

37th Edition



Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

June 20, 2026

Benefitting





2026 Inductees

Kenny Cole
Rhea Greenwell
Nathaniel Holmes
Gary Knotts
Mark McClanahan
Billy Don Sharp
Glenn Thompson
Leigh Anna Trimble

Cook Museum of Natural Science
Decatur, Alabama
7:00 P.M.
June 20, 2025



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2026 Program Agenda

Program Agenda		
I.	Welcome	Joe Bailey, President Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
II.	Invocation	Joe Bailey
III.	Dinner	DoubleTree Hotel
IV.	Boys and Girls Club	Video Presentation
V.	Introduction of Sports Hall of Fame Board of Directors, Past Inductees/Special Guests, and Sponsors	Joe Bailey
VI.	Introduction of the 2026 Class of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame	Joe Bailey
VII.	Inductee Kenny Cole	Video Presentation
VIII.	Inductee Rhea Greenwell	Video Presentation
IX.	Inductee Nathaniel Holmes	Video Presentation
X.	Inductee Gary Knotts	Video Presentation
XI.	Inductee Mark McClanahan	Video Presentation
XII.	Inductee Billy Don Sharp	Video Presentation
XIII.	Inductee Glenn Thompson	Video Presentation
XIV.	Inductee Leigh Anna Trimble	Video Presentation
XV.	Acceptance on Behalf of Inductees	Kenny Cole
XVI.	Picture – All MCSHOF Inductees	Joe Bailey
XVII.	Closing Remarks	Joe Bailey



President's Welcome

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame Board, with great pleasure, I welcome you to the 37th Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Banquet.

Congratulations to this year's inductees – Kenny Cole, Rhea Greenwell, Nathaniel Holmes, Gary Knotts, Mark McClanahan, Billy Don Sharp, Glenn Thompson and Leigh Anna Trimble - for the outstanding contribution they made to the field of athletics and to our great county.

Since our first banquet in 1989, we have inducted 265 sports legends and we still have many others who deserve this special recognition. I believe Morgan County is blessed with the greatest sports heritage in the state. Our mission here at the Hall of Fame is to keep the memory of that heritage alive.

It is with genuine appreciation that we express gratitude to those corporations, businesses, and individuals who have supported the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame during the past 37 years. Your generosity allows us to continue our mission of remembering, recognizing, preserving, and celebrating Morgan County's exceptional sports history.

We thank you for your continued support and for your contribution to the special memories we will create tonight.

Sincerely:



Joe Bailey
President - Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame



MCSHoF's Welcome

Welcome - The Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame (MCSHOF) is dedicated to honoring Morgan County's many sports heroes. Its purpose is to preserve the county's unique sports heritage by identifying and recognizing for future generations Morgan County's rich sports history.

The county boasts a sports legacy unmatched by other counties of its size. The membership includes: All-Americans; outstanding professional athletes, Alabama Sports Hall of Fame inductees; Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame inductees; record setters in football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, wrestling, softball, gymnastics, track, golf, bowling, boxing, and tennis; legendary coaches and officials in all sports; and selected individuals who made significant contributions in a supporting role to sports activities in the county.

The 2026 Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame inductees include: Kenny Cole, Rhea Greenwell, Nathaniel Holmes, Gary Knotts, Mark McClanahan, Billy Don Sharp, Glenn Thompson and Leigh Anna Trimble.

Thank You - The Board gratefully acknowledges the contributions of many who have made the Hall of Fame possible. In particular, we are grateful for your attendance and participation in our 37th Induction Ceremony. Once again, the good people of Morgan County have demonstrated their commitment to the need of maintaining a virtual historical record of the County's sports heroes.

We are especially thankful for all the corporate sponsors of the banquet and the golf tournament. Because of their financial support, the Board has been able to contribute more than \$555,000.00 to the Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama.

Also, we are grateful to those individuals who have nominated more than 283 deserving sports heroes of the County. During the past 37 years, the Board has selected 265 Morgan County individuals for enshrinement into the Hall.

And finally, we thank the dedicated sports fans of Morgan County. The Hall is a team effort! No one can do this alone. The Board has been blessed with an especially large and devoted group of county citizens who have encouraged, inspired, and challenged us to maintain the high standards established by past Board members.

To all, we say, "Thank you!"



Charge to ALL Inductees

Organized sports had its beginning in Morgan County in the early 1900s. First records are found in the Decatur-Albany Daily located in the Morgan County Archives Building located on Bank Street in Decatur. Later records are found in the 1924 yearbook, "Golden Memories," published by Central High School in Albany, Alabama which touched on Decatur. Within its pages, the 1923 football team and its records are listed. One of the players pictured is Raymond "Hot Stuff" Pepper. He played fullback on a team that compiled a record of 9-0. Recorded on page 27 of the 1924 Golden Memories yearbook are these comments; Raymond "Hot Stuff" Pepper, Fullback - For a fullback take a look at Pep. Our triple threat man, he has terrorized many a squad, when with never failing accuracy, he hurled defeat at them, and crowned the Purple and Gold with laurels of victory. We will hear of him in the football halls of fame."

Raymond Pepper was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1989 - 65 years after the sports writer prediction. The eight athletes/coaches inducted into the class of 1989 were the beginning of a tradition that has continued for 36 years. Today, June 20, 2026, the MCSHOF Board will induct the Class of 2026 - which includes six Morgan County athletes, one Morgan County athlete / race car driver, one Morgan County athlete / support. This will bring the total number of inductees to 265.

The members of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame Board have deemed each inductee worthy of induction into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame. You now join the 257 previously inducted members. Because of your participation in athletic competition, you have brought fame and honor to yourself as well as to Morgan County. You have earned the respect and admiration of every citizen in the county, and you have give to them a source of pride as you became a part of the county's sports heritage. The board congratulates you for being officially inducted into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame. We commend you for you the many hours you spent in the constant pursuit of excellence and the positive impact you have made on the lives of so many. Your unwavering commitment to success serves as an example to today's athlete as well as to those in years to come.

To ensure the memory of each inductee's accomplishments endures forever, the board has officially inducted each athlete into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame. We have: honored the inductees with a banquet and induction ceremony, printed a program that contains a record of the inductees accomplishments, placed a plaque in the Morgan County Courthouse, presented to each inductee a beautiful watch to commemorate the honor, published each ones accomplishments in the Decatur Daily, and operated and maintained a web site to promote world wide the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame inductees.

We, the MCSHOF Board, kindly request that each inductee: support and promote the Hall by attending each annual banquet/induction ceremony and assist in the activities that sustain everyday operations/activities.

MCSHOF Board



Hall of Fame Member Photo



First Row Seated L-R:

Don Widner (2025), Hamil Martin (2025), Rod Bass (2025), David Elwell (2025), Christy Ferguson (2025), Tanya Lybarger Childers (2025), Bob Godsey (2025), Marc Lewis (2025).

Second Row Standing L-R:

Jeaniece Slater (2018), Phil Garrison (2006), Ricky Bowling (2012), Earl Morris (1991), David Chairs (2024), Nancy Keenum (2021), Wayne Bowling (2001), Lori Breedlove Bailey (2021), Larry Keenum (2007)

Third Row Standing L-R:

Jere Adcock (2024), Andrea Watkins-Orr (2021), Shondra Fuller (2023), Ricky Allen (2017), Steve Rivers (2008), Larry Peck (2018), Ronald Grantland (2015), Walton Ashwander (2008), Tony Julian (2012).

Congratulation to the following Class who had the most members attend the 2025 Banquet (who are in the picture):

- Class of 2021: Three members

Congratulation to the following member for being the earliest Inductee to the Hall in attendance at the 2025 Banquet:

- Earl Morris, Class of 1991

Congratulation (AGAIN) to the following member who has yet to attend a Banquet (even his own induction):

- Ronnie Norris, Class of 1999



2026 Class Announcement

Morgan Hall of Fame names Class of 2026

By David Elwell

It's been several years since Rhea Greenwell drove a car racing at high speed towards a finish line.

The 84-year-old Decatur native did cross a finish line earlier this week when he was elected to the 2026 Class of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame.

"I was happy just to be nominated, but to be in the Hall of Fame is really special. It's a great honor," Greenwell said.

The Decatur High graduate brings an impressive resume to the Hall of Fame. He starred for the Red Raiders in football, basketball and track. After graduating from the University of Alabama, he returned to Decatur to help with the family business. Stock car racing became a hobby and eventually led to him racing at Daytona International Speedway in 1971.

The 36th Class of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame will be inducted on June 20 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront. Joining Greenwell in the class are Gary Knotts, Nathaniel Holmes, Mark McClanahan, Kenneth Cole, Billy Don Sharp, Leigh Anna McDaniel Trimble and Judge Glenn Thompson.

Knotts graduated from Brewer in 1995 and was drafted that summer by the Florida Marlins. He pitched in the major leagues for four seasons with the Marlins and Detroit Tigers.

"This is awesome. I'm extremely honored to be selected," Knotts said. "This is certainly something that you never expect."

McClanahan made his mark in both basketball and baseball. He was a star guard on Austin's 1973 Class 4A state championship team. McClanahan played baseball at Auburn and pitched for the Tigers' 1976 SEC championship team that advanced to the College World Series.

"I'm excited and proud to represent our state championship basketball team in the Hall of Fame," McClanahan said.

McClanahan will be the fourth member of that Austin team to be inducted. He joins Billy "Dog" Sandifer, Marvin Sales and Rickie Stukes.

Holmes was one of the first Blacks to play football and basketball at Decatur High in 1967. The star running back was also the first Black to play football at the University of Tennessee at Martin, where he received All-American honors.



2026 Class Announcement

“It’s been a long time since I played sports in Decatur,” Holmes said. “It’s really special to be honored by the place where it all started for me.”

Cole anchored the Decatur Red Raider defense in the mid-1970s. The nose guard was a Super All-State selection in 1976. Cole played linebacker in college at Vanderbilt.

Sharp played center on Priceville’s 1965 state championship basketball team.

Trimble starred on the 1994 Austin girls basketball team that advanced to the Class 6A state finals. She played in college at Northwest Shoals and North Alabama.

Thompson is well known in Morgan County for his career as a lawyer and then a judge. He did play football and basketball at what was then Morgan County High School before walking on for one season of football at the University of Alabama. Thompson has been a major contributor for many years to the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame as a board member.



Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 2026

 Kenny Cole	 Rhea Greenwell	 Nathaniel Holmes	 Gary Knotts
 Mark McClanahan	 Billy Don Sharp	 Glenn Thompson	 Leigh Anna Trimble



2026 Class Announcement

Here's a capsule look at the Class of 2026:

- **Kenny Cole**, 66, received Super All-State honors in 1976 playing nose guard for Decatur Red Raiders. That season he recorded 116 tackles, nine quarterback sacks and six fumble recoveries. He went on to play linebacker in college at Vanderbilt where he received SEC All-Academic honors.
- **Rhea Greenwell**, 85, starred in football, basketball and track at Decatur High. In his senior season in 1957, Greenwell's football skills earned him All-State and honorable mention All-American selections. From 1965-1971, Greenwell enjoyed a successful stock car racing career that included competing at Daytona International Speedway.
- **Nathaniel Holmes**, 74, was one of the first Blacks to play football and basketball at Decatur High in 1967. The star running back then became the first Black to play at Tennessee-Martin. Holmes earned conference and All-American honors at UTM. In 1988 he was inducted into the UTM Sports Hall of Fame.
- **Gary Knotts**, 48, began his professional baseball career journey after being drafted in the 11th round of the 1995 MLB draft. The Brewer graduate made his major league debut in 2001 with the Marlins. In 2003, he was traded to the Detroit Tigers. He played four seasons in the MLB before injuries ended his career.
- **Mark McClanahan**, 71, played on a state championship basketball team at Austin in 1973 and on a Southeastern Conference championship baseball team at Auburn in 1976. He was a point guard for the Black Bears and a pitcher for the Tigers, who advanced to the College World Series.
- **Billy Don Sharp**, 77, was the starting center on Priceville's 1965 state championship basketball team that beat Lineville 40-39 for the Class 2A state championship. Sharp played in college at Calhoun and Saint Bernard. He went on to a long career as a teacher and coach.
- **Glenn Thompson**, 73, first made his mark playing football and basketball at Morgan County High School. He was a walk-on tight end for one season at Alabama before deciding to devote his time to prepare for his eventual career as a lawyer and judge. He's spent nearly 50 years as a member of the film crew for Hartselle High football.
- **Leigh Anna Trimble**, 49, the Austin graduate helped spark the 1994 Black Bears girls to the Class 6A girls basketball state championship game. She was a first-team All-State selection after earning MVP honors at the Northwest Regional. Trimble played in college at Northwest Shoals and North Alabama.



2026 Class Highlights



Kenny Cole - The Decatur High great got his first taste of football when he moved to the River City before his freshman year in 1973. Cole quickly found a home in the middle of the Red Raider defense at nose guard for Hall of Fame coach Earl Webb. His work ethic on and off the field made Cole a team leader. In his senior season, Cole was a team captain and earned All-State, Super All-State and All-American honors. He continued his football career at Vanderbilt, where he earned All-Academic SEC honors. Cole graduated from Vanderbilt Law School in 1984 and began a distinguished law career.



Rhea Greenwell - The 1958 Decatur High graduate starred in football, basketball and track and field for the Red Raiders. In 1957, Greenwell was an All-State and All-American football selection. After graduating from the University of Alabama, Greenwell found a new avenue for competition with stock car racing. After finding his way competing on small tracks in the area, Greenwell advanced to the NASCAR Late Model Sportsman division while competing against legends like Red Farmer, Darrell Waltrip and Bobby Allison. In 1971, he finished third in the nation and drove his Ford in a race at Daytona International Speedway.



Nathaniel Holmes - The Decatur High trailblazer was one of the first Blacks to play football, basketball and compete in track for the Red Raiders. Holmes continued his football career as one of the first Blacks to play at the University of Tennessee-Martin. He is regarded as one of the top running backs in school history and was named to the 1971 NAIA All-American team. Holmes rushed for 2,005 yards in his career, including 1,400 yards and 14 touchdowns in his last two seasons. After trying to continue his career in the NFL, Holmes returned to Martin where he enjoyed an over 50-year career as a coach, teacher and administrator.



2026 Class Highlights



Gary Knotts - The 1995 Brewer graduate starred in two sports in high school. Knotts was named MVP of the Morgan County Tournament after leading the Patriots to the 1995 basketball championship. College coaches and pro scouts flocked to Brewer to watch Knotts pitch in his senior season. The Florida Marlins drafted him in the 11th round in 1995. Knotts began his pro career in 1996 and made his major league debut in 2001. After two seasons with the Marlins, Knotts was traded to the Detroit Tigers. Arm injuries curtailed his promising career after four seasons with a 13-16 major league record.



Marc McClanahan - Championships highlighted McClanahan's career as a basketball player at Austin and then a baseball player at Auburn. He was a starting forward on Austin's 1973 Class 4A state championship team that went 26-4 with the losses by a combined total of six points. McClanahan enjoyed a dominating baseball career as a youth league and high school pitcher. In 1976, he was an ace reliever for the Auburn Tigers. He was the winning pitcher in a win over Mississippi State that advanced Auburn to the SEC title series. The Tigers beat Kentucky for the SEC crown and eventually advanced to the 1976 College World Series.



Billy Don Sharp - In 1965 when Priceville won the Class 2A basketball state championship with a 40-39 win over Lineville, Sharp had key plays on both ends of the court. The junior hit a free throw to give the Bulldogs their final point of the game after trailing by 16. Sharp's blocked shot in the final seconds made that point total hold up for the school's fourth state championship in 15 years. In his senior season at Priceville, Sharp led the Bulldogs in scoring with a 16.2 point average and earned All-District and state All-Star game honors. After college at Calhoun and Saint Bernard, Sharp embarked on a 34-year teaching and coaching career.



2026 Class Highlights



Glenn Thompson - The 1970 Morgan County High graduate has been a fixture at Hartselle football games since he was a child watching the Tigers play at Sherrill Stadium. Thompson was a star receiver and defensive end for the Tigers from 1967-1969. He later walked on at Alabama and played one season for the Crimson Tide. For the last 46 years Thompson has been behind the scenes for Hartselle football filming games and providing sideline communications for the coaching staff. Since 1989, Thompson has served as a valuable member of the board for the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame.



Leigh Anna Trimble - As a freshman at Austin in 1990, Trimble made her presence known on the basketball floor when she became a starter for the girls varsity basketball team. The Black Bears won just eight games in her freshman season. In her senior season, Austin (25-5) played in the Class 6A state championship game. Trimble averaged 15 points and six assists while earning All-State honors. She was also named the MVP of the Class 6A Northwest Regional. Trimble played in college at Northwest Shoals and North Alabama. In 1996, she starred on Northwest's state championship team while averaging 20 points a game.



2026 Class Resumes

Kenny Cole

Honoring a Red Raider football great

By David Elwell

For much of Kenny Cole's young life, he was an Army brat moving around from place to place following the military career of his father.

When his father, Kenneth Cole, decided to retire from the military, he and his wife Evelyn decided to settle in their home state of Alabama. That brought them to Decatur in 1973.

"I had three older sisters, who never went to just one school while they were in high school," Cole said. "I was fortunate to get to spend all four years of high school at Decatur."

Cole's time at Decatur High was marked by academic and athletic success. He was a valedictorian in the Decatur High Class of 1977. His football skills earned him All-State and All-American honors. He continued his football career at Vanderbilt and earned a law degree from the prestigious university in Nashville.

"My years in Decatur probably had the greatest impact on my life," Cole said. "I actually only lived in Decatur the four years I was in high school, but I still consider it my hometown. It still has a special place in my heart."

The 1970s were a grand time for athletic success at Decatur High thanks to two Hall of Fame coaches who shared the first name Earl. In 1970, Earl Morris coached the boys basketball team to a state crown. In 1971, Earl Webb coached the football team to a state championship.

In 1973 when the Cole family moved to Decatur, the Red Raiders' state championship success was still being celebrated. The community was hungry for the next state championship.

"That summer after we moved to Decatur, Dad met with Coach Webb and told him he had a son who wanted to play football," Cole said. "Coach Webb told him to send me up there for the summer workouts. I was actually part of the football team before I even started school. I also made a lot of new friends that summer. That made it a lot easier to start at a new school."

Cole found his spot on the football field on defense directly across from the center at the nose guard position. It was perfect place for Cole to use his size (6-foot-1, 190 pounds), strength and quickness to disrupt the offensive attack, which in those days was predominately running the football.

"Kenny was just a special player," said Bryce McCreless, who played defensive tackle for the Red Raiders. "Before each game, he would say 'Meet you at the quarterback' and we would. He could really blow up the offense."





2026 Class Resumes

"I remember when Kenny got his starting spot. He was a sophomore. Somebody got injured against Scottsboro and Kenny came into the game. He did so well that he stayed in the starting lineup. That was when it was rare for a sophomore to play any on the varsity."

After a 5-5 season in 1974, expectations were high in 1975 for the Red Raiders with a veteran defense led by Cole, now a junior.

"I was the backup center for three years and had to go against Kenny every day in practice," said Chuck Thompson. "That meant I was the recipient of his forearm every day for three years. He was a hard worker who refused to lose."

Cole's work ethic was legendary. After a hard day of practice that ended with the team running sprints, Cole would move to the track for more running while most of his teammates headed to the locker room and prepared to go home.

"My Dad told me that after practice, if I couldn't look at myself in the mirror and say I got better that day, that I needed to do something extra to get better," Cole said.

While many of his teammates had taken showers and were headed to the parking lot, they could see Cole still on the track. On many days some teammates would join him in the trips around the track."

"I might have run with him a few times, but I usually had done all the running I wanted to do that day on the practice field," McCreless said. "He was just a determined person who was built a little different from the rest of us."

Cole said the laps around the track really did make him a better player. It helped his endurance.

"Those laps paid off in the fourth quarter," Cole said. "I was still going 100 percent."

The 1975 Red Raiders went 7-2-1. The defense allowed just 98 points. The two losses were by a total of 13 points. That was enough to keep Decatur out of the playoffs that season.

Missing the playoffs in 1975 helped serve as an incentive for the 1976 team in Cole's senior season.

"Not many people expected us to be good our senior season," offensive lineman Mike Plemons said. "The guys before us were supposed to be the team. We were not a big team, but we played hard and Kenny was our leader."

Cole was known for being easy going off the field, but his personality changed in the locker room before a game.

"Kenny would get all excited trying to pump everybody up," said offensive lineman Tim Hofman. "That worked for a lot of the guys, but some guys had rather wait until the game actually started to get excited. They would hide in the bathroom to get away from him."

The 1976 Decatur season opened with a road win at Bradshaw, 20-6, and a home opening victory over Athens, 14-8. The third game was a region battle in Huntsville vs. Grissom. It was a scoreless battle until Decatur's Stanley Thompson returned a punt 79 yards for a touchdown with 22 seconds left for a 7-0 victory.

Old rival Hartselle visited Ogle Stadium the next week. It was expected to be a close battle. Decatur had won the season before 7-0 in overtime. The 1976 game would also be an overtime contest. This time it was Hartselle winning 7-6. Decatur lost six fumbles and had a pass intercepted.

"I think that loss made us more determined," Cole said. "We knew we were a better team than that."



2026 Class Resumes

The Red Raiders bounced back to win their next six games to take the Class 4A, Region 11 championship. The defense allowed just 42 points in the 10 regular season games. There were four shutouts. Athens' eight points was the most allowed in any of the regular season games.

One of the most impressive performances was in the region-clinching 21-0 victory over Johnson. The Jaguars were stonewalled to zero yards rushing. The effort brought praise from Earl Webb.

"I am really proud of this defense," the head coach said. "I feel we can put them on the field with any team in the state and represent Decatur High proudly."

The region championship gave the Red Raiders a first-round bye in the state playoffs. The second-round opponent turned out to be rival Butler. The Rebels shocked the Red Raiders with two quick touchdowns to take a 14-0 advantage in the game played in Huntsville.

Decatur cut the lead to 14-7 on a Darnell Shackelford touchdown run with 54 seconds left in the first half. The Red Raiders took the ball first in the second half and marched 63 yards in 13 plays to tie the contest at 14-14. Decatur would score the game-winning touchdown with 1:14 left for the 21-14 victory.

The next challenge for Decatur was a semifinal contest at home vs. defending state champion Mountain Brook. The Spartans entered the game on a 25-game winning streak. Their offense featured one of the top running backs in the country in Major Ogilvie, who had rushed for 1,897 yards and 24 touchdowns.

Decatur's offense was led by junior quarterback Benny Perrin. Ogilvie and Perrin would later become teammates at Alabama and play on national championship teams in 1978 and 1979.

The showdown at Ogle Stadium on the Friday night after Thanksgiving was played on a muddy field.

"I remember that on the first play of the game Mountain Brook had the ball," Cole said. "The call was for the defensive line to shift together one way. Ogilvie got the ball and I got a clean shot at him.

"I hit him under his chin and drove him backwards into the mud. "I told him, 'It's going to be like this all night long.'"

Unfortunately, it didn't quite work out as planned. Ogilvie rushed for 240 yards with two touchdowns for 50 and 56 yards. One of those TD runs came late in the first half.

"It seemed like Mountain Brook had all the momentum after that run," McCreeless said. "Any time I watch a game on TV and see a team score late in the first half, I think of our game with Mountain Brook."

Decatur actually took the lead back at 20-17 in the third quarter on a 63-yard run by Stanley Thompson. Mountain Brook went ahead 24-20 in the fourth quarter, but Decatur still had a chance late to win the contest.

The Red Raiders had first down at the Mountain Brook 2 with 1:10 left to play. Four plays failed to cross the goal line.

"I truly believed we were going to win that game," Cole said. "It was a heck of a game between two great teams. I'll never forget it."

The sting of the loss got even deeper the next week when Mountain Brook thumped Murphy, 52-26, in the Class 4A state championship game.



2026 Class Resumes

Cole's numbers in his senior season totaled 47 tackles, 69 assisted tackles, nine sacks and six caused fumbles. Accolades followed with All-State selections by both the Birmingham News and Post-Herald. He earned a Super All-State selection and All-American honorable mention.

"Kenny Cole had all the intangibles that any football coach would look for in a player," said Steve Rivers who was a young assistant coach for the 1976 Red Raiders. "Kenny was a favorite of all the coaches because he wanted to be the best at everything he did. He just had that 'it' factor that made him a really great player."

The football career for Cole continued in college at Vanderbilt with the Commodores. A position change moved him from nose guard in high school to linebacker in college.

"Playing college football got me thinking that maybe I could play in the NFL one day," Cole said.

Cole's aggressive warm-up routine followed him to Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt would warm up and then head back to the locker room before hitting the field again shortly before kickoff.

"There was one game where we were back in the locker room and one of my friends noticed my helmet was cracked," Cole said.

The cracked helmet was saved. Now it's a lamp on Cole's desk at his law office.

Following his sophomore season, Cole was named to the SEC All-Academic team. Later that year a severe back injury while working out brought his football career to an end.

"I went to Vandy to major in English and become a high school football coach," Cole said. "After I got there I decided to go to law school. Vanderbilt Law School opened a lot of doors for me"

Cole's law career began with a prestigious corporate firm in Houston. After a few years, Cole decided to switch to the other side of the table to represent clients in litigation against companies like the ones he had represented.

"When I played at Vanderbilt, we were always the underdogs of the SEC," Cole said. "You could tell it in the fourth quarter against a team like Alabama. They would have a third stringer in the game trying to block me to impress Coach Bryant. They came into the game fresh and I was tired from having played 80 snaps.

"That experience taught me to be at my best in the fourth quarter. He gave me the mindset to do what I do today for a living. I have to be ready to compete every day for my clients."



2026 Class Resumes

Rhea Greenwell

From football to stock car racing

By Bruce McLellan

Rhea Greenwell earned selection to the state high school All-Star football game in 1958.

He competed in sports at Decatur High for legendary coaches Joe Jones in basketball and H.L. "Shorty" Ogle in football and track and field. In 1971, he drove in a race at Daytona International Speedway.

But perhaps Greenwell's fondest sports memory as he prepares to enter the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame involved a 500-lap race on Decatur's old $\frac{3}{8}$ -mile dirt track. He won it using his ability to sense track conditions.

"It was more or less durability of the car and the method or the way the driver drove that vehicle," he said of the October 1966 race. "After a while, the track started to rutting."

Greenwell, now 85, said the track, located in the southeast quadrant of where I-65 and I-565 meet today, deteriorated during the race and driving through its turns felt like going over a ribbed washboard.

J. Hugh Looney, 83, of Decatur remembers watching races at the Decatur International Raceway track and said it was composed of red clay.

"This red dirt I'm talking about is like you make a brick out of," Looney said. "It was hard, and when they got it packed down and it was later at night, it would actually squeal a tire it was so hard."

In the 1966 race, Greenwell guided his 1933 Chevrolet sedan on the smoother spots in turns and finished several laps in front of the rest of the field.

"I was going into No. 1 (turn) and this car comes on the inside trying to get around me. He comes up beside me, and I can remember it just as well as if it was yesterday. His front end was jumping off the ground going through the rub boards. Two or three laps (later), he was in the pits tore up."

The skills that helped Greenwell win that dirt-track race helped him become a contender in races on asphalt tracks later in the 1960s. He won twice in a three-race span at Huntsville Speedway in 1968 driving a 1964 Ford Fairlane. In 1971 he finished runner-up in Alabama in the season-long NASCAR late-model sportsman points race and was third nationally.





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Competing in NASCAR events throughout the South, he became friends with Hueytown-based drivers Red Farmer, Bobby Allison, Donnie Allison and Neil Bonnett, who were part of the Alabama Gang.

"We would run Huntsville on Thursday night, Birmingham on Friday night and Montgomery Saturday night," Greenwell said. "And if there were any races Sunday somewhere, we'd go to them."

The pinnacle of Greenwell's racing career came in February 1971, when he competed at Daytona in the late-model sportsman series, a step below the top Grand National division, which was for newer model cars. He qualified with a speed of 150.837 mph for the 36th position in a 44-car field for the Permatex 300 at the famed 2.5-mile tri-oval with turns banked at 31 degrees.

"The first lap I ever made around that track more or less was wide open," he said. "You don't notice the banking. You're running so fast that when you come off (turn) No. 2 and you look down there, turn 3 is way down yonder. And then you're there before you realize it."

A broken transmission knocked Greenwell's car out after 53 laps, and he finished 33rd in the race won by Farmer. Among the drivers in front of Greenwell were Darrell Waltrip in 28th and Bobby Allison in 22nd. Harry Gant was one spot behind Greenwell, who said he wasn't intimidated by the track's reputation.

"I was just glad to be there," he said. "I didn't have any fears or any anxieties about doing it."

Looney said he remembers that other drivers had to be cautious trying to pass Greenwell.

"He was always aggressive," Looney said. "He would not back off. If you pulled out on him, you were going to get run over."

Greenwell was a unique competitor who excelled in high school sports that relied on the human body as well as the sport of auto racing that involved controlling an external force. But he possessed traits that benefited him in all of his sports: toughness, a desire to win and strength.

He developed some of those skills at his family's rock crushing business at the Trinity quarry still operated today by Vulcan Materials. He worked at the quarry in high school.

"I wanted a job that paid the most," he said. "They had power shovels back then that you operated with levers. You had pedals that would control your bucket coming up and down and then you had these levers that would cause it to go out or come in."

It required human force to operate the controls. The job gave him a workout in an era when athletes didn't train year round.

"You don't realize it's building that upper body strength," Greenwell said. "You may not be sitting there working out with weights, but you're sitting there working your arms and your legs and everything all day long. It just really improved my overall body strength."

His parents, Vernie and Mary Kathryn Greenwell, had both played basketball in Boston, Kentucky, where Rhea was born before the family moved to Alabama. He always loved sports. As a seventh-grader, he came to a meeting for students interested in joining the Decatur Red Raider football program.

"I went down there and of course I was the littlest," Greenwell said. "Coach Ogle wanted to know what I was doing down there, and I said well I want to play football."



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"He said, 'Well, son, you're going to have to eat some more beans and rice before you can play junior ball.' So I had to try again a year or two later."

Greenwell eventually joined the junior varsity and later was an end on both offense and defense for the varsity. He became a standout player as a senior.

The Decatur Daily wrote of a 20-13 over Tuscumbia's Deshler High in 1957: "End Rhea Greenwell, who snagged three passes on one Raider drive that didn't hit pay dirt, was perhaps the game's defensive stickout, too. He made a couple of tackles on wide Tuscumbia sweeps that looked like they were going for the distance."

In another game his senior season, Greenwell caught six passes from quarterback Hugh Ogle – the coach's son – in a 19-13 victory over Florence's Coffee High.

Greenwell said he was tall and lanky as a high school player at 6-foot-2 and about 160 pounds. But the grit required by the sport appealed to him.

"I just loved contact," he said. "Tommy Wright was a real good friend of mine and played ball too. He and I just kind of set the tone for the team as far as toughness and meanness."

At the end of his senior season, Greenwell was named to the North All-Star team on a line that included Tuscaloosa's Billy Neighbors, who became captain of coach "Bear" Bryant's first national championship team at Alabama.

Greenwell also played basketball, and in January 1958 scored 12 points in a victory over Priceville for the Decatur team coached by Jones, who had already coached Austinville High to a state championship and would later win two more at Austin High. He competed in sprints, relays, the high jump and long jump during track and field season.

The North-South All-Star game in August 1958 was Greenwell's last football game, but his interest in auto racing was already starting to develop

"When I was a senior in high school, my dad bought me a '57 Chevrolet and then I proceeded to take it apart from one end to the other half a dozen times and put different camshafts in it and different pistons and different carburetion and everything."

Greenwell became a member of the Road Rebels car club in the late 1950s and got an introduction to driving in races at Jake's Dragstrip in Moulton. As a student at Alabama, where he earned a mechanical engineering degree, Greenwell often spent free time watching auto races in Midfield and at the Alabama State Fairgrounds in Birmingham.

Greenwell discovered that he wanted to be more than a spectator.

"I just wanted to race," he said. "I just love competition."

The strength developed working at the rock quarry became an asset in racing. Steering through fast turns was more physically demanding in the 1960s than it is now.

"In the old days, you had to manhandle the car," Greenwell said. "They didn't have power steering. You didn't have power brakes."

He bought a go-kart and raced it in the Alberta City community east of Tuscaloosa. He later traded the go-kart for a 1934 Chevrolet Coupe and raced it in Alberta City.



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"I took it out there to the drag races and won top eliminator with it the first time I ever raced a car," he said.

The coupe's rear end was welded to an axle and he learned that wasn't a good setup for racing on a round track.

"When I got back from college, I tried that car down at the Muscle Shoals (track)," he said. "Not knowing anything about racing or anything, you had to have some suspension under it. I took it down there the first night, and with the axle welded to the frame it broke loose so I couldn't do anything with it."

That led Greenwell to buy the 1933 sedan, which he drove successfully in modified races. He followed that by competing in the late-model sportsman division. After his successful 1971 season, he returned to Daytona in February 1972 anticipating another good year.

But while Greenwell was in Daytona, his father died in Decatur. Greenwell returned home.

"I had to quit racing and start working, tending to the family businesses," he said.

Frances Greenwell, his wife of more than 52 years, said there was a sense of relief when he quit racing a year before they married.

"I hated he had to, but it's a dangerous sport," she said.

Greenwell said that if the need to take over the family business had not forced him to end his racing career, he may have enjoyed more success in the sport.

"Bobby Allison told me once that he thought if I had run the sportsman thing for NASCAR back then I could have been fairly successful because I could feel the car move in my rear end and back before the car ever actually showed any movement. If you were about to spin or something, you could catch the car before you spun."

After his father's death, Greenwell helped run the family stone-crushing and asphalt businesses for another decade before they were sold. Then he had jobs in sales and raising cattle, including an exotic breed called Chianina. More than 30 years ago, he started a company that installed water irrigation systems for lawns and other landscapes.

"My wife and family have always supported me in whatever I decided to do, whether it was farming, the cattle business or racing," Greenwell said.

Although he hasn't competed in an auto race in more than 50 years, Greenwell admits his racing instincts sometime return when he's driving on the road. "You don't want anybody being in front of you. You start out trying to drive normal and next thing you know, here's somebody comes and cuts you off ... and then that ends it."



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Nathaniel Holmes

Honoring a sports trailblazer

By David Elwell

Nathaniel Holmes has been a “first” many times in his life.

He was one of the first Blacks to play football and basketball at Decatur High in 1967.

Holmes was also one of the first Black football players at the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1969. The next season he was the only Black on the team.

After his athletic career ended, Holmes was hired by the Weakley County School System in Martin, Tennessee. He was not the first Black teacher or Black coach hired by the school system. He was just the second.

Following a long coaching career, Holmes was the school system’s first Black assistant principal and later the first Black principal.

“I’m proud to say that I’ve been a ‘first’ many times in my life,” Holmes said. “I’m also proud to say I’m a Decatur High graduate. If I didn’t go to Decatur High, I’m not sure I would have had those opportunities.”

Holmes, 75, is a member of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2026. The induction banquet is June 20 at Decatur’s Cook Museum of Natural Science.

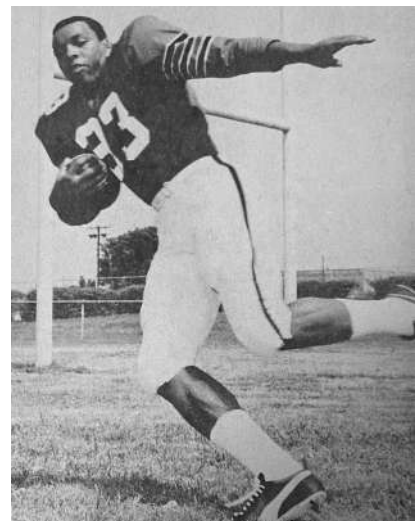
Holmes grew up on Lafayette Street in Northeast Decatur. Claude Stevenson lived across the street. They have been best friends since the day they met.

“Growing up we were like two peas in a pod,” Stevenson said. “We did everything together. We even double-dated together.”

One of the places they went together was Lakeside School, the school for Blacks in segregated Decatur.

“When I was in elementary school my dream was to be a drummer in the Lakeside band,” Holmes said.

The education scene changed a lot during Holmes’ childhood. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that separating children in public schools on the basis of race was unconstitutional. In 1963, a federal court ordered Alabama to integrate its public schools.





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In 1966, Decatur City Schools gave Blacks freedom of choice. That meant Blacks could leave Lakeside for either Decatur or Austin. Since Decatur City Schools provided no transportation, it would be up to the students to provide their own way to school.

In 1967, Earl Webb was hired as the new head football coach at Decatur High. That led to six athletes from Lakeside making the move to Decatur. They were Holmes, Stevenson, Frederick Outlaw, Donnell Parker, Bobby Joe Pride and Rick White.

Actually, Holmes was returning to Decatur to finish high school after attending Nashville Christian Institute in Tennessee. NCI was a primary and secondary school for Blacks supported by the Churches of Christ and had close ties to Lipscomb University.

Several of Holmes' older siblings attended NCI with scholarship support from area Churches of Christ. His brother Tandy later played basketball at Pepperdine University, another Churches of Christ school.

"NCI closed after my sophomore year and I was going to have to finish high school in Decatur," Holmes said. "I was set to finish at Lakeside, but when Claude said he was going to go to Decatur I decided to go with him."

Holmes played for three Hall of Fame coaches at Decatur High: Webb, Earl Morris for basketball and H.L. "Shorty" Ogle for track.

"It was a great experience to be coached by all three of them," Holmes said. "Decatur had great football and basketball programs and we wanted to be a part of it. Everybody at Decatur was good to us. Getting to join the football team in the summer let us make some friends before we started school."

Holmes' first season at Decatur was also his first time to ever play football. He was primarily a backup running back to Pride, who was the team's top player before injuries slowed him down. Pride would go on to star at what is now the University of North Alabama. He was inducted into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame in 2018.

"The only football I had played was at the schoolyard where someone would pick up the ball and everybody else would try to tackle him," Holmes said.

Holmes and Stevenson were the first two Blacks to play basketball at Decatur. In their first River City Rivalry matchup with Austin, Stevenson scored 16 points and Holmes scored 12. They each had 10 rebounds.

"I didn't always agree on everything with Coach Morris, but I learned a lot that helped me become a better coach," Holmes said. "Several years later he told me that everything came so easy for me that I didn't push myself hard enough."

"When I was coaching I had some players like that. That helped me understand Coach Morris even more as a coach than when I played for him."

Holmes was part of a pretty stout 440-relay team for Ogle's track program. Joining Holmes was Stevenson, Pride and John Rice. Pride set the pace on the first leg and Holmes was the anchor.

Decatur went 4-5-1 in Webb's first year as head coach in 1967. Expectations were high for 1968 and a big part of that was Holmes. He was getting bigger, stronger and faster. By the time he played at Tennessee-Martin, Holmes was 5-foot-10, 190 pounds.



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"Nate walked slow and talked slow, but when he got on the football field he was anything but slow," Stevenson said. "He had a body like a bodybuilder, but he never lifted a weight. He was just an outstanding athlete."

Holmes' senior season in 1968 was not a good season for the Red Raiders. They posted a 2-7-1 record. The offense scored just 103 points and 54 of those points came in a 21-0 win over Hartselle and a 34-0 win over Walker.

"It was really disappointing. I wanted to have a great season and be heavily recruited," Holmes said.

Instead the recruiting offers were Jacksonville State and Troy. Tennessee and Kansas State offered him an opportunity to walk on, but that wasn't financially possible.

"I really wanted to go to SMU and be the next Jerry LeVias," Holmes said. "He was my favorite player. LeVias was a pioneer and I wanted to be a pioneer, too."

LeVias (5-9, 177) set the college football world on fire in 1966 with his blazing speed at receiver for SMU. The first Black to play in the Southwest Conference led the Mustangs to their first conference championship in 20 years. LeVias inspired the Mustangs with key touchdowns in wins over rivals Texas, Texas A&M, Baylor and TCU.

Holmes decided to cast his lot with Tennessee-Martin. UTM was a member of the Gulf South Conference along with Jacksonville State, UNA and Troy.

"They recruited Phillip Pisani, my teammate at Decatur," Holmes said. "I thought it would be good to go where I knew somebody."

Holmes was one of seven Blacks in the UTM freshman class. Most of them were from out of state, including Nat Moore from Florida. Moore left after his first year at UTM and eventually became an All-SEC running back for the Florida Gators. He later was a star receiver in the NFL for the Miami Dolphins.

Holmes was the only Black on the 1970 UTM football team. The pioneer was determined to make the best of the situation with head coach Robert Carroll. UTM went a combined 13-17 in Holmes' final three seasons. He rushed for 2,005 yards, including 1,400 yards with 14 touchdowns in his final two seasons.

The rushing numbers still rank Holmes as one of the top running backs in school history. He was named to the 1971 NAIA All-American team. Holmes was named UTM's Most Valuable Back for three seasons and was team co-captain in 1971.

"My last year at UTM I injured an ankle and really didn't have the senior season I wanted," Holmes said. "The Kansas City Chiefs had a scout who visited UTM a lot. That was back when Mike Garrett was a star running back after winning the Heisman Trophy at USC."

"I met Garrett one time when I was visiting my brother in California. He was about my size (5-9, 190) and I thought if he could play in the NFL, I could, too."

Holmes' NFL opportunity came as a free agent signee with the Miami Dolphins. The Dolphins under head coach Don Shula were on their way to becoming an NFL powerhouse. They would win back-to-back Super Bowls in 1972 and 1973. They were stacked at running back with stars like Mercury Morris and Larry Csonka.



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"I think Shula liked what he saw from me," Holmes said, "but it was just impossible to make it with the Dolphins. He tried to get me to play for a minor league team, but I wanted to play in the NFL."

Holmes went to camp with the Houston Oilers and later got a call from a team in the Canadian Football League.

"Pro football just never worked out for me," Holmes said. "I have no regrets."

Holmes' wife, Cathie, is a native of Martin, Tennessee, and it's been his home ever since he left Decatur. After a stint as a graduate assistant coach at UTM, Holmes was hired as a teacher and coach at Martin's Westview High School.

"When you are first hired to be a coach, you coach anything they want you to coach," Holmes said. "I coached football, basketball, softball and track. I enjoyed every minute of it."

Holmes was assistant principal at the high school for eight years. Then he moved to Martin Middle school as principal for 27 years during which the school received numerous honors for academic success. After 43 years, he retired from education in 2018, but became a volunteer coach for football and basketball. One of the star athletes he coached in middle school was future Alabama quarterback Ty Simpson.

"He's a great young man who comes from a great family," Holmes said. "His father (Jason Simpson) is the head football coach at UTM. I know him well."

In the last couple of years, Holmes cut back on his volunteer coaching duties down to just basketball at Westview. It was a big year for varsity teams at Westview. The football team, led by Ty's brother Graham at quarterback, won the state championship. The basketball team fell just short in the state playoff finals.

For the man who had so many "firsts" in his life, Holmes said this basketball season may have been his last.

"It's probably time to stay home and spend more time with my wife," Holmes said.



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Gary Knotts

Brewer hoops and baseball star

By Bruce McLellan

Like a lot of sons, Gary Knotts played catch with his dad. But as the son started to develop as a pitcher, he didn't simply toss the baseball to his dad. He threw it harder and harder.

Eventually, the elder Knotts had to prepare for what had become training sessions at their Priceville home.

"He bought shin guards, he had a chest protector. I think he bought the whole nine yards," Knotts recalled of his late father.

Eventually, the son would start throwing the baseball at more than 90 mph.

"He was never shy to let people know that I wore his shins out," Knotts said. "It got to that point where he's like, 'I'm not going to catch you anymore.'"

"I've got some guys I train that throw that hard, and I don't like catching them either, so I understand."

The ability to throw a baseball fast eventually led Knotts to success as a high school pitcher and a major league career.

Close to 6-foot-4 in height, Knotts, now 49, was a standout basketball player at Brewer, earning the MVP award in the 1995 Morgan County Tournament.

Knotts' athletic journey began when he was in the first grade. Although his father, Gary Knotts Sr., who died in 2013, did not play high school sports, he got his son started at a young age in youth sports.

"He saw that early in me, my athletic ability," the younger Knotts said. "Even though he wasn't necessarily athletic himself, he still enjoyed sports."

Knotts tried multiple sports, including soccer and football.

"I never really got into football, but baseball seemed to be a good fit for me," he said. "I was pretty good at hitting the baseball and throwing it around. So it just kind of stuck."

Ironically, he may have been more passionate about basketball. He spent hours in the family's driveway shooting basketball and never made baseball his only sport.

"Man, I loved shooting hoops, and baseball was one of those things I did when basketball was over," he said. "Basketball, it's more cohesiveness, it's more camaraderie. Your success is dependent on





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other guys playing defense and doing their jobs. You're out there sweating with each other and bumping bodies and bumping heads and getting hurt. I just enjoyed the physicality of it."

Knotts even turned down an invitation to play American Legion baseball between his junior and senior years at Brewer. The team's organizers wanted him to attend games when he wasn't pitching. That

would've been OK with Knotts if he could've played shortstop and got to hit on his pitching off-days like he did at Brewer.

But the American Legion team already had a shortstop, and Knotts didn't want to be a spectator at dozens of baseball games when he wasn't pitching.

"I ended up playing basketball all summer," he said. "We had open gym. I'd much rather spend my time shooting basketball and playing pickup games. That's just the way it was."

That decision benefited the Brewer basketball team and led to what might have been Knotts' most significant sports accomplishment at the school.

Earl Morris, Brewer's basketball coach at the time, remembers his 1994-95 team taking advantage of the offseason to play pickup games in the school gym and improve. The team's hard work continued in the fall under Morris and assistant coach Sam Brown.

"They worked us hard. I just remember coming home and being so exhausted and then having to do my homework," Knotts said.

By the time the Morgan County Tournament arrived in January 1995, Brewer's boys had a 14-9 record and the No. 1 seed for the event. In its 22th year to have a basketball program, Brewer was still looking for its first ever Morgan County Tournament championship.

In the semifinals, Brewer faced a Hartselle team that included several holdover players from a state championship team the previous year. Hartselle also had eliminated Brewer from the county tournament in each of the previous two seasons.

This time it was Brewer coming out on top with a 70-61 win in overtime over the Tigers. Shawn Langford led the Patriots with 19 points. Knotts scored 16.

The win set up a championship game showdown with Danville, ranked No. 5 in Class 3A.

"They were supposed to beat us," Morris said.

Brewer had a different plan. Knotts scored 27 points in the 77-66 victory.

"That whole tournament it seems like we were dominant and could beat anybody," Knotts said. "It was just one of those games where everything was falling.

"I think I probably averaged half that throughout the season. I just wanted to be on the court. I just enjoyed being out there with my buddies. It was a good time."

When his senior basketball season ended and the baseball season began, Knotts wasn't being closely tracked by scouts for professional teams. A right-handed pitcher, Knotts didn't even know how fast he could throw.

"All I knew is that I could throw it by guys when I needed it," Knotts said.

Eventually word got around that Brewer had a pitcher who threw fast. Then in one game a scout recorded Knotts pitches with a radar gun.



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"He said, 'You know how hard you're throwing the ball?' I was like, no. He was like, you're 91, 92," Knotts said. "I said, 'Is that good?' That's how ignorant I was about it."

Knotts finished his senior season at Brewer with a 1.94 earned run average with 83 strikeouts in 65 innings. He also led the team in batting with a .384 average.

Bill Singer, a former major-league pitcher mostly for the Los Angeles Dodgers, lived in Decatur at the time and was a scout for the Florida Marlins. He learned about Knotts and continued scouting him.

"Somebody told him there was a kid out there throwing the ball hard. So when he came out and saw me, that's when everybody started showing up," Knotts recalled. "It was like somebody finds out and next thing you know you got 10 radar guns in the stands that I had never seen before."

After Brewer's season ended, Knotts was selected to play in the Alabama Lions Club All-Star baseball games for graduated high school seniors. Knotts had six strikeouts in three innings in the first round game played in Decatur in May, and interest in him continued to build during the rest of the All-Star series.

In June 1995, the Marlins, encouraged by Singer's scouting reports, selected Knotts in the 11th round of the major-league draft. However, Knotts put the pros on hold to play a season for Northwest Community in Phil Campbell. That ended up being a good decision because he met his future wife, Amanda, there.

"I sat behind him in history class, and we say the rest is history," she said.

They celebrated 27 years of marriage on Jan. 1.

Knotts played one season at Northwest and in May 1996 he signed with the Marlins, who had retained rights to him. He ended up playing professional baseball in the major, minor and independent leagues from then until 2009.

He spent the summer of 1996 in a rookie league and 1997 and '98 in Class A leagues before progressing to Double-A in 1999-2000. He spent time in Triple-A in 2001, and got his first experience in the majors that same year. He pitched six innings over two games for the Marlins before returning to the minors.

Knotts spent more time in the majors in 2002. In 2004, Knotts had his busiest season in the majors. He made 19 starts and 17 relief appearances over 135 innings, with a 7-6 record for the Detroit Tigers.

The career seemed on an upward swing, but Knotts injured both his rotator cuff and labrum during spring training of 2005.

"They didn't give me much of a hope to come back from that," Knotts said. "The doctor said we'll do the best we can and we'll see what happens."

It turned out that the rotator cuff tear was not as severe as expected. Knotts was 28 when the injury occurred and he missed the 2005 and 2006 seasons, meaning he was 30 by the time the 2007 spring training came round.

"When you hit that 30 mark, it's kind of like if you're not established in the big leagues, they don't give you a good shot," Knotts said. "You're going to have to still prove yourself."

He started 2007 in the Independent Atlantic League before the Philadelphia Phillies signed him. He pitched in both Double-A and Triple-A for the Phillies organization. At the end of the season, the Phillies said they wanted him back in 2008 and asked him what he wanted.



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"I said, 'Well, I want a legitimate shot.'"

He thought he performed well enough in the 2008 spring training to make the major-league roster but was sent down to Triple-A just before the season started. That was a double disappointment because not only was he back in the minors, he missed out on being part of a team he knew would be good. The Phillies won the 2008 World Series.

Knotts spent the 2008 season in Triple-A, pitching first in the Phillies' farm system and then in Baltimore's. After pitching in the Atlantic League again in 2009, he ended a professional career that stretched over 14 years.

"It seemed like the time in the big leagues was very fast," he said. "I hadn't quite got established when I got hurt and I didn't really get a shot back at the big leagues after that."

Knotts had several notable moments during the four seasons he spent in the major leagues. His first major-league victory was especially memorable for a player from North Alabama. It came against the Atlanta Braves when he was pitching for the Marlins.

Knotts entered the April 13, 2002, game in Miami in the top of the 13th inning with the score 4-all.

"I was about the last guy in the bullpen. They had pitched everybody," he said. "I had not really established myself as a bullpen guy."

"This was still new for me at the time because I had been a starter my entire career. I had gone to them in spring training and said hey give me a shot at making the team out of the bullpen and that's what I did."

He ended up pitching two innings and didn't allow a run. He struck out Braves catcher Javy Lopez in the top of the 13th inning and got Chipper Jones to hit into a double play to end the top of the 14th. That enabled the Marlins to win 5-4 in the bottom of the 14th on an infield single with the bases loaded and two outs.

Knotts didn't give up a hit and had one strikeout.

"I remember that because it was against the Atlanta Braves," Knotts said. "You had Chipper Jones and Andruw Jones – you had all those guys that were in the (Braves) lineup. So that was one of my good memories."

Another memorable game came in 2003. The Marlins had traded him to the Detroit Tigers before that season. He faced the White Sox on May 24, 2003, in Chicago. He allowed only two hits and two walks while striking out six in 7 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings of a 1-0 Detroit victory.

The final batter Knotts faced in the bottom of the eighth was Frank Thomas, a former Auburn player known as the "Big Hurt." Thomas struck out swinging.

"I just pitched really well," Knotts said. "They interviewed me after the game and I got the pie in the face. That was one of the things you always remember when you pitch well and your teammates do that to you during the interview. That's always a good thing. But shaving cream is not good in the face."

Since 2011, Knotts has owned and operated Integrity Sports Training in Decatur where he trains young softball and baseball players looking for their path to stardom.



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Mark McClanahan

Pride of Austin and Auburn

By David Elwell

The process of completing a jigsaw puzzle requires all the pieces fitting together perfectly to create a finished product.

In Mark McClanahan's athletic career, he was a piece of the puzzle for two different sports teams that each celebrated accomplishments on the championship stage.

McClanahan was a starter on the 1973 Austin basketball team that won the Class 4A state championship under the leadership of Hall of Fame coach Joe Jones.

In 1977, McClanahan used his pitching talents to help the Auburn Tigers baseball team win the SEC championship and advance to the College World Series for just the second time in school history.

On June 20, McClanahan, 71, will be honored with induction into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame.

"I was blessed to play basketball and baseball with a lot of great people," McClanahan said. "I was also associated with a lot of great people who helped me along the way."

The McClanahan family lived on Second Street Southwest, not far from West Decatur Elementary and the Boys & Girls Club on Third Street.

"The Boys Club was a big part of my growing up," McClanahan said. "That's where I learned how to play basketball."

McClanahan still has a team photo of a 10-year-old basketball team from the Boys Clubs. He's standing on the back row directly in front of a kneeling Rickie Stukes. Just a few years later they would pose together in another basketball team photo as state champion of what was then the largest high school classification in Alabama.

The baseball exploits for McClanahan started with games at the complex called Wingfoot Field at what was originally the Goodyear plant on 19th Avenue Southeast.

"There were two fields at Wingfoot with games four days a week and each team played two games a week," McClanahan said. "My dad (Scott) always coached my teams. Since we were always at the field, he got a job that paid \$2 a game to keep score and send in the results to The Decatur Daily. It ended up being me keeping score while my dad was busy talking to other coaches."

The McClanahan father and son combination was difficult to beat, even with Mark usually playing in an older age group.





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"I would average around 15 strikeouts in a six inning game," Mark said. "We were playing Little League and we had a lot of success, but we could never get past the regional tournament because of those great teams in Huntsville."

As McClanahan grew older the games moved to Water Tower Field at Delano Park and Herman Bailey Field behind the fire station on 3rd Street.

"That was a great time to grow up in Decatur," McClanahan said. "If we weren't at the ball field or at the Boys Club, we were together at somebody's house. Everybody was just a short bike ride away."

McClanahan's trip to the varsity level at Austin continued after junior high. In the ninth grade he was a starting pitcher on the varsity baseball team. In the 10th grade, McClanahan and Stukes were on the varsity basketball team.

"We didn't play a lot as sophomores, but we practiced against some big seniors every day," McClanahan. "We also got to learn what it was like to play for Coach Jones. That helped a lot when we got to be starters as juniors."

McClanahan and his friends came along at a great time for basketball in Morgan County. When they were in the eighth grade, Austin won its first basketball state championship in just the school's fourth year of competition. Decatur won a state title in 1970 followed by Hartselle claiming its first ever in 1971.

"Mark and I grew up together playing with Butch Watterson," Stukes said. "Donald Booker and (Billy) Dog Sandifer joined us along the way. We were all seniors together. Marvin Sales was the last piece of the puzzle. He joined us that season as a junior."

The 1972-1973 high school basketball season might have been the greatest ever in Morgan County. There was a new school called Brewer bringing together talent from five small schools with great basketball history. There were hall of fame coaches and players at just about every school.

Jones led a group of coaches who would later become members of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame. The group included Decatur's Earl Morris, Danville's Wayne Bowling, Brewer's Wally Sanders and Hartselle's Tommy Tomlinson.

The list of players who played that season and are in the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame includes, from Austin: Stukes, Sandifer, Sales and McClanahan; Brewer: Gary Winton and Ricky Allen; Hartselle: Gary Orr; West Morgan: Larry Tucker; Danville: Randy Lewis; and Falkville: Randy Nelson.

Brewer and West Morgan joined Austin in advancing to the state tournament. West Morgan's season ended in the Class 2A finals.

One of the highlights of the season was the Morgan County Tournament played at Brewer in its brand new gym that could hold a crowd. In the semifinals, Brewer beat West Morgan, 70-67, and Austin beat Hartselle, 76-46.

The finals between the Patriots and Black Bears had an estimated crowd of 4,500. They saw a back-and-forth battle with Austin up by one after the first quarter, Brewer up seven at halftime and five after three quarters. Austin outscored Brewer 20-7 in the final quarter to win the classic contest 63-53.

"We went to our press defense in the fourth quarter and it paid off," McClanahan said.



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The momentum of the Morgan County Tournament championship had the Black Bears rolling. The only glitch the rest of the way was an overtime loss to West Morgan. The Black Bears finished the season with a 22-4 record.

"We lost four games that season by a total of six points," McClanahan said. "We learned something from each of those losses that helped us later in the playoffs. If we had not had those four losses, I don't think we probably win state."

In 1973, the format to advance to the state tournament had eight regions in each classification. Each region champion advanced to Tuscaloosa to play at what is now Coleman Coliseum.

The Class 4A, Region 8 tournament was played at Flowers Hall on the campus of what is now the University of North Alabama. The finals came down to the River City rivalry of Austin vs. Decatur.

"The first time Austin ever beat Decatur in basketball was in our junior season," McClanahan said. "That was a big deal. When Austin won the state championship in 1969 with Charles Lee Martin and that bunch, they didn't beat Decatur."

The Black Bears' first win over the Red Raiders came in Florence in the consolation game of the Tennessee Valley Conference Tournament.

"The week after that win over Decatur we had a regular season game with them at Calhoun," McClanahan said. "I remember the Decatur fans holding up signs that said 'Never again.' They beat us pretty bad that night."

One season later with the region championship and a trip to state on the line, it was the Black Bears who celebrated with a 45-32 victory in front of a crowd of 4,300.

"They're too little to win in this region and go to the state tournament," Jones told the Decatur Daily on the night of the region championship. "I didn't want to tell them. They might have believed me."

Jones was correct about Austin's size. The Black Bears were not big. Sandifer was the tallest player at 6-foot-2, but his leaping ability was more like that of a player several inches taller. What Austin did have going for it was the ability to play as a cohesive unit.

"This was back before basketball got rough," McClanahan said. "It wasn't about being the biggest or strongest. We knew how to play basketball because we were coached so well by Coach Jones."

"We had no super player and no super size. We were just good athletes who knew the fundamentals of the game. We were not afraid to be down because we knew that we would find a way to win."

The players were also great friends. Before home games, the players had a pre-game ritual of a meal at C.F. Penn Hamburgers.

"The one thing we all did well was play together," Stukes said.

In 1973 the state tournament was an eight-team event and it took three wins to claim the state championship trophy. Up first for the Black Bears was Carver of Birmingham, considered by many to be the tournament favorite.

Carver led 29-26 at halftime and 52-42 after three quarters, but Austin found a way to win. The Black Bears rallied to outscore the Rams 26-13 in the fourth for the 68-67 victory. Stukes hit a shot at the buzzer for the winning basket. He finished with a game-high 28 points.



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"I had the ball down on the baseline looking to pass to anybody that was open," Stukes said. "Nobody was open and time was running out. I couldn't even see the goal, but I had to shoot and somehow it went in."

While Stukes was the hero of the game, McClanahan's defensive effort on Carver star Eddie Cauthen did not go unnoticed. Cauthen scored well below his average with just 13 points while hitting just 5 of 18 field goal attempts.

"We all had to play a role and your role could change from game to game," McClanahan said. "My role for that game was to slow down their top player."

Next up for Austin was Talladega and its All-State center Pepto Bolden, who went on to star at Auburn. Bolden was supposed to give Talladega an advantage inside, but it turned out the advantage inside went to Austin with Sandifer. He set a state record with 43 points to go with 22 rebounds in the 76-59 Austin victory.

"I'm sure some people wondered how we would play after an emotional win in the first game," Stukes said. "Dog carried us that night."

Austin's opponent in the Saturday night game for the state championship was Wenonah of Birmingham. The Dragons led 33-29 at halftime and 51-45 after three quarters. The lead ballooned to 59-51 early in the fourth quarter.

Then it was time for the team that thrived on finding a way to win to deliver. Stukes and Sales led a rally that tied the game at 63-63 at the end of regulation and then gave the Black Bears a 69-66 overtime victory.

"This is the gutsiest bunch of kids I've ever had and that's the only way you can explain it," Jones said. "They kept falling behind, but they never once showed a defeated attitude. Instead they just played that much better."

Stukes with 24 points and Sandifer with 22 led the Austin scoring. Both were all-tournament selections. McClanahan scored five points, but again it was his defensive effort that stood out. He held Wenonah star David Desmond to just 12 points.

"We were a tight group that went through a lot that season," McClanahan said. "Our goal was to win three tournaments — the TVC (Tennessee Valley Conference), the (Morgan) County and state and we did it. That was special."

As soon as basketball season ended, McClanahan was ready to jump into the baseball season. It was the sport that would lead to a college career.

"I pitched a lot in Little League and the older I got the better I seemed to get," McClanahan said. "In the 10th grade I started getting some notoriety after I beat Lee with just three hits in seven innings. They were a great team with Condredge Holloway and Randy Davidson. They won the state championship that year with just two losses."

The East-West Lions Club All-Star games that culminated with the top high school stars in the state playing in Birmingham was a huge deal in the 1970s. Lots of college coaches and pro scouts would attend. It was an event usually for seniors, but top underclassmen would sometimes be invited. McClanahan was invited as a sophomore and junior.



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"I went 8-1 in my junior year and got invited back to Birmingham," McClanahan said. "Then the Cincinnati Reds had a camp in Decatur for 10th and 11th graders and I went. More people started noticing."

McClanahan signed with Auburn and became a part of the program's all-time best pitching staffs. In 1976, the Tigers advanced to the College World Series behind a pitching staff led by Robert Hudson, Terry Leach and Joe Beckwith. Leach and Beckwith would eventually pitch in the major leagues.

"It was a heck of a pitching staff. Going into the College World Series we had the second best earned run average in the country," McClanahan said. "My role was as a reliever."

"I loved coming into games after Beckwith and Leach. My pitching style was different from them. I threw sidearm and it was difficult for hitters to adjust after facing them."

McClanahan went 4-0 that season with a 2.16 ERA. In 41 2/3 innings he struck out 33 and gave up just 10 earned runs. He pitched in 18 games, 17 in relief and one as a starter. The one start was a win at Mississippi State that put the Tigers in the SEC championship series.

The SEC baseball championship format was different in 1976 than it is today. There were eight schools in the SEC. They were split into two four-team divisions. The division winners played a best two-out-of-three playoff series for the championship and a berth in the national playoffs.

Auburn beat Kentucky for the SEC championship and won the regional in Tallahassee, Florida, to advance to the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska. Auburn lost the first game to Clemson, 9-4, and was eliminated with a 9-8 loss to Maine the next day.

Unfortunately for McClanahan, he was just a spectator for the playoffs. The week after the win over Mississippi State, he injured his arm in a game against Birmingham-Southern. Eventually he had to have surgery and then a second surgery.

"I just never could get back to where I was," McClanahan said. "After I got my degree, I was ready to move on. I have no regrets that I gave it up. I just regret that I was not as good in college as I could have been."

For a kid who grew up learning how to play basketball at the Boys Club and how to play baseball at Wingfoot Field, it was a pretty amazing career.



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Billy Don Sharp

Honoring a Bulldog basketball great

By David Elwell

When Billy Don Sharp was 7 years old, he asked his father for a basketball goal on their farm in Priceville.

A year later it became a reality.

Sharp then asked his father for another basketball goal so he and his friends could play full-court.

"To my surprise, he put up another goal and that made it really good," Sharp said. "In the evenings I had buddies coming from across the fields and pastures to play. It was just a dirt court and the ball would get pretty grimy, but we loved it."

On many days at that dirt court in Priceville, Sharp would step off the 15 feet from the goal to where the free throw line should be. He would take a stick and scratch out the line in the packed dirt. Then he would begin the process of shooting free throws.

"I took a lot of pride in shooting free throws," Sharp said. "They didn't keep up with stats back when I played like they do now. I probably shot about 80 percent from the free throw line."

The biggest free throw of his life came in the 1965 Class AA state championship game. A Sharp free throw produced what turned out to be the game-winning point in the Bulldogs' 40-39 victory over Lineville.

While Sharp's free throw is long remembered, it was the 6-foot-4 junior center's blocked shot in the closing seconds that kept Lineville from possibly winning the game.

The 1965 state championship was Priceville's fourth in 15 seasons. The Bulldogs previously won championships in 1951, 1955 and 1961.

It was an amazing time for basketball success in Morgan County. Union Hill started it off with a state championship in 1950. Austinville won championships in 1953, 1957, 1958 and 1959. Danville brought home state championships in 1962 and 1963. That's 11 state championships for one county and four different schools in 15 years.

"If you look at the names on the rosters for those state championship teams at Priceville, you will see many of the same last names," Sharp said. "You see last names like Clark, Maples and Sharp. It was a lot of brothers and cousins all mixed together. I remember sitting in the stands at Foster Auditorium in Tuscaloosa watching my brother John play on the 1961 team."

Athletics at Priceville 60 years ago was vastly different from what it is today. There were no sports for girls. The school had no football team. Basketball was king. The start of school meant the





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beginning of preseason workouts. Attending games was a way to bring a proud community together as one.

"It got to the point that the expectations at Priceville were that to have a good season you had to make it to Tuscaloosa," Sharp said. "Winning a state championship meant it was a great season."

Behind most great teams there is a great coach. The 1964-1965 Bulldogs had one in Herman Myers, who was inducted into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame in 1994. Myers had coached at Danville and Hartselle before moving to Priceville to be principal. After a couple of years in that position, he moved back into coaching.

"I wished he had been my basketball coach when I was in the seventh grade," Sharp said. "I would have been a much better player. He could mold a group of guys into a basketball team like he wanted. That was a team that played hard."

"Whatever he told me to do, I did. We never questioned him. We were scared of him, but we respected him."

Myers served in the Marines in World War II. He was known for his disciplined pre-season workout program. There were weeks of physical conditioning before the players ever touched a basketball.

"It was tough. There was a lot of running," said John Williams, who also played for Myers at Priceville. "He would pick his team based on how hard you worked."

"One day we were running in our small gym. One of the guys ran so hard he hit the wall with his head and knocked himself out. He's lying on the floor, out cold. Myers stood over him and said 'This man has made the team.' That's how tough it was."

Priceville opened the season with 12 straight wins before falling to rival Cotaco, 64-60. In the Decatur Invitational, Priceville squared off with one of the biggest schools in the state in Lee of Montgomery. The Bulldogs won 46-41. The finals had host Decatur winning 71-65.

The Bulldogs bounced back with a 73-56 win over Athens to push the record to 19-2. Priceville averaged 71.4 points a game with an average winning margin of 18.3 points.

Going into the Morgan County Tournament, the headline in the Decatur Daily asked "Who can stop the mighty Bulldogs of Priceville?"

Priceville opened the tournament by edging host Hartselle, 74-72, on Bobby Landers' basket with 13 seconds left to play. The Bulldogs got revenge vs. Cotaco in the semifinals with a 74-64 victory.

That set the stage for the championship game between Priceville and Danville, coached by Wayne Bowling. Back in the day when there were just two classifications, the Bulldogs were ranked No. 1 in Class AA. The Hawks were No. 1 in Class A. The night at Hartselle's Petty Center belonged to Bowling's Hawks with a 76-70 victory.

"We probably played our worst game that night," Sharp said. "We really wanted that county championship."

It would have been Priceville's first county tournament championship since 1955. Instead it was Danville's first since 1954 when Myers was the Hawks' coach.

The county tournament finals had been delayed by winter weather from Saturday, Jan. 31 to the following Tuesday on Feb. 3. Ironically, the teams had a rematch scheduled for that Friday, Feb. 6.



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"It was our home game, but because they expected a big crowd and our gym was so small, they moved the game to Hartselle," Sharp said. "There was no way we were going to lose this time."

Priceville won 79-72 on what would be the start of an undefeated streak that led to the state championship. In those days the state tournament was an eight-team affair with three wins needed to take home the state championship trophy.

The Bulldogs eased past Douglas, 66-57, and Lexington, 57-40, to set up the finals with Lineville. It was a third straight state tournament for Lineville. The Aggies played in the finals in 1963 and lost in the semifinals in 1964.

"They were a really good team and we got behind big and were down {16 points) at halftime," Sharp said. "We put the defense on them in the second half and they scored like six points."

According to Sharp, the last few minutes of the game was chaos with missed shots, turnovers and even the ball being accidentally kicked into the upper section of Foster Auditorium.

"There was about two minutes left when I got fouled trying to shoot," Sharp said. "We were up 39-37. It was a 1-and-1 and the first one was the most important. I don't remember being nervous and I made it with no problem. Because of that it doesn't make sense that I missed the second one."

Sharp said there was about 1:30 left on the clock and he expected more scoring in the final 90 seconds. Lineville did score to make it 40-39.

"They got the ball back with just a few seconds left. That's when I got the block," Sharp said. "It was against their big man. It was a clean block with no controversy."

Senior captain Kenny Clark was named the tournament MVP after scoring a game-high 15 points in the finals. Clark was one of Sharp's neighbors who would frequent the dirt court with two goals.

"Everybody wanted to play on Billy Don's court," Clark said. "It was a great opportunity to play on a full-length court with two goals. I believe it made us all better players."

Clark was joined on the All-Tournament team by teammates Wayne Landers with 3 points and Kenneth Speegle with 4. Sharp scored 5 points.

"There was no doubt that Kenny Clark was the MVP," Sharp said. "He was a great player and a great team leader."

Other players on the Priceville state championship team were Bobby Landers, Gary Oden, Kenneth Lipscomb, Tommy Brenner, Ray Brown, Earl Holt, Ferrell Maples and Bobby Taylor.

The Bulldogs finished 32-3. Because of the small size of their gym they played just 10 games on their home floor that season.

In the days after the tournament, Myers was quoted in the Decatur Daily saying that the key to the team's success was how it bounced back from the losses.

"I knew we would have a good team," Myers said. "Sometimes you have to lose to find out whether they've got what it takes."

Sharp was one of six players returning for the 1965-1966 season. It was another winning season, but the team fell short in the regional with a double overtime loss to Hazel Green. Sharp was selected for the North team in the state's annual North-South game.



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"I really think that team our senior season was better than the state championship team," Sharp said.

Sharp continued his athletic career playing basketball and baseball at Calhoun Community College and then Saint Bernard College in Cullman. After college, he was a high school basketball coach in south Alabama.

In 1976, Sharp got a phone call from Myers, who had just been named the boys coach at Johnson High in Huntsville.

"He wanted me to coach the junior high and junior varsity teams," Sharp said. "I told him that I would be there tomorrow."

The pair worked together for five years. On most days they rode to school together.

"It was a special time working with him," Sharp said. "Herman could take a troubled kid and make something special out of him."

One of those troubled kids at Johnson was Donnie Humphrey, who became an All-American defensive lineman at Auburn and played in the NFL.

Sharp coached basketball for 20 years and retired after 34 years as a teacher.



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Glenn Thompson

Hartselle Tiger legend

By David Elwell

Back in the day Sherrill Stadium was the place for high school football in Hartselle.

It was located behind what is now Hartselle Junior High on Sparkman Street.

Just a few years before Sherrill Stadium was replaced by what is now J.P. Cain Stadium, young Glenn Thompson could be found behind the stands playing cup ball while dreaming of playing for the Tigers of what was then Morgan County High School.

Thompson's dream came true when he starred on the football field for the Tigers from 1967-1969. That led to a second dream of playing at Alabama for Paul "Bear" Bryant, which he did for one year, before deciding to devote more time to another dream of getting his law degree.

Thompson is being inducted into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame on June 20.

"I grew up catching a football," Thompson said. "There was a group of us who would get together after school and play until dark.

"We had an old Voit football that was worn slick because it had been used so much. It was hard to catch, but I could because I had big hands."

In 1967, Thompson was a 6-foot-4 sophomore split end for head coach J.P. Cain's Tigers. This was in a time when most teams were run oriented on offense and shy about passing the football. The size and hands made Thompson an asset that had to be used. He set a school record with 50 catches in his junior season

Bucky Pitts was the head coach for Thompson's senior season. He moved the receiver from outside to inside at tight end.

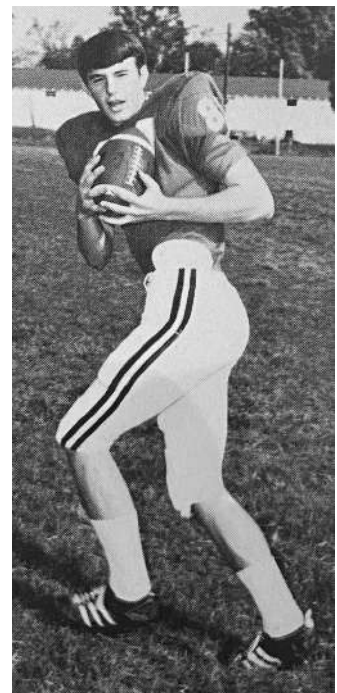
"Glenn was as slow as Christmas, but if you threw the ball close to him, he would go up with those big hands and catch it," said teammate John Pat Orr, who played quarterback.

Thompson caught over 100 passes in three seasons for over 1,500 yards. He earned All-State honors in his senior season.

"When I played football, I felt like I was representing everybody in Hartselle," Thompson said. "I still get that feeling on Friday nights and it's been over 50 years since I played."

The success on the football field completed a link to his father Cline Thompson, who played on Hartselle's first football team in 1917. The 1920 team claimed a state championship. His father was 51 when Glenn was born in 1952. He passed away when Glenn was 8½ in 1960.

Thompson's mother, Kathryn, had been a school teacher before opening a private kindergarten/daycare in 1952 that she operated for 40 years.





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"I started kindergarten when I was just a few months old and went to kindergarten for five years," Thompson said. "Some parent would drop off their kids on their way to work at 6 a.m. More kids would come over for daycare after school got out. Some kids wouldn't be picked up until 6 p.m."

One of his mother's many legacies was being president of a committee that got a marching band started at Morgan County High in 1947.

"After Dad died, it took a real community effort to raise me," Thompson said. "Bill Evans was my brother-in-law, but he was more like a big brother. He had started filming the high school football games and would take me on the road games when I was 9."

While Thompson found success on the football field in high school, he was also successful in other areas. He played basketball on the 1968 Morgan County Tournament championship team. It was the school's first county championship since 1949.

Thompson also excelled in the classroom. One of his favorite teachers was Dr. William Penn for American History in the 11th grade.

"We had some great discussions in his class about history, the Constitution and how the law worked," Thompson said. "I had met some lawyers and had tremendous respect for them because they helped people. I decided that's what I want to do."

Thompson remained interested in playing football at Alabama, but the Crimson Tide would only offer him the opportunity to join the team as a walk-on. Texas A&M with Gene Stallings as head coach offered him a scholarship, but the chance to play for Bryant was too much to pass up.

"That was back in the day when freshmen could not play on the varsity," Thompson said. "We had a five-game freshman schedule. As soon as I got down there the coaches moved me to defensive end."

Thompson was the only walk-on out of 20 to make the starting lineup. The freshmen class of scholarship players included future stars like Gary Rutledge, Wilbur Jackson and Chuck Strickland who helped the Crimson Tide win a national championship in 1973.

"After I got my grades after that first semester I decided that playing football and getting the grades I needed to get into law school just wouldn't work," Thompson said.

Thompson graduated from Alabama in 1974 and received his law degree from Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham. In 1980 he returned to Morgan County to practice law. He was elected to four terms as a Morgan County Circuit Judge.

Over the years Thompson has become well known for his contributions to many community programs. He's been a board member of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame since 1989. He's the founder and chairman of the Hartselle Scholarship Foundation, which awards scholarships to Hartselle High graduates.

"I love being able to contribute and I've done that since high school when I was in the Key Club and Boy Scouts," Thompson said. "It matters what you do. We've raised our kids to find ways to contribute."

"When you serve in government you want to make a difference in people's lives. That's the way life ought to be lived."

Jimmy Yarbrough was a teammate when Thompson played football for the Tigers. He is part of a group of former teammates who nominated Thompson for the Hall of Fame.

"I place Glenn in the same category as J.P. Cain and Dr. Bob Sittason as far as his contributions to Morgan County High, Hartselle High and the Hartselle and Morgan County communities and beyond," Yarbrough said. "The time and effort he has given back to Hartselle athletics and our community is truly amazing."



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During Thompson's judgeship he started the Morgan County Drug Court in 2008. It gives individuals facing prison on drug related charges a second chance with an opportunity to enter the drug court program. The success rate has been remarkable with an impact that has saved lives and families.

"As a judge, Glenn often saw the same people over and over with drug addictions who committed crimes to support their addictions," Yarbrough said. "He has a big heart and wanted to help those individuals break this cycle."

Rendell Drummond went through the Drug Court program. He credits Thompson for changing his life.

"We have had many judges in Morgan County, but none that have had the impact that "The Judge," Glenn Thompson has had. That is especially true in my life," Drummond said. "By giving me one more chance, not only did that impact my life, it has had a generational impact."

"We have witnessed countless men be delivered from a life of darkness and so many families restored, all because Glenn Thompson listened to God's voice and gave me that second chance."

One of Thompson's favorite ways to contribute to the community is to support Hartselle athletic teams. As a lawyer he played a key role in Hartselle being able to purchase land around Sparkman Park to make it home to all its youth baseball and softball leagues.

"Community support is the common thread that jumps out to me when I think of how successful all of the different sports have been at Hartselle over the years," Thompson said.

Thompson's longest contribution has been filming Hartselle Tiger football games since 1979. When he returned to Hartselle to open his law practice, Evans put Thompson back to work behind the camera.

Technology has changed the job over the years. In the early days it was two men filming the games and then taking two 400-foot rolls of film to a lab in Decatur to be developed and returned to the coaches, if they were lucky, by around midnight. Now it's done with video that can give coaches on the sideline instant access. Since 1980, Thompson has also been in charge of the sideline communication system for the coaching staff.

"Friday nights during football season are like when you are hunting quail," Thompson said. "When the dog points and you know the birds are about to come out of the brush, there's that moment of excitement because you know what's about to happen. If that feeling ever leaves me, it will be time for me to stand down."

The 2026 season will be Thompson's 48th season behind the camera. In the first 47 years, Hartselle has played 582 games. He's missed just four.

Thompson's favorite game came in 2011. It was the Class 5A state championship at Bryant-Denny in Tuscaloosa. Hartselle was a big underdog to a Vigor team out of Mobile that was stacked with college prospects.

The Tigers coached by Bob Godsey rallied for 10 points in the fourth quarter to take the 13-3 victory to give the school its first ever football state championship trophy.

"That was something I had been looking for all my life," Thompson said. "It was a great team and a tremendous achievement. I hope I can see Hartselle do it again."



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Leigh Anna Trimble

Austin Black Bear legend

By David Elwell

Today at the corner of Danville Road and Modaus Road in Decatur sits Decatur Fire/Rescue Station 5.

Back in the day there was a white house with columns that stood on that same property. Behind that house was another house that faced Longfellow Drive inside the Braswell subdivision.

Between the houses was a concrete pad with a basketball goal. Nearly 40 years later, the concrete and the goal are still there. The years have not been kind to the backboard. It's been a few years since the sound of a basketball bounced off the concrete.

This is where Leigh Anna Trimble worked on her game and eventually became an All-Star player for the Austin Black Bears in 1994.

"My grandmother lived in the white house and we lived in the house behind her," Trimble said. "During the summer when we were out of school, we stayed most days with my grandmother.

"I would spend my time on the concrete pad with a basketball working on my shooting. Every day it was 100 free throws and 100 3-point shots. I wasn't the quickest player or the most talented so I had to be the best shooter I could be."

Trimble, 50, will be inducted into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame on June 20 at Cook Museum of Natural Science in Decatur.

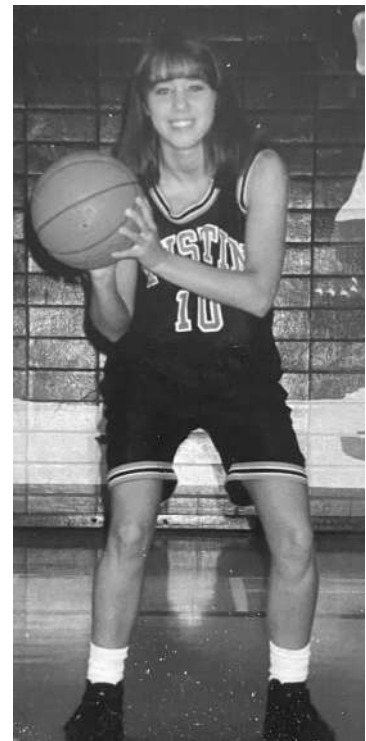
The history of girls high school basketball in the City of Decatur has been dominated by a Decatur High dynasty from 1990 to 2001. The Red Raiders won five state championships and had two other state championship game appearances.

Cross-town rival Austin took a step out of the Red Raiders shadow in the 1993-94 season with a run to the Class 6A state championship game. The Black Bears coached by Billy Miles were led by All-State players Leigh Anna McDaniel (now Trimble) and Andrea "Bam" Watkins (now Watkins-Orr).

Austin posted a 20-5 record and beat Decatur four out of five times that season, including wins for the area (57-47) and regional (40-39) championships.

The Black Bears' path to success was not a short one. It was a culmination of four years of hard work. Trimble and Watkins-Orr were both starters as freshmen for Miles in his first year as head coach.

"The program had been down when we took over," Miles said. "We knew Leigh Anna and Bam were special before they got to Austin. They had a lot of success together at Brookhaven (Middle School).





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"We thought starting them as freshmen was the right thing to do. We knew we were going to take our lumps, but it paid off in a big way."

Trimble grew up in a home where sports was a major part of everything. Joe McDaniel was a long-time football and baseball coach at Austin, Hartselle and other schools in the area. Her three brothers, Buddy, Sonny and Wil, all played sports.

"I grew up around sports. It was all I ever knew," Trimble said. "I played softball for a long time before I played basketball. My first basketball team was a rec league team in the sixth grade."

Because Trimble's mother, Mary Sue McDaniel, taught school in Hartselle she went to school there through the seventh grade.

"I decided that I wanted to go to school in Decatur because most of my friends were here," Trimble said. "I made the move in the eighth grade. That's when I first met Bam."

The friendship clicked right away on and off the basketball floor. Even though they were about the same height the combination turned into a great inside/outside team. Watkins-Orr was a force inside at 5-foot-7. Trimble was the point-guard who could direct the offense. When defenses tried to sag inside to stop Watkins-Orr, Trimble could answer with a basket from behind the 3-point line.

"We had to grow together at Brookhaven to blend our games," Watkins-Orr said. "Before we left to go play at Austin we talked about our dreams for success."

"For me it was great to have a teammate so much aligned on what we wanted to achieve. Of course the key was hard work and we never had to worry about how hard the other one worked."

Starting on the varsity as a freshman in 1990 was not easy. Girls basketball in Morgan County and North Alabama was strong. Trimble and Watkins-Orr played against mostly juniors and seniors. They battled against players like Decatur's Yolanda Watkins and Shondra Fuller and Brewer's Christy Thomaskutty, who all received All-State honors and played in college for Division I programs.

"That first year the 20-point losses got to be a sign of improvement over the 40-point losses," Trimble said.

After just eight wins in that first season, the Black Bears had 11 wins in their sophomore season. The record was 15-13 as juniors with Watkins-Orr missing the first half of the season because of an off-season knee injury.

"That first year there weren't many people in the stands," Trimble said, "but we were young and growing up together. Because we were young, the team didn't change much and we grew a following."

"By our senior year the crowds grew so much that the stands were packed for every game. People had to come to the boys junior varsity game before our game just to make sure they had a seat."

In Trimble's senior season, the Austin-Decatur games had to be played at the home team's gym because the neutral site at Calhoun Community College was unavailable due to construction. For years the rivalry games were played at Calhoun because its gym could seat many more than the high school gyms at the time.

"The night of our game at Austin, I can remember getting to school and seeing a long line of fans lined up on the sidewalk waiting to get in," Trimble said. "When we went out for warmups there were no seats left. That was a pretty cool thing to see."



2026 Class Resumes

That game was on Dec. 10, 1993. Austin beat Decatur 64-62. Watkins-Orr hit the game-winning shot in the closing seconds. Trimble scored 29 points. It was Austin's first win over Decatur since Jan. 29, 1987.

After the game, Trimble told the Decatur Daily: "It was the best feeling in my whole life to beat Decatur. All the other years we didn't have a chance. It was awesome."

Little did Trimble know that she and her teammates would have three more "awesome" wins over Decatur that season. Austin beat No. 1-ranked Decatur on the Red Raiders home court, 53-43, in a January regular season game.

The final Class 6A state rankings for the regular season had Austin at No. 2 and Decatur No. 3. That higher-ranking held up for the Black Bears in the area and regional championship games. The regional championship earned Austin its first trip to the state tournament in 10 years.

The Black Bears drew defending state champion Carver-Montgomery in the semifinals and took an impressive 69-49 victory. Trimble scored 20 points and dished out seven assists.

The state championship game featured the red-hot Black Bears vs. undefeated LeFlore from Mobile. LeFlore led 31-30 at halftime. Austin opened the second half with six points to take a 36-31. After that it was all LeFlore for a 72-49 win.

"That loss was rough on me. I carried it with me for a long time," Trimble said, "but we were so happy to put Austin girls basketball back on the map."

Trimble and Watkins-Orr both earned All-State honors. Austin's dream season earned Miles the Class 6A Coach of the Year honors.

"The best adjective I can think of to describe Lee Anna the player is unselfishness," Miles said. "She was all about making her team the best it could be. To do that she wanted to be the best player she could be."

Miles' star players both signed to continue their basketball careers in junior college. Trimble went to Northwest Shoals. Watkins-Orr went to Wallace-Hanceville. In their freshmen seasons they would face each other in the junior college state championship game. Trimble's team won and advanced to the national tournament.

"My game changed when I got to Northwest. I had to become more of a shooter than I was in high school," Trimble said. "It was a cool experience to win state and go to the national tournament."

After junior college, Trimble and Watkins-Orr were teammates for one year at North Alabama.

"The bottom line for both of us was our toughness," Watkins-Orr said. "It was great when we played together. It was always there when we played against each other."

When the college career ended, Trimble moved into coaching. She was the last girls coach at Coffee High before it merged with Bradshaw to form Florence City in 2004.

In 2022, Trimble and her husband Scott bought George's Steak Pit, a landmark restaurant in Sheffield that will soon celebrate 70 years in business. Trimble says her experience in sports has helped in the restaurant business.

"Athletics puts you in a lot of pressure situations," Trimble said. "It's how you react to those situations that matters. That's the way life is."

"It's the same situation with our restaurant. It's hard work, but if you surround yourself with good people and treat them the way you want to be treated, you can be successful."



History of the MCSHoF

IN THE BEGINNING - 1988

The need for a Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame (MCSHOF) was first identified by David Elwell in 1988. Serving as the Sports Editor, he presented his idea through the Decatur Daily. His identification of the need motivated Phil Garrison who created an organization that would fully and continually fulfill the needs of a MCSHOF.

The following three articles that appeared in the Decatur Daily, presents to the reader a detailed story of the beginning of the MCSHOF.

Article 1: COUNTY HOF NEEDED

David Elwell - Sports Editor Decatur Daily

June 5, 1988

Milton Berle is supposed to be famous for stealing jokes from other comedians. Berle probably has stolen a joke or two along the way, but we bet there isn't a comedian alive who has not swiped a joke from someone. It's the same in the newspaper business, particular sports. If one paper gets a good idea you can bet that at least a few other newspapers will copy that idea.

A perfect example is the expanded major league baseball standings that breakdown a team's record into various categories. It used to be that the only place you could get expanded major league standings was weekly in The Sporting News. But then came USA Today with five days each week of expanded baseball standings. After USA Today started it some other papers were soon to follow. Finally, the Associated Press started moving expanded baseball standings each day. Now, just about every newspaper in the country can carry expanded baseball standings. The Decatur Daily has two seasons. We were one of the first in the state. Now most papers in the state carry expanded standings. A lot of people think that using some one's idea is stealing. Maybe it is and maybe it isn't. It may depend on how you look at it. I worked for a man one time who told me that using somebody's idea was not stealing as long as you as you improved on the idea.

It made sense then.

What this is all leading to is an idea that the people of Morgan County need to borrow. Heck, you can call it stealing, but it's still a great idea.

The idea is one that the City of Mobile just recently saw became reality. On May 13 the Mobile Sports Hall of Fame inducted its first two members The City of Mobile, like Decatur and Morgan County, is an area where sports is important. Football, basketball, baseball, whatever, it's all important to the people of Mobile. Their schools win more state championships than any other part of the state. It's always been that way. As a result Mobile has turned out some pretty good athletes through the years. The two that were inducted on May 13 were baseball's Hank Aaron and former Alabama quarterback Riley Smith. Future members of the Mobile Sports Hall of Fame will come from groups that include the likes of baseball's Willie McCovey, Satchel Paige,



History of the MCSHoF

Eddie Stanky, Cleon Jones, Tommie Agee and Billy Williams; football's Vince Dooley, Ed Dyas, Paul Crane, Scott Hunter, Ken Stabler, Joe Childress and Frank Howard.

We wonder why Morgan County couldn't do something like what Mobile is doing? Why couldn't the great athletes from Morgan County be honored with a hall of fame? We admit that Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame will be hard pressed to match Mobile's as far as greats go. No all-time home run kings or other baseball hall of famers or former NFL quarterbacks call Morgan County home. That's OK. We aren't concerned with comparing hall of fames. What we want to do is honor the greats. Why? So their exploits and contributions to the community won't be forgotten.

One day I was talking football with a 5-year-old. I got the privilege of telling him who Bear Bryant was and what the man did. My son was born about six weeks after Bryant died. Before our talk he didn't know Bear Bryant from a character on Sesame Street. Shug Jordan, Johnny Musso, Pat Sullivan and Terry Beasley, Lee Roy Jordan, Jimmy Sidle and Stabler are people my son will have to be told about or read about. But what happens to some of the other greats that people will forget about over the years.

Will young people 20 years from now know anything about Randy Campbell? Will they be told about his struggles at Auburn from the bottom to leading the Tigers to the Southeastern Conference Championship and the Sugar Bowl victory? What about Benny Perrin? Will he be remembered 20 years from now for his all-around athletic greatness, his success at Alabama and his later success in the NFL? What about Don Whitmire? He's one of the few people in the country to be an All-American football player at two schools. What about Bobby Freeman? He was great at Auburn and enjoyed an equally great career in the NFL. What about Marv Breeding? He was a local legend and made it to the major leagues. What about Tim Baker? He was captain of Auburn's 1947 national championship team. What about basketball's Vickie Orr? What about coaching greats like "Shorty" Ogle, Joe Jones, Earl Morris, Earl Webb, J.P. Cain, Tom Calvin, Steve Rivers and Don Woods. Will their achievements go forgotten in future generations?

These are just a handful of the people from Morgan County who have achieved a level of greatness in athletics. There are many more. What needs to happen is for some organization to form a group to spearhead the idea of a Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame.

A committee would select inductees for each year. A banquet could be held to honor the inductees for each year. Proceeds from the banquet could go to secure the hall of fame financially and maybe some leftover could go to charity. If the banquet becomes the major event that it should, it would be possible to bring in some big-name speakers, who could sell tickets and boost growth. The inductees could be honored with plaques that could hang in the courthouse or maybe in the proposed civic center that some people would like to see Decatur build.

If someone picks up on this idea, be advised that success won't come quickly. It took mobile five or six years to turn the idea into reality.



History of the MCSHoF

But the Mobile Sports Hall of Fame is alive and we bet it will do quite well. The same could be true for the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame. Maybe.

Article 2: MAYBE HALL IDEA WILL TAKE ROOT

David Elwell - Sports Editor Decatur Daily

August 28, 1988

Plant a seed and watch it grow.

Maybe that has happened.

Several weeks ago we wrote a column suggesting that one thing Morgan County needs is a way to recognize some of the people who have contributed to this community through their athletic achievements. Our reasoning was that as the years go by the deeds of these people go from becoming larger than life to fleeting memories.

A perfect example is the late Decatur football coach H.L. "Shorty" Ogle. In 50 years the Ogle name will be nothing more than the name of a football stadium to most of the people in the area. There will be few people around who will understand who Ogle was and what he meant to this community.

A perfect way to keep the past from being forgotten would be to make an effort to keep the memory alive. That's what a Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame could do.

A few weeks after that column we were contacted by Phil Garrison and A.D. Ashcraft of the Boys' Club of Decatur. They liked the idea, felt it was something the community needed and, at the same time, could prove beneficial for the Boys' Club. What the two had in mind was letting the Boys' Club sponsor the hall of fame with an annual banquet. Proceeds would go to the Boys' Club. "We are a non-profit organization and we receive some funding from the United Way" said Garrison. "While we appreciate the United Way's contribution to our efforts it does not fully fund our work. We have to raise the remaining operating funds.

"We feel like a Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame would be a good once-a-year fund-raising project for our organization. It will fund our efforts, but more importantly, we will be giving something positive back to the community."

Meetings have been held. A committee of men representing a wide interest of sports in Morgan County has met and decided that there is a need for a Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame.

Plans are in work for it to become a reality in 1989. Members of the committee are Garrison, Ashcraft, Veron Lang, Dr. Bob Sittason, Dr. Lloyd Nix, Mayor Bill Dukes, J.P. Cain, Earl Morris, Jack Allen, Wes Thompson, Jim Frances, Leon Felts, "Red" Caudle and Lorenzo Jackson.

A recent meeting of the committee included a presentation by John Lee, executive director of the Boy's Club of Knoxville; Tenn. Lee's club has sponsored a sports hall of fame in that city for seven years. It's been a huge success. Members of the committee hope to pattern Morgan County's after Knoxville's.



History of the MCSHoF

The objectives of the Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame are:

1. Raise funds for the Boys' Clubs of Knoxville.
2. Honor area athletics and coaches.
3. Market the Boy's Club.
4. Provide the community with a class event.

The Knoxville event features a golf tournament and banquet. The banquet is used to honor the people being inducted. An added bonus each year is a famous sports personality speaking at the banquet. One year Knoxville had basketball's Al McGuire. Another year it was Dallas Cowboy quarterback Danny White. The criteria to enter Knoxville's Hall of Fame is being a native of the area or having attended school in the area for four years of which three were in high school or living in the area long enough to be considered a permanent resident or a combination of one of the first three requirements and at least 15 years in coaching.

Those criteria would open up the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame to a number of people from Morgan County. But the awards don't have to stop there. The committee has discussed having a special award for an athlete or coach from the Decatur area (Lawrence, Limestone and Cullman Counties). That would allow someone like Lawrence County native Jesse Owens to be included.

Another award mentioned is honoring THE DAILY'S high school Male and Female Athletes of the Year. Members of the committee have thought long and hard and searched high and low to find some reason why the project would not be successful. Frankly, there is no reason why it cannot be a huge success. It can truly be something that the people of this community would be proud to call their own. The only possible stumbling block would be the people not caring enough for it to become a reality. We think that is impossible. Too many fine people have already committed themselves to it becoming a success.

What we need now is help from the community. There are two ways you can help. One is become of the group of people organizing the effort. It does not matter who you are or where you live. If you love sports and want to see Morgan County's sports heroes honored, join the effort.

If you want to help, but for various reasons can't or really prefer not be included in the organizing of the event, you can still help by nominating candidates for the Morgan County

Sports Hall of Fame. Right now the method of selection has not been completely decided. No one is ready to receive any formal nominations. But what you can do is think about candidates. We don't everybody to nominate the obvious people like Ogle, Joe Jones and Don Whitmire. We want anybody and everybody who you think is worth of consideration to be nominated.

So think about it. Think how much this can mean to our community. If you have any questions or comments contact us at 353-4612 or write P. O Box 1527, Decatur, 35602 or contact Ashcraft at 358-8782 or P.O Box 1431, Decatur, 35602.



History of the MCSHoF

Article 3: GARRISON'S VISION AND DRIVE HELPED MAKE HALL A REALITY

Mark Edwards - Sports Editor Decatur Daily

2006

During the period 1989 - 2006 the MCSHOF, in concert with the Boys and Girls Club of Morgan County, has inducted 100 Morgan County sports heroes into the MCSHOF and raised more than \$250,000.00.

One of the pioneers of the formation of the MCSOF program is Phil Garrison. The following story presents some of the highlights of his 17 years of dedication to the program.



When Decatur resident Phil Garrison picked up his Sunday morning paper June 5, 1988, he never imagined that reading that day's edition would spark an idea that has raised about a quarter of a million dollars for charity.

That day, Garrison read a DECATUR DAILY sports column by then-sports editor David Elwell about how Morgan County should find a way to recognize its top athletes and coaches from the past. At the time, Garrison served as president of the board of directors for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Decatur, now the Boys and Girls Clubs of Morgan County. The board was looking for a way to promote the organization and raise funds.

Garrison figured that a hall of fame would accomplish those goals and honor Morgan County's athletic tradition. I called David and asked him, "What do you think?" Garrison said. He said, "Let's go for it."

That conversation marked the beginning of the process, which gave birth to the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame. The first class was honored in the summer of 1989, with the proceeds from the induction banquet going to the Boys and Girls Clubs. Now, 17 years later, the annual

banquets have honored more than 100 athletes and raised about \$250,000 for the Boys and Girls Clubs.

Garrison has served on the Hall of Fame's board since the start, and for his efforts in building it into what it is today, his fellow board members have honored him with a spot in this year's induction class. "It's a great honor, but I'd prefer to keep the focus on the Boys and Girls Clubs," said Garrison, 61. "I just happen to be someone who helped start the Hall of Fame. Looking at how much money the Hall of Fame has raised for the Boys and Girls Clubs — that's what it's all about."

But it took work to get the idea off the ground, and Garrison did much of it. After contacting Elwell, Garrison sent out letters to about 25 current and former coaches and athletes living in



History of the MCSHoF

Morgan County to determine if there was much interest. Garrison found out that he wasn't the only one who thought it was a good idea. One of the first replies came from Vernon Lang, who wrote back, "Phil, you can count on Vernon Lang and Lang's Sporting Goods to support this effort." The rest of the responses contained the same level of enthusiasm. "That's the key — getting support from great people," Garrison said. "We had a lot of great people get involved early."

With his group of interested people on board to help, Garrison contacted the Southeast regional office of the Boys and Girls Clubs to see if anyone else was doing anything similar. The answer came back that the Knox County branch in Tennessee had started a Hall of Fame and it was going well.

Garrison invited the Knox County director to give a presentation to his group about starting a Hall of Fame. "It was very helpful," Garrison said. "So from there, we decided to go forward and start the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame, following the Knox County plan."

The process included appointing a board of directors, conducting monthly meetings, scouting for nominations to the Hall of Fame and organizing the first banquet to honor the first class. In addition, the board added a one-day golf tournament for recreational golfers. It's played the day before the banquet, and Garrison has handled the tournament every year since its beginnings.

"Everyone has such a good time at the golf tournament," he said. "Stories get swapped. Family and friends get to see each other. Old teammates get together. It's a lot of fun to see."

The initial class included eight men: former professional baseball players Ray Pepper, Rip Sewell and Marve Breeding; former NFL player Bobby Freeman; legendary coaches Joe Jones, Randolph Ryan and H.L. "Shorty" Ogle; and former college football standout Don Whitmire.

Soon after the initial meetings, it was determined that a logo was needed to visually identify the Hall to the general public. The picture in the above left corner presents in color the final logo design.



MCSHoF Mission Statement

The Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame was established in September 1988. The Hall's mission, in brief, is to develop a sports hall of fame for Morgan County as a means to promote and preserve its rich history of sports.

Morgan County boasts an amazing sports history, dating to the early 1900s. However, the story of sports in Morgan County has not been recorded for public display. It is a collage of people, places, legends, and lore. Included are true icons from H.L. "Shorty" Ogle to Joe Jones, Earl Morris, Mike Smith, J.P. Cain, Dr. Bob and Randy Sittason, Don Whitmire, Gary Redus, Ricky Hardin, Debra Harvel, Kathy Farrer, Paul and Preston Brogdon, Tom and Lenette Calvin, Conley Duncan, Phil Garrison, Bill Evans, Tina Chairs, Bud Lee, Boonie Russell, Roger Ferrell, Bob Harpe, Lloyd Nix, Bobby and Marvin Golden, Bob and Roy Freeman, Earl Webb, Jimmy Mitchell, John Sivley, Bucky Pitts, Joe Brewer, Rod Goode, John Williams, Wally Sanders, Johnny Atkins, Carl Penn, William "Junior" Vaughn, Kim Evans, Marvin Taylor, Charles Riley, Carl Penn, Ralph Sharp, Nevada Spurlock, Robert Whisenant, Wayne Ridgeway, Leo Gray, Ricky Allen, Don Logan, Yolanda Watkins, Vickie Orr, and many more sports heroes. A total of 214 have been inducted - May 4, 2019.

Until the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame was established in 1988, there has been no central organization to preserve and promote this outstanding legacy. Established as a non-profit organization the Hall's mission extends far beyond the county's sports history. Using the common bond of sports, the Hall, in concert with the Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama, support youth programs in numerous ways. These programs directly influence the lives of the county's young people in the area. At this grass roots level, local youth are exposed to and educated about the tremendous history of sports in Morgan County. With the fervor of the county's fan base, this broad-based, mass appeal is the prime mover behind all the Hall's programs and initiatives. From the youngest fan to the oldest grandparent reliving their fondest memories at an induction ceremony presentation, the Hall with its multi-generational appeal is unlike any organization.

The Board recognizes the Morgan County fan as its core audience. This robust fan base combined with key support/sponsor organizations, institutions, and individuals, forms the essence of the Hall's mission. The Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame is dedicated to honoring individuals prominent in the history of athletics in Morgan County. The Hall recognizes the timeless intertwining of sports into the fabric of the county's everyday life. This is the Hall's credo! As its mission the Hall is committed to: Preserving/Recording the great sports history of Morgan County, Honoring excellence in all sports, Recognizing individuals who have contributed to sports excellence in a supporting role, and Connecting the counties generations.



MCSHoF By-Laws

Article 1: Name of Organization

- The Name of the Organization shall be “Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame”.

Article 2: Purpose

- The purpose of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame is twofold. First, the HoF is to preserve the history and traditions of Morgan County Sports and to honor the men and women of this community who have made a significant impact on the athletic field. The second purpose is to raise funds for the Boys and Girls Clubs of North Alabama. All funds raised by the MCSHoF will be donated to the B&G Clubs of North Alabama.

Article 3: Membership

- The Board will consist of members from varying communities inside Morgan County in order to represent each community.
- New perspective board members will be voted on by the current board and must have unanimous vote in order to be able to serve on the board.
- Each board member must maintain character that is fitting for representation not only for MCSHoF but also the Boys and Girls Clubs.
- Each member must attend 6 of the 12 yearly meetings in order to vote in December. If the December meeting is the 6th, then the member ballot will be counted.
- No member's ballot will be counted if he/she does not attend 6 of the 12 meetings.
- Any member that does not make 6 of 12 meetings (unless health prevents) will be placed on “Non-Voting status” for one year. The member may retain voting privileges the next year if he/she attends proper number of meetings.
- After two straight years of not making the proper number of meetings, the member will be removed from the board.
- Each member is obligated to purchase 2 tickets to the banquet each May.
- Each member is Encouraged to also secure two \$500 table sponsors for the banquet, one golf team, and one golf hole sponsor.
- Each member will be required to serve on one sub-committee (Golf, Banquet, inductees, Election)
- The B&G will have a non-voting person on the board at all times
- The board will have a president that serves a two-year term beginning in June and ending with the banquet in May. The president may serve consecutive terms if elected by the board.
- The board will also have a vice president serve a two year term with same guidelines as president.
- The board will also elect a treasurer to serve a two-year term with same guidelines as president. In addition to the treasurer, there will be a co-treasurer to ensure accountability for the board.



MCSHoF By-Laws

- In order for any bylaws to be changed the board must have a 3/4 vote in favor of the change.

Article 4: Finances

- All money raised by the MCSHOF will be donated to the Boys and Girls Clubs of North Alabama
- The Board will keep a minimum of \$1,000 in the bank at all times for unexpected expenses
- All money will go through the elected treasurer, co-treasurer and the B&G Clubs rep

Article 5: Meetings

- All meetings will be on the first Monday of every month unless otherwise noted
All meetings will start at 5:30 PM unless otherwise noted.
- All meetings must have enough members present (Half the members) in order to have a quorum.

Article 6: MCSHoF Banquet Weekend

- The celebration weekend will always be the first weekend in May -The Golf tournament will be held on Friday and banquet on Saturday -Banquet will start at 7:00 with reception at 6:00.

Article 7: Nomination process

- A nominee can be nominated by anyone in the general public
- A nominee who performed his/her athletic achievements in Morgan County must be a current or former resident for 5 continuous years not counting military service.
- A nominee who performed his/her athletic achievements before moving to Morgan County must be a resident for 10 continuous years.
- A nominee must be 40 years old at the time of his/her induction
- A coach can be active but must have 25 years of coaching experience before being inducted.
- Support personnel can still be active in his/her field while being inducted.
- Once a person is nominated, he/she will be considered each year but new information may be included each year.

Article 8: Election Process

- The December meeting will be election night each year.
- All board members who have voting status will cast a paper ballot
- Each member can vote for up to 8 inductees each year
- The top 8 will be selected
- In case of a tie for the 8th spot, all members will have a private vote on the nominees that are tied. If this ends in a tie, then there will be 9 inductees that year.



MCSHoF Board



First row L-R:

Paul Henderson, Glenn Thompson, Andrea Watkins-Orr, Phil Garrison, Caki Engen, Joe Bailey, and David Elwell.

Second row L-R:

Matt Zartuche, Walton Ashwander, Harry Knop, Ronald Grantland, Ricky Allen, Ricky Bowling,, Lonnie Williams, Mike Tarpley, and John Godwin.

Not in picture:

Billy Miles, Amy Miles, Rico Pickett, Nancy Keenum, Dan Coulter, Mike Jones, Jeanice Slater and Steve Meek.

Inductee Nomination and Selection - The Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame has a "Master List" of candidates who have been nominated by various individuals for induction. Each year the board reviews the list; and, from that list, the board conducts its annual vote to choose the induction class each year. Election is by a majority vote of the Board.

Should anyone wish to nominate an individual to be considered for induction into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame, please use the forms contained in this publication. In the documentation, please include information on the nominee in the form of career highlights, documented statistics, accomplishments, copies of media coverage, awards, etc.

Include a cover letter of nomination and mail to:

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
P.O. Box 326
Hartselle, Alabama 35640



Alabama Sports Hall of Fame

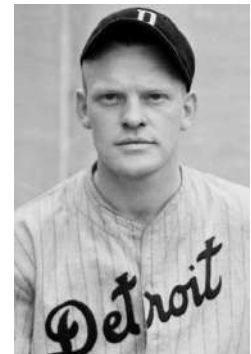


MCSHoF members who are also members of the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame

Truett Banks “Rip” Sewell

Class: 1976
Born: May 11, 1907
Location: Decatur, Alabama
Category: Baseball

Rip Sewell attended Vanderbilt University, playing football during the 1930-31 season, before leaving to pursue a baseball career. From 1932 through 1937, he played for Detroit's farm teams in Buffalo, Toledo, Louisville and Beaumont. He was traded to Pittsburgh in 1938, where he played 12 seasons and finished with a 143-97 record. A four-time National League All-Star, he led the league in wins in 1943 and in winning percentage in 1948. Sewell is known for his development of a change-of-pace pitch called “the blooper” or “Eephus pitch.”



H. L. “Shorty” Ogle

Class: 1979
Born: January 31, 1906
Location: Gainesville, Georgia
Category: Football

At Birmingham Southern he played football, basketball, baseball and ran track. He was selected to the All-Southern team at Birmingham Southern and was awarded the Porter Cup as the best all-around athlete. After four years at Hanceville, Coach Ogle was at Decatur High School for 31 years. He introduced the “T” formation to Alabama high school sports in 1942. He was the winning coach in the first Alabama all-star game. Ogle coached four teams that finished the season as undefeated state champions.





Alabama Sports Hall of Fame

Donald B. "Don" Whitmire

Class: 1980
Born: July 1, 1922
Location: Giles County, Tennessee
Category: Football

He graduated from Decatur High School in 1940. He was an All-American tackle at the University of Alabama in 1943 and voted to the All-Time SEC Team in 1968. He transferred to the U.S. Naval Academy where he was an All-American in 1944 and was awarded the Knute Rockne Trophy as outstanding lineman in the United States that year. He is one of a handful of college football players to be named as an All-American at two different schools. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1956. He pursued a career in the Navy and eventually reached the rank of rear admiral.



Lloyd Nix

Class: 1994
Born: December 7, 1936
Location: Carbon Hill, Alabama
Category: Football

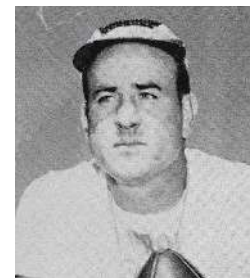
Nix was quarterback for the best back-to-back seasons in Auburn football history: the 1957 National Championship season and the 1958 season where Auburn finished with a 9-0-1 record and fourth place in the AP Poll. Nix moved from halfback to quarterback before his 1957 junior season and was second in the SEC in total offense. The next year as a senior and team captain, he led the conference in total offense. Playing both offense and defense, he was twice named to the All-SEC team. In 1958, he was the first baseman on Auburn's SEC baseball championship team and was named to the All-SEC team. During the 1959 season, he had a perfect 9-0 pitching record. He won the 1959 Cliff Hare Award as Auburn's outstanding senior athlete.



Henry "Hal" Self

Class: 1996
Born: February 22, 1922
Location: Anderson, Alabama
Category: Football

A football, basketball, and baseball standout at Decatur High School, he entered the University of Alabama in 1941. He was quarterback for the Crimson Tide in 1941-42 and 44-45 (no team in war year of 1943) and played in four major bowls: the Cotton, Orange, Sugar and Rose Bowl. One of Frank Thomas' famous "war babies," he ran for two touchdowns in the 34-14 Rose Bowl win over Southern California. He won the coveted Jacobs Blocking Award as the SEC's best blocking back in 1945. He went on to coach two years at Athens High School where he had a record of 15-5. In 1949, he began restoring the football program at Florence State (now University of North Alabama) where he had a record of 110-81. Self was named UNA Athletics Director in 1969 and later was a member of the faculty until his retirement.





Alabama Sports Hall of Fame

Don Logan

Class: 2011
Born: 1944
Location: Hartselle, Alabama
Category: Distinguished American Sportsman

Don Logan is an American media executive from Hartselle, Alabama who lives in Birmingham. A retired Time Warner media chairman, Logan also owns the Birmingham Barons minor-league baseball team. In May 2011, he was inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. In 2010, he led an ownership group to purchase the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society from ESPN. In late 2011, they relocated B.A.S.S. headquarters from Celebration, Florida, to Birmingham. Pursuing a degree in mathematics, Logan graduated magna cum laude from Auburn University in 1966. He also holds a master's degree in mathematics from Clemson University and has been awarded honorary doctorates from Auburn University (1997), Clemson University and University of Alabama at Birmingham



Victoria "Vickie" Orr

Class: 2013
Born: February 25, 1967
Location: Hartselle, Alabama
Category: Basketball

Vickie Orr played collegiately at Auburn University. She was a Kodak All-American three consecutive years (1987, 1988, 1989). She was named SEC Player of the Year in 1988. Currently ranks second in Auburn scoring with 2,035 points. She is one of only two Auburn players to score over 2,000 points and 1,000 rebounds. She led the Lady Tigers to two straight NCAA Championship Games and three Final Fours. She was a member of the 1990 Women's U.S.A. Basketball Team. She was also a member of the 1992 U.S. Olympic Team that won a Bronze Medal. She played professionally in Italy from 1990-1992.



Martha Jones Lang

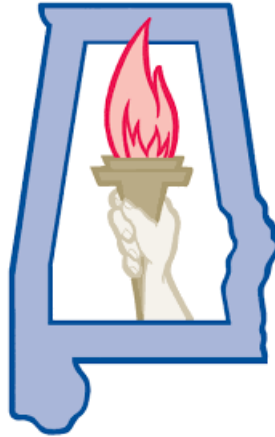
Class: 2016
Born: December 15, 1952
Location: Decatur, Alabama
Category: Golf

Lang played collegiately at the University of Alabama, where she earned All-American honors. She won the Alabama State Junior Championship in consecutive years from 1967-1970 and the Alabama State Amateur Championship in 1973. In 1974 and 1980, Lang won the Women's Southern Golf Championship. Other wins include the U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur and the Women's Southern Senior Amateur Championship. Her career wins total 15 amateur titles in four different states. Lang was a member of the United States Women's Curtis Cup Team in 1992 and she captained the team in 1996. In 2015, she became one of two American women to be invited to join the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews. She has served on USGA Executive Committee.





Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame



MCSHoF members who are also members of the Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame

Keith Wilemon

Class: 2020

Mississippi native Keith Wilemon, 60, graduated from Itawamba Agricultural High School in 1978 and the University of North Alabama in 1985. He earned two masters degrees – in Special Education and School Administration. He got his first teaching and coaching position at Winfield High School in 1986 teaching math and coaching football, basketball and track. He moved to Falkville in 1989 to coach football and track. His passion for track made the Blue Devils' program one of the best small-school programs in the AHSAA. He became assistant principal and athletic director in 2000, a position he held for the next 18 years until his retirement in 2017. He remained as track coach during that time – leading Falkville to four state boys' outdoor track championships and has served as an assistant as the Blue Devils won four boys' and two girls' state indoor titles. His teams have also finished state runner-up 15 times with him serving as head or assistant coach. Falkville's girls won 14 section titles and the boys won four. Falkville also captured nine boys' Morgan County track titles and eight girls' county titles. He played a major role in help advance the sport of track in the AHSAA serving on the AHSAA Track Coaches Committee for four years. He also helped start the Smith Lake Track Officials Association and serves as president. Wilemon was named the NFHS Alabama Track Coach of the Year in 2014. He was selected the AHSAA State Track Official of the Year in 2017. Falkville's track program is now led by Wilemon's son Jace – and dad still helps as a volunteer assistant. Together, they have added two more state boys' titles.





Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame

William Booth:

Class: 2018

Booth got a late start in coaching at Hartselle High School but made up for lost time quickly. Over the last 30 years he became the state's all-time career baseball wins leader, compiling a 1,025-431 record with eight state championships. He described his first on-field coaching a "cow pasture" and but now plays and practices at Sparkman Park, one of the finest prep facilities in the nation. Some 101 of his former players signed college scholarships. He was recognized by the Alabama State Senate and his hometown last May for his career achievements. He graduated from Morgan County and earned his undergraduate and master's degrees from Athens State and Alabama A&M. He served 10 years as a little league coach. Booth now serves as assistant superintendent while continuing to coach baseball.



Ricky Allen

Class: 2018

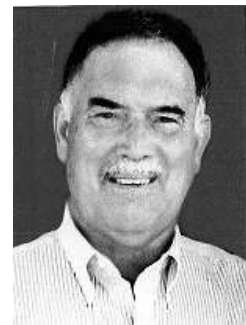
Allen graduated from Brewer High School and Auburn University and then returned to Morgan County in 1977 as a teacher and coach for 34 years. After coaching stints at Brewer and also Cotaco and Union Hill junior high schools, he took over the Brewer girls' basketball program (1985-2015). He compiled a 30-year record of 604-272 with one state title (Class 5A in 2012) and one state runner-up (2009) finish. His teams reached the State Championships five times and the Northwest Regional tournament 15 times. His teams won 17 Morgan County championships. He also coached volleyball and softball. As a member of Brewer's first graduating class, he helped the 1973 team reach its only state boys' basketball tournament in history while averaging 13 points and 12 rebounds. A local church leader, he served on the FCA Board of Directors.



Wayne Bowling

Class: 2017

Bowling was the boys' basketball coach at Danville High School in Morgan County from 1963-2000 and also head baseball coach from 1963-85. Considered one of the coaching leaders in North Alabama, Bowling compiled a 683-388 basketball coaching record that included four Morgan County championships (1965, 1985, 1988, 1992); 12 area championships; five regional championships; two sub-state titles (1991 and 1992); five state tournament appearances (1976, 1977, 1985, 1991, 1992); and one state runner-up in 1992. He graduated from Austinville High School and St. Bernard College and began his high school teaching and coaching career immediately. He was inducted into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame in 2002. The Morgan County basketball tournament MVP Award is named in his honor.





Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame

Bob Harpe

Class: 2017

The Morgan County native began his coaching career as the seventh-grade coach at Oak Park Middle School in his hometown of Decatur. That unbeaten first team led him to Austin High School from 1976-1998 and later to Arab High School from 2003-06. Harpe's teams compiled a 306-143 record and averaged over 21 wins per year. His 1996 team reached the AHSAA Final 48 State Tourney and his 1993 team won the state crown. More than 20 of his players signed college scholarships. Active on AHSAA basketball and golf committees, Harpe helped develop the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Basketball Games and served as administrative coach from 1990-95. He also was a member of the District 8 Board for nine years (1990-98) and also the Central Board of Control. As a retiree he has volunteered his time to assist the AHSAA at its state tournament since 2010. The Decatur High School and Athens College graduate earned a Master's from UAB.



Lorenzo Jackson (Old Timer Division)

Class: 2017

He was head football, basketball and track coach at Lakeside High School in Decatur from 1955-69. He was named the AIAA North Alabama High School Association Coach of the Year in 1958, 1959 and 1964. When Lakeside and Decatur merged following the 1968 Merger Act, Jackson served as assistant football and track coach at Austin High School for nine years. Then he became principal at Leon Sheffield Elementary School in Decatur through 1989. Active in civic affairs, he was a member of the Decatur Planning Commission and Alabama Democratic Conference. He also worked as a Decatur Parks/Recreation Aquatic Supervisor. Now deceased, he is a member of the Morgan County and Athletic Booster halls of fame.



Mike Smith

Class: 2014

Graduated from Hueytown High School and Jacksonville State University and also holds a master's degree. He started the girls' basketball program at Decatur High School and remained for 28 seasons. His teams compiled a 624-225 record with five state championships (1990, 1991, 1992, 1995 and 2000) and three runner-up finishes (1987, 1996 and 2001). Smith's 1992 team was ranked No. 2 in the nation and the 2000 squad finished 34-0. He had three other teams that won 30-plus games and retired as the winningest girls' basketball coach in AHSAA history. He coached in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Basketball Game three times (1992, 1995, and 2000) and also coached volleyball for six years and softball for nine. An outstanding classroom teacher, he taught advanced placement government and politics for more than 20 years. He is a member of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame.





Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame

Steve Rivers

Class: 2015

The veteran football coach had head-coaching stops at Pelham (1979-80), Decatur (1981-95), Athens (1996-99) and Wakefield, N.C. (2000-05). A graduate of Sylacauga High School (1967) and Mississippi State University (1971), his overall head-coaching record is 188-95. Rivers had unbeaten regular seasons at Decatur, Athens and Wakefield during his 27-year career. He is the father and high school coach of current NFL quarterback standout Philip Rivers and quarterback Stephen Rivers, who played at Vanderbilt during graduate school (2014). Coach Rivers led 16 teams to the state playoffs. He played in the North-South All-Star Game (1967) and later coached in the 1997 game. He was an assistant in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Game in 1999. Rivers was inducted into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame in 2008 and named the Decatur Daily Football Coach of the Year five times.



Wallace "Wally" Sanders

Class: 2002

Coached basketball for 30 years at Union Hill, Brewer and Decatur high schools and carried a team to the state tournament from each one. His 15 years at Decatur with three state tournament appearances and a 217-192 record put his career mark at 427-369. He coached golf for 10 years with a second and third place finish in five state tournament appearances. He was named District Coach of the Year in 1999 by the National Federation coaches association. Currently he is an instructor in the AHSAA Coaches Education Program. A graduate of Eva High School and Florence State College (now the University of North Alabama).



Paul Terry

Class: 2001

His coaching career spanned 35 years, 30 as a head football coach compiling a 198-113-4 overall record at three South Alabama schools he led into the playoffs for the first time. His 12 Enterprise teams posted an 86-31-3 record and he coached in the 1972 all-star game. He compiled a 40-14-1 mark in five years at Florala and a 72-68-0 record during 13 years at Carroll. He is member of the Wiregrass and Morgan County halls of fame. A graduate of Decatur High School and Auburn University.





Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame

Earl Morris

Class: 1993

He became a household word in Morgan County basketball for 26 years. His teams compiled a 535-204 record with three consecutive state championships at Austinville and one at Decatur. His teams, known for their disciplined, fundamentally-sound, team concept, won numerous county, district and region titles while averaging 20.5 wins per year. He received state, national and international recognition for his coaching skills. A graduate of Union High and Jacksonville State.



Earl Webb

Class: 1993

Coached football 29 years and his teams compiled an overall record of 203-80-14 with one state championship at Lanett and one at Decatur. He was twice the all-star game head coach and was state coach of the year. Also he served as president of the state coaches association and served on the AHSAA Central Board of Control for five years. A graduate of Hanceville High and Florence State.



James Paul "JP" Cain

Class: 1992

Made countless contributions to public education at Hartselle as a teacher, football coach and school administrator. During his 12 years as head coach, his teams posted a 66-51-3 record. A booster club scholarship is named in his honor along with the football stadium. A graduate of Hartselle High and Jacksonville State, where he is also a member of the JSU Athletic Hall of Fame.



Lenette Calvin

Class: 1992

Enjoyed an unusually successful career coaching gymnastics and cheerleading for 33 years at Sylacauga and Decatur where she won numerous honors and championships, both national and state. During her 11 years in Decatur she coached four teams at the same time and kept the level of competition high. A graduate of Woodlawn High and the University of Alabama.





Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame

Tom Calvin

Class: 1991

Coached 33 years at Baldwin County, Sylacauga and Austin with a 204-129-11 career record and earned three state "Coach of the Year" Awards. He won a state championship at Sylacauga where his teams had 15 straight winning seasons. He also posted a 92-15 record in 14 years as tennis coach at Sylacauga. A graduate of Athens High and the University of Alabama.



Joe Jones

Class: 1991

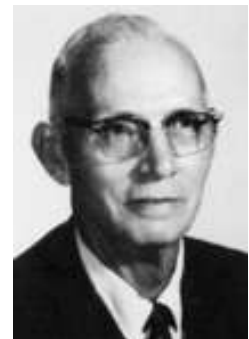
Compiled a superb record of 606-197-in 31 years of basketball coaching in four Morgan County schools – Danville, Austinville, Decatur and Austin. His teams won state championships in three different classifications – Class A Austinville in 1953, Class 3A Austin in 1969 and Class 4A Austin in 1973. Coached in the first All-Star Game. A graduate of Austinville High and Florence State.



H. L. "Shorty" Ogle

Class: 1991

Spent 38 of his 42 years of coaching at Decatur, compiling overall records of 253-73-9 in football, 232-42 in basketball, 128-29 in baseball and 147-31 in track meets. He coached four undefeated teams which won state championships and was a member of the first All-Star game staff. A member of the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. A graduate of Albertville High and Birmingham-Southern.





2026 Member Memorial



Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

2026 Member Memorial



Johnny Atkins

- ★ Averaged more than eight points per game for Priceville's 1955 Class A state championship team.
- ★ Started at guard for Priceville playoff teams in 1954 (state runner-up) and 1956 (state quarterfinals).
- ★ Played and coached various 3M sports teams during 30-plus years of employment.
- ★ Active in serving the community through the Decatur Boys and Girls Club, as well as Meals on Wheels, the Priceville Booster Club and the Elks Lodge.
- ★ Nine-year member of the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame selection committee

Class of 2013

November 1, 1937 - October 13, 2025



Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

2026 Member Memorial



Charles Lee Martin

- ★ Led the Austin Black Bears basketball team to the school's first state championship ever in 1969
- ★ Point guard for legendary coach Joe Jones scored 26 points and was named the Most Valuable Player in Austin's 69-59 victory over Cherokee County for the Class 3A crown.
- ★ Excelled on the baseball field as a catcher.
- ★ After starring in the Lions Club East-West All-Star game in Birmingham, he passed on an offer from the Pittsburgh Pirates to instead play college basketball at South Alabama and later Athens State.

Class of 2021

November 27, 1950 - October 13, 2025



MCSHoF Induction Classes

1

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2025






Rod Bass Tanya Lybarger Childers David Elwell Christy Ferguson






Bob Godsey Marc Lewis Hamil Martin Don Widner

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2024 *Deceased







Jere Adcock David Chairs Lorenzo Jackson *Dwain Keel Steve Meek







Timothy Morgan Randy Nelson Gary Orr *DA Arnold Lesley Smothers

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2023 *Deceased







Mike Burns Gary Couey *Joe Edwards Shondra Fuller *Myles Hammon








Robert Pope *Kathleen Slaten Gary Spivey *Frank Sykes Keith Wilemon Karen Wilemon

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2022






David Albritton Stuart Allen William Booth Cleveland Jarman







Mario Morris David Ogle Greg Stewart Christy Thomaskutty Larry Tucker

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2021





Lori Breedlove Bailey Howard Jenkins Nancy Keenum





Clifton Knight Charles Lee Martin Andrea Watkins-Orr

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2019






Randy Lewis Billy Miles Curtis Miller Jan Sanders






Greg Screws Chick Sparkman Jerry Warren Jody Witt



MCSHoF Induction Classes

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2018






Jimmy Brazelton Katie Eich Leon Mooney Gary Morris






Larry Peck Bobby Joe Pride Jeaniece Slater Joe Weaver

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2017






Ben Allen Ricky Allen Jeffery Dunlap Don Logan






*Jack Mooneyham Wade Tomlinson Yolanda Watkins Vickie Orr Wiley

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2016 *Deceased





Kim Evans *Lewis Hardage Ferrell Maples





Joe Porter Larry Slater Gary Winton

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2015





Gregory Gilbert Ronald Grantland Leo Gray





Wayne Ridgeway Marvin Sales Jimmy Wallace

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2014 *Deceased





*Jane Fields Charles Maples *Ralph Sharp





Nivada Spurlock Danny Welborn Robert Whisenant

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2013





Johnny Atkins Wayne Moseley Carl Penn





*Charles Riley *Marvin Taylor *Junior Vaughn



MCSHoF Induction Classes

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2012



Ricky Bowling



Joe Collier



Debra Harvel



Mike Jones



Tony Julian



Jimmy Mitchell

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2011 *Deceased



*Carl Boley



*John Braswell



Carl Dow



*Billy Smith



*Ricky Hardin



Don Lewis



Monte Sharp

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2010 *Deceased



Paul Brogdon



Preston Brogdon



Ken Clark



*Marvin Golden



Hulond Humphries



John Kitchens



Harvey Morris

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2009 *Deceased



Tina Chairs



Jim Eidson



*Bill Evans



Randy Morgan



Eugene Page



Mike Smith



*Earl Warren

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2008 *Deceased



Walton Ashwander



Bill Nelson



*Harry Puckett



Steve Rivers



*Bill Sexton



Don Stanford



*George White

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2007 *Deceased



*Johnny Newman



Preston Newman



Larry Keenum



Don Poole



*Alfred Poole



Roger Ferrell



Rick Stukes



MCSHoF Induction Classes

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 2006 *Deceased





*Tommy Ed Roberts Mark Hampton *Stewart Stephenson






Rick Chenault Phil Garrison Bruce Jones George Nancarrow

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 2005 *Deceased





*Walter Osborne Gale Montgomery Sherry Steadman






*Harold Morris *Gary Blagburn *Bud Lee Charles Sandlin

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 2004 *Deceased





*Neamon Childers Roderic Goode *Bobby Maxwell






Oscar Knox Billy Sandifer *Bob Shuttleworth Tim Thomas

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 2003 *Deceased





George Stephenson *Cliff Holladay *James Stephenson






Paul Ransom Gary Redus Marshall Hames Bucky Pitts

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 2002 *Deceased





Wally Sanders *Claude McMurtrie Charles Russell





*Charles Livingston *Bob Sittason Tommy Tomlinson

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 2001 *Deceased





Wayne Bowling Bob Harpe John Williams





*Archie Wilson Randy Campbell Joe Millsap



MCSHoF Induction Classes

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 2000 *Deceased





*Benny Perrin *Lester Ralph *Erskine Speegle






Billy Biles *Noojin Walker *Bill Dukes *Oliver Woodard

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 1999 *Deceased





Buddy French *Jimmy Long Randy Sittason






*Bill Burleson *John Thompson Ronnie Norris *Red Sanders

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 1998 *Deceased





*Wilford S. Bailey Lewis Clark Gilmer Ellis





Mary Rodgers Les Fowler Paul Terry

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 1997 *Deceased






*Jimmy Pannell Mel Bowling *Billy Woodall *Joe Brewer






Roger Mathis Conley Duncan *Jim Bowling *Mike Mathis

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 1996 *Deceased





Johnny Chandler *Robert Ryan *Lorenzo Jackson






Fred Frickie *Cecil Turner *Vernon Lang *Roy Freeman

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
Class of 1995 *Deceased





*William Hamilton *Hernie Bailey Rolland Nelson






Walter Todd Jim Moebs *Evelyn Latham *Marvin Posey



MCSHoF Induction Classes

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 1994 *Deceased





Jimmy Caudill *Herman Myers Lynn Thompson






Jerry Thompson *Kermit Pitt *Lamar Moye *Bearl Whitsett

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 1993 *Deceased





Martha Lang *Russell Smith Lynn Holladay





*Bill Isbell John Meadows *Billy Stephenson

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 1992 *Deceased







*Jack Allen *Delmer Bagwell Lenette Calvin *Tom Calvin *Bobby Golden






Jim Grammer *Richard Grammer Jimmy Johns *Earl Webb

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 1991 *Deceased





*Red Caudill *Ed Eubanks *J.C. Pettey





Kathy Farrer Earl Morris *Wes Thompson

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 1990 *Deceased





Tim Baker *J.P. Cain *Aubrey Fuller





Lloyd Nix *Hal Self Bud Stallworth

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame

Class of 1989 *Deceased






*Marve Breeding *Joe Jones *Bobby Freeman *Shorty Ogle






*Ray Pepper *Rip Sewell *Randolph Ryan *Don Whitmire



MCSHoF Nomination Procedure

To be eligible for induction into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame, a candidate must be:

1. Any one of the following:
 - A native of Morgan County, or
 - Attended high school in Morgan County, or
 - A resident of Morgan County for a period of time sufficient to be considered a resident, and,
2. Any one of the following:
 - As a player be retired or out of professional competition for five (5) years, and forty (40) years of age or older; or
 - Coached anywhere and be forty (40) years of age or older (the past requirement for a coach to be retired or out of professional competition for five (5) years is no longer applicable), or
 - Officiated anywhere, no longer be active as an official, and be forty (40) years of age or older, or
 - A person, forty (40) years of age or older, whose contribution to sports, in a supporting role, is deemed by the Board of Directors as so significant as to warrant induction into the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame.

Selection of all Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame inductees shall be the responsibility of the Board. Individual members will introduce nominees for consideration at the annual November meeting and the vote will be taken at the next month's meeting. Election of all inductees shall be by majority vote of the Board.

Additional Policies

The number of inductees shall be limited to eight (8) inductees per year, unless the Board considers and designates two (2) inductees (such as siblings or husband and wife) as a pair to be inducted together, then the number of inductees shall be increased to nine (9) per year. The criteria for designating two applicants as a pair to be inducted together is that the two (2) individual careers are indistinguishable and to induct one without inducting the other would create an inequity.

The Board shall not select more than one (1) deceased inductee per year of the total eight (8) inductees to be selected each year. If two (2) or more candidates in this category have the same number of votes after the initial votes taken, then a runoff shall be held between the two (2) or more candidates with the same number and highest number of votes in that category.

The Board shall not select more than one (1) inductee from the category of "Support Personnel" (paragraph 2) above per year of the eight (8) total inductees to be selected each year. If two (2) or more candidates in this category have the same number of votes after the initial votes taken, then a runoff shall be held between the two (2) or more candidates with the same number and highest number of votes in that category.

In order for any person to be considered for induction to the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame that person must have a completed application on file with the Board of Directors. **Any person, including Board members, may complete an application and nominate anyone to be considered for induction to the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame.** See official nomination forms on the next page.

All applications for induction must be turned in no later than the regular scheduled Board meeting held in the month prior to the monthly meeting (November) where voting occurs for selection for the next year's class of inductees.



MCSHoF Nomination Form

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame



OFFICIAL NOMINATION FORM





MCSHoF Nomination Form

MORGAN COUNTY SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Nomination Form

(PLEASE PRINT OF TYPE ALL INFORMATION)

I. NOMINATION INFORMATION

NAME: _____
Last First Middle Nickname

ADDRESS: _____
Street City State Zip code

AGE: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____ PLACE OF BIRTH: _____

WORK#: _____ HOME#: _____ CELL#: _____ DECEASED (Y/N): _____

HIGH SCHOOL: _____ YEAR GRADUATED _____

COLLEGE: _____ YEAR GRADUATED _____

ADDITIONAL DEGREES (Masters, Doctorates, etc.) _____

(IF NOMINEE IS DECEASED, GIVE DATE OF DEATH AND FILL IN SECTION II)

II. NEAREST RELATIVE

NAME: _____
Last First Middle Nickname

RELATIONSHIP: _____

ADDRESS: _____
Street City State Zip code

WORK#: _____ HOME#: _____ CELL#: _____

(Continued on next page)



MCSHoF Nomination Form

III. SPONSOR INFORMATION (Person Making Nomination)

NAME: _____
Last First Middle Nickname

ADDRESS: _____
Street City State Zip code

WORK#: _____ HOME#: _____ CELL#: _____

TITLE/POSITION: _____ SCHOOL/SYSTEM: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

IV. ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

IN CHART BELOW, PLEASE LIST CHRONOLOGICALLY THE NOMINEE'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS (coach, principal, etc.) AND OTHER APPROPRIATE DATA:

WHAT SPORT	DATES	HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE/PRO	AWARDS AND COACHING RECORDS

OTHER AWARDS AND HONORS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

(Continued on next page)



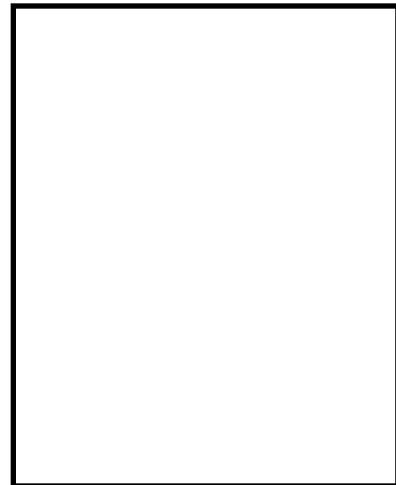
MCSHoF Nomination Form

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS:

V. PHOTOGRAPH

ATTACH A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE NOMINEE: (preferably head & shoulder shot; wallet sized)

Send sharp
photograph
(preferably color)



V. SUPPORT OF CANDIDACY

Using whatever supportive data you wish, please describe the activities and accomplishments which make this nominee a viable candidate for the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame. Please remember that only thorough and complete documentation will be considered. Newspaper articles, letters of recommendations, etc., may also be submitted in support of the nominee.

The committee shall seek to honor those who have directly influenced the history and evolution of Morgan County athletics. Attachments are considered appropriate.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED: _____ REMAINS ACTIVE UNTIL: _____



MCSHoF Information & Support

Information

- The MCSHoF's website can be found at www.mcshof52.com.
- MCSHoF can also be found at our facebook page.
- The inductee plaques can be found on the first floor of the Morgan County Courthouse, located at 302 Lee Street NE, Decatur Alabama.

Support

The Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame is a non-profit organization established in 1988 as a tribute to the men and women whose achievements in the world of sports have made Morgan County a centerpiece of athletic success and brought special honor to our community.

During its 30 years of existence, the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame has recognized 206 individuals at our annual banquet.

All members of the board are all unpaid volunteers. The modest costs (postage, supplies, etc.) and inductee awards are financed by the annual induction banquet, program sponsors, golf tournament, and donations. All remaining proceeds are given to the Morgan County Boys and Girls Club. Since its inception, the Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame has contributed more than \$500,000.00 to the Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama.

The Hall of Fame is always in need of funding to keep the program, activities, and events effective and moving forward. If you operate a business in the county or one that is associated with sporting activities, a sponsor relationship with the Hall of Fame would be to your benefit. To associate yourself with the MCSHOF in helping us continue to give recognition and award to county teams and athletes, sheds a positive light on you and your business and will be rewarded with dedicated patronage.

Sponsorships are available of all types and sizes for any budget. We sincerely appreciate all support. We encourage yours!

If you would like to discuss a sponsorship and how it will benefit your business as well as the MCSHoF, area teams and athletes, please contact:

Caki Bolding at 256-566-5861 or cbolding@bgcnal.com

Or

Mail your gift to

Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame
P.O. Box 326
Hartselle, Alabama 35640

Make checks payable to: Morgan County Sports Hall of Fame



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On behalf of the MCSHOF Board, we want to extend a heart-felt "thank you" to our sponsors for your commitment to making this event so successful. It is the vision of the Board to enshrine outstanding Morgan County athletics into the Hall, to inform citizens, to entertain attendees, and to provide each one of you with a printed program that gives an overview of the Hall's mission and history. Our sponsors' generous contribution made our vision a reality by helping to offset the cost of holding the Conference in an environment as beautiful and professional as the Cook Museum in Decatur, Alabama. Remember, all proceeds go to the Boys and Girls club of Morgan County - over \$500,000 in 34 years!

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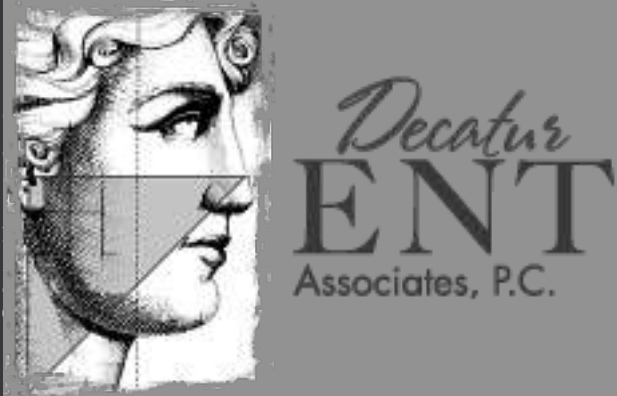


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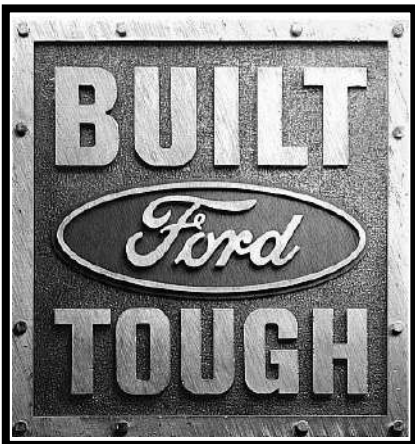
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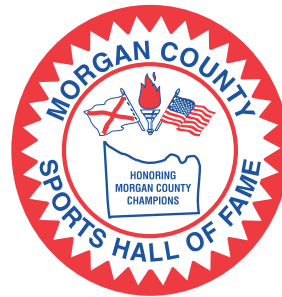


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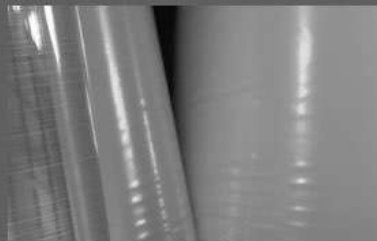
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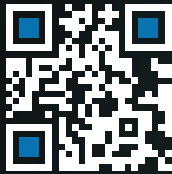
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