Thomas L. Herrion was born in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1981 and played football at Kilgore College on the undefeated 2001 team that was 12-0.

Herrion, who was 6-foot-3 and 310-pounds, was a key offensive lineman during KC’s undefeated 2001 season.

His nicknames at Kilgore were "Train" and "Big T." He was also called "Thunder" later when he played professionally in Germany because his head was too big for a regular helmet.

Herrion was named the Herschel Curtis Lineman of the Year at KC and was named to the First-Team All-Southwest Junior College Football Conference team in 2001.

He was also named as an Honorable Mention JUCO All-American in 2001.

He graduated from KC in 2002 and transferred to the University of Utah where he blocked for former San Francisco 49ers quarterback and number one draft pick Alex Smith.

At the University of Utah, he was named Honorable Mention to the All-Mountain West team and played on the Utes’ Liberty Bowl Championship team in 2003. Utah defeated Southern Mississippi in that bowl game, 17-0, in front of 56,000 fans in Memphis.

He was also elected as a team captain for the University of Utah’s 2003 football team and started every game that season at left guard.

Herrion was signed to a reserve/futures contract with the NFL’s San Francisco 49ers on Jan. 5, 2005. As a first-year player with the 49ers, he spent part of the season on the San Francisco and Dallas practice squads. He also played with the Hamburg Sea Devils of NFL Europe.

Shortly after an exhibition game against the Denver Broncos on Aug. 20, 2005, Herrion collapsed in the locker room and was transported to St. Anthony’s Central Hospital in Denver where he was pronounced dead.
The cause of death was later determined to be Ischaemic heart disease, or (according to a subsequent examination of the autopsy report) hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

At only 23 years old, he was gone way too soon.

In 2005, the San Francisco 49ers established the Thomas Herrion Memorial Award, which is given annually to the player who best exemplifies the spirit of Thomas Herrion.

At Kilgore College, Herrion is known as KC’s first TRIO participant who worked extremely hard to accomplish his goals.

The TRIO Learning Center was dedicated to Herrion’s memory in 2006 and renamed as the “Thomas L. Herrion TRIO Learning Center.”

It would make Thomas happy to know that his name is on such a valuable asset that assists students in need.

He worked extremely hard to be successful and now his name is synonymous with student persistence, achievement and student success at Kilgore College.

Today we are pleased to induct Thomas Herrion posthumously into the KC Athletics Hall of Fame.