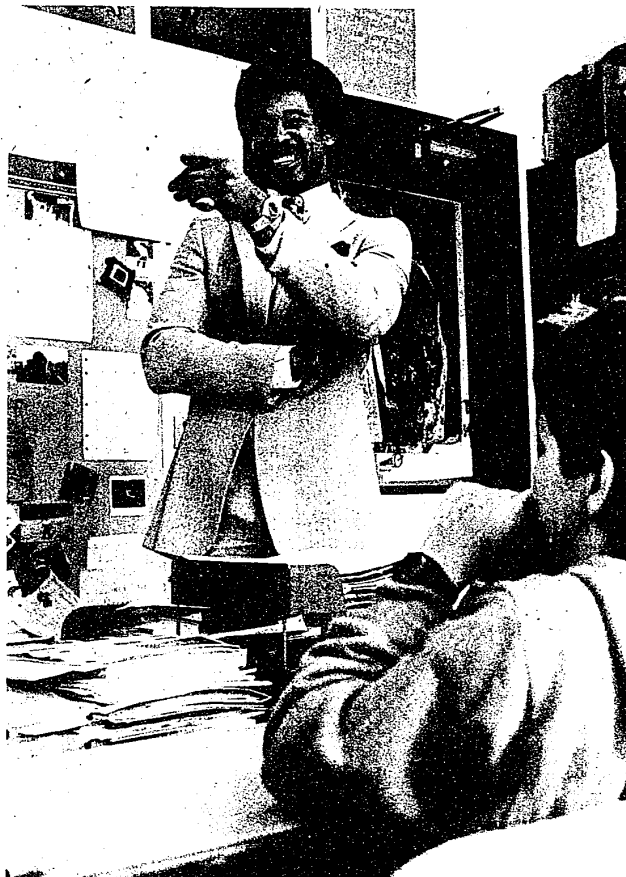
Touchdowns? He estimated he had made between 35-38 TDs.

How many times was he hurt? "About every game," answered Sanders. Then he said he had cleat marks all over his back, "where people walked on me." He also has a separated shoulder with a screw in it. He doesn't think any ligaments are left in his left thumb. He had bone surgery on his right knee.

The aches in his bones enable him to "tell you today what the weather will be like tomorrow."



Big bold letters were used by Charlie Sanders as he signed autograph after autograph at Children's Village. (Staff photo by Bill Bresler)



Charlie Sanders, retired Detroit Lions football player, got a bang out of answering questions from students at Methodist Children's Village. (Staff photos by Bill Bresler)

## Slinky's owner working to ditch Driftwood image

Will new owners, a name change and a facelift be enough to rid the Driftwood of its former rowdy image?

Don Jayco hopes so.

As one of the new owners of Slinky's Rock and Roll Saloon on Grand River in Redford Township, Jayco is hoping the poor reputation of the Driftwood Lounge is junked with the name and old signs that were removed from the building.

Jayco doesn't like talking about what he calls the "bad raps" that contributed to the rough-neck reputation of the Driftwood.

**THE BAR** was the object of false rumors, stemming from incidents which occurred near the Driftwood, but not actually in the bar, said Jayco.

The worst of the incidents happened one weekend in August 1979, when two men were stabbed in separate incidents outside the Driftwood, one resulting in the death of a 21-year-old Livonia man.

The most recent incident, which again cast a dark cloud over the Driftwood, involved a yet unsolved beating death of a man in the parking lot between the Driftwood and neighboring Canterbury Palace restaurant.

The victim may have been attempting to mediate a fight between members of two motorcycle clubs, which didn't do much to remove the Driftwood's stigma as a hangout for a groups of rowdy, tough guys.

The 37-year-old Jayco says he intends to change that reputation, and in the process, discourage the type of clientele which contributed to the Driftwood's poor image.

The first step in the campaign to create a new image involved a physical change of the building, extensive renovation inside and out.

**"OUR FIRST** decision as the new owners was to change the image the old Driftwood had and give the place a facelift," said Jayco.

However, one reputation the old Driftwood had that the new owners don't want to lose, said Jayco, is the bar's reputation for great rock 'n' roll music.

"I started coming here about 15 years ago, when it was the Driftwood, and I remember seeing fantastic performances from '50s and '60s rock 'n' roll bands," Jayco said. "In their early days before they became famous, people like Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Danny and the Juniors, and Bob Seger used to play at the old Driftwood. You used to have to wait in a line that stretched around the block to get in the place."

"It seats about 200 people and it was always packed. We want to keep quality Detroit rock 'n' roll here. We want to create a comfortable, enjoyable rock 'n' roll saloon where our customers can have a good time, listen to good rock music, leave with a smile — and come back."

Jayco said the old Driftwood used to be a "real hot spot" and he and his partners would like to duplicate that kind of atmosphere with a few key changes.

**"WE'RE NOT** interested in the hard, abrasive

type of rock music. I call that noise. We don't want the long-hair bands, whose members are clad in leather jackets and tennis shoes and we don't want the kind of following those bands attract as customers in Slinky's," Jayco said.

"We're looking for bands to play the type of rock music you hear all the time on a top 40s FM radio station, with maybe a few oldies thrown in occasionally, as opposed to the hard electric rock. I'm talking about music like that of the Rolling Stones, Beatles and Bruce Springsteen, music you can dance to without being blown out," Jayco said.

After first softening the decor and the music, Jayco's hope is that Slinky's will now begin attracting a "softer" clientele than that which frequented the old Driftwood.

"We were concerned about the reputation of the Driftwood, but it always was a moneymaker. When the previous owners decided to sell, we saw the great potential due to the location on Grand River, where the traffic flow is heavy, and we grabbed it," said Jayco. "We knew we could continue to make it successful with a lot of dedication and effort to make the change to Slinky's. We've poured a lot of sweat and money into the change."

Jayco said the goal was to attract a new clientele which had never frequented the old Driftwood. So the former marketing representative for Xerox and Eastman Kodak put his experience to work in designing the type of atmosphere to attract the desired clientele.

**"WE FIRST** created the Slinky's theme," he said. "We then hired an artist to paint the walls with earth-tone graphics to depict the theme, with the central drawing being that of the name, highlighted by a slinky woman."

"We enhanced the decor with a new color scheme, featuring oranges, browns, yellows and tans, the installation of tons of attractive, good smelling rough saw and cedar wood, Casablanca ceiling fans, new carpeting, tables and mirrors. We gave the interior life with hanging plants," Jayco said.

"My intention was to create a lively atmosphere," he said. "We also installed several stand-up bars with the idea of creating an element of movement for those customers who don't want a seat, but just want to move around."

"All our renovation efforts were designed to soften the atmosphere to attract a softer clientele. We're aiming for customers between the age groups of 25 to 40, those people who wear sweaters and ski jackets," said Jayco.

And Jayco believes he can maintain a soft atmosphere by maintaining order through tight management.

**"WE'LL HAVE** better crowd control by proper staffing and allowing in a manageable number of customers," Jayco said. "We'll have our doormen keep a periodic watch on the parking lot in an effort to stop any kind of disturbance before it gets started."

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