After getting his start in Stagg Stadium, Coach Pete Carroll has led his teams to two appearances at the Super Bowl, one Vince Lombardi trophy and two national college championships. He’s been a USC Trojan, a New York Jet, a New England Patriot and now a Seattle Seahawk.

But at heart, he is a Pacific Tiger. A Tiger three times over.

Carroll earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees and his teaching credential at University of the Pacific. But beyond the academic credentials, Pacific helped shape the coach at three pivotal points in his life.

When he was an undergrad transferring from College of Marin in the fall of 1971, Pacific offered him a scholarship at a time, he said, he really needed it.

"Right here on this campus is where it started."

—Pete Carroll
Carroll recalls that he barely made it to Pacific. He was one of the Tigers’ smaller players—but he was determined and thoughtful. So much so that he earned his way onto the All-Pacific Coast Athletic Association (PCAA) team both seasons he played for Pacific.

After graduating, he worked in Southern California selling business supplies, contemplating his next move. He had been a coach during the summers but otherwise didn’t know much about that side of the game.

Then he got a call from former Tigers head coach Chester Caddas offering him a graduate assistantship—and he found himself once again at Pacific in the mid-1970s.

After returning to Pacific as a graduate assistant, he got his start in coaching. Studying sports psychology, he also formed his coaching philosophy.

He hadn’t been a great student as an undergraduate, but this time around, something clicked, he said.

Working with mentors Glen Albaugh, a Sports Sciences professor who was Carroll’s thesis advisor, and Larry Meredith, a Religious Studies professor, his philosophy about coaching took root.

Carroll read the psychologist Abraham Maslow’s book *Toward the Psychology of Being*, and that’s when it hit him—the concept of self-actualization and how it applied to the success of athletes.

That helped him build the foundation on which he coaches today. He wants his players to trust themselves and play without the fear of screwing up, to play like they’re capable.

“I’m trying to uncover the unique qualities a person has. They all have something special about them,” he said.

Years later, after clawing his way through graduate assistant and coordinator jobs at the college level, he returned again to Pacific to become the assistant head coach and offensive coordinator for the 1983 season. After that, he went on to the pros.

Oh, and he also met his wife, Pacific volleyball player Glena (Goranson) ’77, on campus when he was a graduate assistant. An accomplished athlete in her own right, she was Pacific’s first female scholarship athlete.

“So many things started for me here,” he said during a visit with Tiger coaches and student-athletes in May.

In a packed room at the Alex and Jeri Vereschagin Alumni House, Carroll gave Pacific athletes a glimpse into his enthusiastic, motivational approach that has carried his teams to victory. He talked about the tenacity that got him $10-an-hour graduate assistant jobs and how he endured “butt-kicking” experiences as a pro coach moving from the Buffalo Bills to the Minnesota Vikings, from the New York Jets to the San Francisco 49ers and then to the New England Patriots, where he was fired after three seasons as head coach.

**PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID GONZALES**
“Getting fired from the Patriots was the best thing that ever happened,” he said. In the time that followed, before he took the helm at USC, he started thinking—really thinking—about his personal philosophy. What was important to him? What did he believe?

He realized he was a competitor, but more than that, he also realized that he wanted to help his team become the best it could be. He wanted everyone he coached to believe in their potential.

“This is the foundation of what’s coaching the Seattle Seahawks today,” he told the Tiger coaches and student-athletes. “Right here on this campus is where it started.”

“I love this place” said Carroll, as he described his lifelong relationship with Pacific.

As Carroll talks about his alma mater, it’s clear that two people, his former professors Albaugh and Meredith, are central to that relationship. And perhaps even to his success.

The two are “angels who have followed me around all of these years,” Carroll said. “Angels who have kept me connected to the past and looking to the future.”

And perhaps that’s why he is a Tiger for Life.

“I’m trying to uncover the unique qualities a person has. They all have something special about them,” Carroll said.

Carroll is the second Pacific alumnus to have won the Super Bowl as an NFL head coach. Tom Flores ‘59 is one of only two people in NFL history to win a Super Bowl Championship as a player (Super Bowl IV), assistant coach (Super Bowl XI), and head coach (Super Bowls XV and XVIII) all with the Oakland Raiders. Flores also was the first Hispanic starting quarterback and the first minority head coach in professional football history to win a Super Bowl.

Pacific has also had two other alumni serve as NFL head coaches: Bruce Coslet ’68 (Jets, 1990–93; Bengals, 1996–2000) and Hue Jackson ’87 (Raiders, 2011).

Pacific’s NFL and Super Bowl Stats

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Highlights of an Outstanding Career

• Head Coach Seattle Seahawks: two consecutive Super Bowl appearances, including 2014 championship, three NFC West division titles
• Only the third coach to win championships in college and the NFL
• 62 games without a double-digit loss in the NFL, a league record
• University of the Pacific Alumni Association’s Distinguished Alumni Award for Professional Service (2014)
• Named NFC Coach of the Year at the 101 Awards and finished third in the AP Coach of the Year voting (2012)
• Head Coach USC: won seven consecutive Pac-10 titles (2002–08), two national championships (2003–04, though 2004 title later vacated by NCAA) had a 97–19 record and 34-game winning streak, reached a bowl game in each of his nine seasons and won seven
• Named Coach of the Decade by Lindy’s (2009)
• Coached three Heisman Trophy winners in a four-year span (Carson Palmer, Matt Leinart, Reggie Bush)
• Three-time Pac-10 Coach of the Year (2006, 2005, 2003)
• American Football Coaches Association Division I-A Coach of the Year, Home Depot National Coach of the Year (2003)
• Founded “A Better LA” (2003) and “A Better Seattle” (2011), initiatives that aim to reduce youth and gang violence through an innovative collaborative model
• Inducted into the Pacific Athletic Hall of Fame (1995)