Top Taggart Field has served as home for the Ferris State football team since 1957.

Officially dedicated in October 1978, the stadium is centrally located on the FSU campus and features a current seating capacity of 6,200. Permanent lighting makes it possible for night games, which are popular with the Bulldog faithful during the early part of the season.

The facility also has been used extensively by individuals outside the University community as Top Taggart Field has hosted numerous athletic events on the high school level.

Presently, the facility is midst a multi-phase renovation and construction project. The initial phase, completed in August 1998, involved the installation of an AstroTurf 12 playing surface which is considered by experts as the highest quality artificial turf on the market. The playing field is surrounded by a new 400-meter, eight-lane track with a brick red urethane surface. A new electronic scoreboard was installed in June 2000.

Phase two of the project was completed in August 2001 with the construction of the Wheeler Pavilion, named in honor of alumnus John Taggart and his wife, Chris. The three-story building, which is located on the stadium’s west side, features a clubroom level, a media/game management level, a ticket office, remodeled and expanded restrooms along with a remodeled, expanded and covered concession area. The project also involved upgrading the main entrance, improving site landscaping, adding 250 center section seats and a new lighting system.

Phase three would entail construction of locker rooms, a weightroom and coaches’ offices. Funding for this tentative project would be raised through private donations.

The field is named in honor of W.C. “Top” Taggart. As a child, his own family circle affixed the name “Top.” The name become synonymous with Taggart and inevitably “Top” became a symbol of affection and respect held for him by everyone. A Big Rapids native and a former Bulldog star halfback, Taggart became Ferris’ first official varsity football coach, beginning with the 1912 season. His contributions to Ferris and Big Rapids go much further. Taggart served on the Ferris Board of Control from 1931-50, including five years as its chairman, and was a long-time benefactor of Ferris in countless ways.

As a businessman, he was a pioneer in the natural gas development and production industry, and was president of the Taggart Company in Big Rapids. He passed away in 1968, but not before Ferris officials recognized him in October, 1957, during dedication ceremonies of the University’s football facility. Taggart was inducted into the Ferris State Bulldog Athletics Hall of Fame in 2002.

Wheeler Pavilion

The $1.8 million state-of-the-art Wheeler Pavilion is the latest addition to Top Taggart Field and allows Ferris State University to have one of the nation’s top Division II football-playing facilities.

The three-story building was constructed in 2001 through the generosity of alumnus John Wheeler ('76), Chief Executive Officer of Rockford Construction Company and the Rockford Development Group. Wheeler and his wife, Chris, pledged $500,000 and an in-kind gift of $100,000 in professional services.

A public fundraising campaign raised $600,000 in contributions and pledges, which was matched by the University. A groundbreaking ceremony for the facility was held March 5, 2001.