

Chiefs' Lineman to Receive KCMS Honorary Membership

NFL'S FIRST MEDICAL SCHOOL GRADUATE SHARES THOUGHTS ON FOOTBALL, COVID-19 AND HIS NEXT STEPS.



The Medical Society looks forward to welcoming offensive lineman Laurent

Duvernay-Tardif

from the Super Bowl champion Chiefs as a KCMS Honorary Member at the October 21 Annual Meeting.

Duvernay-Tardif earned his medical degree from McGill University in Montreal in May 2018, completing his medical studies while playing for the Chiefs since 2014. He is the first medical school graduate to play in the National Football League. He will join the Annual Meeting via Zoom to accept the membership.

But what is even more remarkable about Duvernay-Tardif is what he has done since the Chiefs' victorious Super Bowl game. After serving on the football front line to protect his quarterback, he volunteered to serve on the front lines treating patients at a nursing home near Montreal in his native Quebec.

During his nine weeks at the nursing home, he administered medications and carried out other nursing duties. Duvernay-Tardif holds a doctorate in medicine but right now cannot practice as a doctor because he still has to go through residency. Working in the nursing home was a life-changing experience. It drove his decision to opt out of the 2020 NFL season.

"In this particular year, did playing follow my larger convictions?" he wrote in *Sports Illustrated* in September. "I have a

responsibility toward my community from a public health perspective."

This fall, he has begun online studies in public health with Harvard University. And he plans to return to the long-term care facility in Quebec for another tour of duty.

Why did you decide to get involved when the COVID-19 pandemic started?

I was part of a movement of health care professionals who went into the system to help. I consider myself a privileged individual, and it was important for me to give back and contribute to be part of the solution.

Why did you decide to help on the front line?

At some point, I needed to do more than Zoom calls promoting social distancing measures. I had to do some concrete work.

What lessons should we learn that might help with future pandemics?

We have to go where the science leads us and try to minimize the political influence in our decision making.

What was the most important lesson you learned from the pandemic?

Working in long-term care facilities made me realize that this pandemic has an impact on everybody. It's not just the amount of new cases and mortality that matter. It's all the patients who were unable to see their families for three months, all the nurses and orderlies who had to work overtime. When you add that to the im-

pacts we saw on our economy, we can say that everyone was affected by this infectious disease crisis.

You serve on the NFL Players Association task force that helped design COVID-19 protocols. What do you think football will look like this year?

So far the number of positive cases in the NFL is extremely low. I think it's a tribute to the protocols in place and the efforts of the players and coaches to respect to social distancing measures.

Can you tell us a little bit about your LDT Foundation?

The LDT Foundation thinks that physical activity and creativity are fundamental factors in the fulfillment of kids and their educational success. We organize turnkey events that encourage the balance between sports, arts and studies with a particular commitment to elementary students in grades 5-6. This commitment I have toward promoting health is one of the reasons why I decided to study public health at Harvard this year. I think this field of study will allow me to combine my medical background, my public role and my philanthropic goals.

Are the Chiefs going to win the Super Bowl again this year?

Of course! 😊