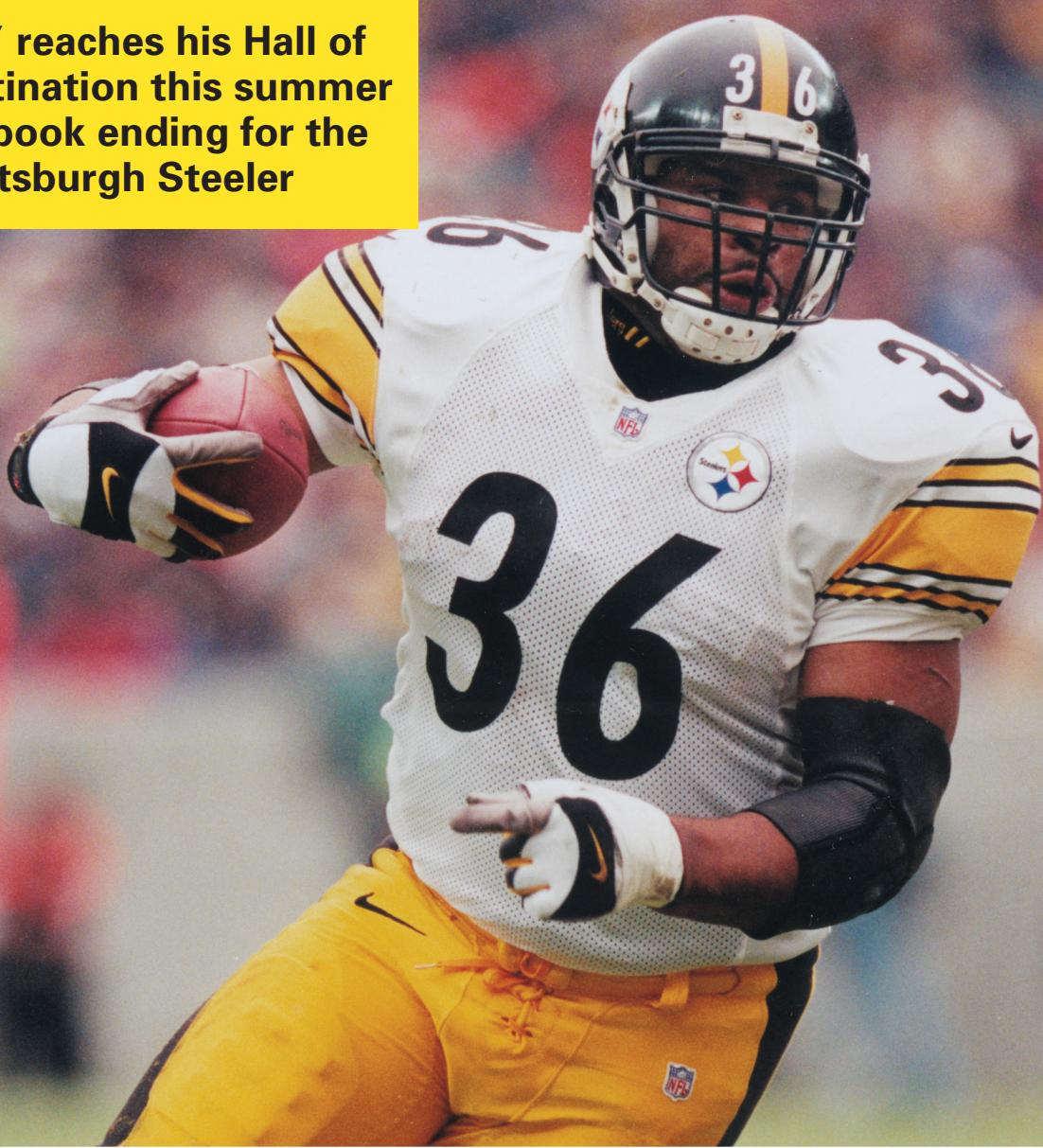


BY ANDREA BOSCO

#36 CALLING JEROME HOME

"The Bus" reaches his Hall of Fame destination this summer — a storybook ending for the retired Pittsburgh Steeler



The phrase, "Good things come to those who wait," hits close to home for Jerome Bettis, who will be enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in August. We've waited four consecutive voting periods for this moment, anxiously anticipating the announcement of inductees each year. And now, the timing is right and the sweet moment is here! The six-time NFL Pro Bowl running back's bronze bust will join the company of 295 incredible and deserving individuals.

The patient, passionate man finds peace in making history and is humbled by the honor. "You don't play the game to go into the Hall of Fame," says Bettis. "You play football to win championships, and the byproduct of your success is the Hall of Fame."

During Bettis' 10 years with the Pittsburgh Steelers, he contributed to the team's Super Bowl XL victory and achieved noteworthy accomplishments, such as being named the sixth all-time leading rusher in NFL history. His career came to a close ever so symphonically in Detroit. "It was a dream come true to play and win the Super Bowl in my hometown because that's where my career started," he says. "It was a tremendous opportunity; I was on cloud nine for a month."

The bliss will be relived this summer, as Bettis says he's most excited to sit among some of the greatest players to ever wear a Steelers jersey, including Pittsburgh heroes Terry Bradshaw, Franco Harris, and Rod Woodson. "It's an honor that I'm just so appreciative of," Bettis says. "I am so humbled." At 43 years old, he's one of the youngest in this year's class.

Throughout his successes on the field and his philanthropic endeavors after retirement, Steeler Nation has served as a proud cheering section. He's even been named an honorary Pittsburgher! "Pittsburgh fans are the best because they have supported me 110 percent from the beginning," he

says. "Pittsburgh is one of the few cities in America where the fans appreciate three yards and a cloud of dust; four yards and a cloud of dust. It's a blue-collar town, and the people enjoy and appreciate football in its truest form."

It's because of the support of this region that Bettis stays active in the community to this day. On **MARCH 26**, he'll host the second annual "Bowl with the Bus" celebrity event at Latitude 360 from 6-9 p.m. Sponsors will have the opportunity to purchase a bowling lane for the evening and help to raise funds for The Jerome Bettis Bus Stops Here Foundation, which benefits underprivileged inner-city youth and backs programs that include computer-engineering, asthma awareness, and mentorships. "This event is important because it gives the community access to create change in our community," he says. "To make an impact."

Latitude 360 is often a go-to when he and his family return to Pittsburgh. His wife, Trameka, and children, Jada and Jerome, Jr., also love to grab breakfast at Pamela's Diner and dinner at SAVOY Restaurant. Of course, they always make time to stop by the Jerome Bettis Grille 36 on the North Shore!

Though his days of barreling through the line of scrimmage at Heinz Field are over, Pittsburgh continues to serve as a welcoming place for No. 36. His admiration for his followers and those who "bleed black and gold" remains strong. "Steelers fans are, without a doubt, the best football fans in the world."

The Jerome Bettis Bus Stops Here Foundation, thebusstopsherefoundation.com.



"Bowl with the Bus," and other celebrity guests, at Latitude 360 on March 26! Enjoy a bowling tournament, live music, great food, and an auction. For tickets, call 412.315.1426 or visit showclix.com.

