

Media contacts: Erik Pepple, [epepple@wexarts.org](mailto:epepple@wexarts.org) or 614 688-3261 or Karen Simonian, [ksimonian@wexarts.org](mailto:ksimonian@wexarts.org) or 614 292-9923. More information on the Wexner Center: [wexarts.org](http://wexarts.org).

## WEXNER CENTER CELEBRATES THE KICK-OFF OF FOOTBALL SEASON WITH SERIES OF FILMS ABOUT THE COLLEGE GRIDIRON

This **September**, the Wexner Center pays tribute to the start of football season with a **five-film series** exploring **College Football in Film**. While college football remains undeniably popular today, in the 1920s–1940s it—along with boxing, baseball, and horse racing—was a national fascination, and it is from this era that the films are drawn. Culled from a wide range of genres—from the hilarious antics of the Marx Brothers in the classic *Horse Feathers*, to the James Thurber-penned, Henry Fonda-starring *The Male Animal* (which takes place at a fictional Midwestern that bears a striking resemblance to The Ohio State University), to the rarely screened biopic *Smith of Minnesota*—the series reflects



**Harold Lloyd in *The Freshman***  
Photo courtesy Sony Pictures Repertory

Hollywood's interest in the sport at the time and suggests that many of the issues surrounding college athletics today existed decades ago. The Harold Lloyd comedy *The Freshman* will feature live musical accompaniment by Columbus guitarist Larry Marotta. Unless otherwise noted, tickets for each evening of the series are \$7 for the general public, \$5 for Wexner Center members, students, and senior citizens. All screenings take place in the Wexner Center Film/Video Theater, 1871 N. High St. Call 614-292-3535 for advance tickets.

The schedule follows.

### **Tuesday—Wednesday, September 26—27**

7 pm

***The Male Animal*** (Elliott Nugent, 1942)

*The Male Animal* features Henry Fonda as a popular professor at Midwestern University who faces dismissal for his outspoken views. Based on the play by Columbus native James Thurber, the film unfolds during homecoming weekend and a match against hated rival Michigan (101 mins., 35mm).

### **Thursday, September 28**

7 pm | 2<sup>nd</sup> film 8:30 pm

***The Freshman*** (Sam Taylor & Fred Newmeyer, 1925) and ***Smith of Minnesota*** (Lew Landers, 1942)

*The Freshman* features **live musical accompaniment by Larry Marotta**.

In *The Freshman*, silent comedy legend Harold Lloyd stars as a naïve college freshman who finds himself the butt of campus jokes until he miraculously gains glory and respect on the gridiron. (76 mins., 35mm,) The rarely seen *Smith of Minnesota* is a biopic of Bruce Smith, famed

halfback of the Minnesota Golden Gophers' 1940 and 41 national champion teams and the school's only Heisman Trophy winner. Smith stars as himself (66 mins., 35mm).

**Friday, September 29**

7 pm | 2<sup>nd</sup> film 8:20 pm

***Horse Feathers*** (Norman Z. McLeod, 1932) and ***College Coach*** (William Wellman, 1933)

Amid the Marx Bros.' typical zaniness, *Horse Feathers* finds Professor Quincy Adams Wagstaff (Groucho) as the newly installed president of Huxley College. His attempts to recruit two ringers for the big game against Darwin U. land him Chico and Harpo instead (68 mins., 35mm). In *College Coach*, Pat O'Brien stars as a ruthless coach who will do anything—fix grades, pay players—to win. His zeal costs him wife Ann Dvorak and alienates student Dick Powell in the process. Look quick for a young John Wayne, a half-decade removed from his football days with Southern Cal (75 mins., 16mm). The *College Coach* print is courtesy of the UCLA Film and Television Archive.

**EVENT SUPPORT**

Major support for the film/video season generously provided by Abercrombie & Fitch and Mills James Productions.

Significant contributions made by the Rohauer Collection Foundation. Additional funding provided by the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation and Wexner Center members.

###30###