



HONORING THE GREATEST FOOTBALL
PLAYERS AND COACHES FROM HISTORICALLY
BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Black College Football Hall of Fame Class of 2012 Announced

***Priority Payment Systems Third Annual Enshrinement Ceremony
to be Held February 18, 2012 in Atlanta, Georgia***

October 21, 2011 (Atlanta, GA) – Today the **Black College Football Hall of Fame** announced the Class of 2012. The newest members were selected from a list of 35 finalists who had been determined earlier by the **Black College Football Hall of Fame Selection Committee**.

The inductees will be honored February 18, 2012 at the **Atlanta Marriott Marquis** during the ***Priority Payment Systems Third Annual Enshrinement Ceremony***.

Black College Football Hall of Fame - Class of 2012

- **Willie Brown** (DB, Grambling State University, 1959-1963)
- **Harry Carson** (DE, South Carolina State University, 1972-1975)
- **Eldridge Dickey** (QB, Tennessee State University, 1964-1967)
- **James “Shack” Harris** (QB, Grambling State University, 1965-1968)
- **Claude Humphrey** (DE, Tennessee State University, 1964-1967)
- **Steve McNair** (QB, Alcorn State University, 1991-1994)
- **Willie “Wonderful Willie” Richardson** (WR, Jackson State University, 1959-1962)
- **Johnny Sample** (DB/RB, Maryland Eastern Shore, 1954-1958)
- **Rayfield “Big Cat” Wright** (OL, Fort Valley State, 1963-1966)
- **Cleve Abbott** (Head Coach, Tuskegee, 1923-1954)
- **Jackie Graves** (Former NFL Scout, former director of personnel for the Philadelphia Eagles)

The **Black College Football Hall of Fame Selection Committee** is comprised of journalists, historians and former football executives from around the country. The committee includes **Ernie Accorsi, Charles Bailey, Gil Brandt, Charles Garcia, Donald Hunt, Mike Hurd, Ty Miller, Roscoe Nance, Charlie Neal and Lloyd Vance**.



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The Black College Football Hall of Fame was established in October of 2009 to honor the greatest football players and coaches from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Previous inductees include greats such as **Lem Barney, Mel Blount, Buck Buchanan, Willie Davis, “Bullet” Bob Hayes, Deacon Jones, Walter Payton, Eddie G. Robinson, Jerry Rice, Art Shell, Doug Williams and Paul “Tank” Younger**. This year, nine players, one coach and one contributor will be inducted into the Black College Football Hall of Fame.

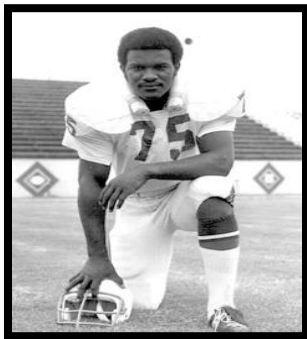
About the Player Inductees

Willie Brown, DB



Brown lettered all four years at split end and outside linebacker during his time at Grambling. He was a member of Coach Eddie Robinson’s first Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) championship team in 1960. Although undrafted out of college, he would retire the only NFL player to intercept at least one pass in 16 consecutive seasons. During his 12 years with the Oakland Raiders, he played in three AFL and six AFC championship games, as well as Super Bowls II and XI. He is still considered among the premier cornerbacks of all time. Finishing his career with 54 interceptions, he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1984.

Harry Carson, LB



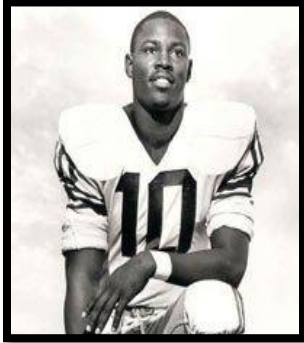
Carson played for Coach Willie Jeffries at South Carolina State University from 1972–1975 and did not miss a single game in four years. He became the first Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) player to win consecutive Defensive Player of the Year honors, and assisted SC State to consecutive conference championships. In 1975, he set school records with 117 tackles and 17 sacks. With Carson as their captain, the Bulldogs defense recorded six shutouts in 1975, and held their opponents to just 29 points, an NCAA record for a ten game season. Carson was drafted in the fourth round of the 1976 NFL Draft by the Giants. He spent all of his 13 seasons with them, leading the team in tackles for five seasons, and was their captain for ten. Carson retired at the end of the 1988 season, and was elected into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2006.



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Eldridge Dickey, QB



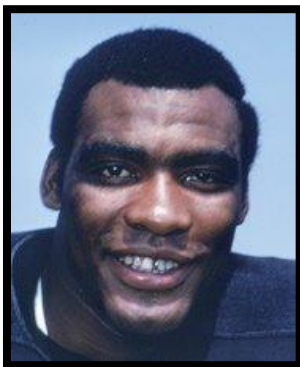
Dickey was a three time HBCU All-American at Tennessee State University. He completed his collegiate career with 6,523 passing yards and 67 touchdowns. Dickey was considered a gifted athlete with his strongest positions being quarterback and punter. He was also able to throw precision passes with both his left and right arm. With Dickey under center, the 1966 TSU team earned their first undefeated, untied season and their first National Black College Football Championship. In 1968, Dickey was drafted in the first round by the Oakland Raiders

James “Shack” Harris, QB



With Harris at Quarterback, Grambling won or shared all four Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) titles. He was named MVP of the 1967 Orange Blossom Classic. As a senior, Harris passed for 1,972 yards and 21 touchdowns on only 225 attempts. In three years as Grambling’s starting quarterback, he led the Tigers to a 24-5-1 record. He went on to be drafted by the Buffalo Bills, and became the first black player to start a season at quarterback. In 1974, he led the Los Angeles Rams to an NFC Western Division title and their first playoff victory since 1951. Harris then became the first African-American quarterback to start a conference championship game. Harris was named to the NFC Pro Bowl team in 1974 and was awarded MVP of that game.

Claude Humphrey, DE



Humphrey was an All-American lineman at Tennessee State University under Coach John Merritt. Humphrey helped lead the Big Blue Tigers to a 35-3-1 record from 1965 to 1967. The 1967 team won the national championship for HBCU’s. Humphrey was drafted out of Tennessee State in the first round of the 1968 NFL Draft with the third overall choice by the Falcons. Humphrey was named to the Pro Bowl six times over the span of his career. He finished his career with 126½ career sacks with the Falcons and Eagles.



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Steve McNair, QB



McNair had many standout seasons with Alcorn State University. In 1992, he threw for 3,541 yards and 29 touchdowns, and rushed for 10 more scores. In 1993, the Braves upped their record to 8–3 while McNair threw for more than 3,000 yards and 30 touchdowns. He was also named First-Team All-SWAC for the third year in a row. In his senior season, McNair gained nearly 6,000 yards rushing and passing, along with 53 touchdowns. In the process, he surpassed more than a dozen records and was named an All-American. In addition, McNair won the Walter Payton Award as the top I-AA player and finished third in the Heisman Trophy voting. He set career records for the Football Championship Series with 14,496 passing yards, as well as the division record for total offensive yards with 16,283 career yards, a record that still stands. He was drafted by the Houston Oilers with the third overall pick in the 1995 NFL Draft and became a full time starter for ten years, leading his Tennessee Titans to Super Bowl XXXIV.

Willie “Wonderful Willie” Richardson, WR



Richardson became one of the most honored players in the great history of the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC). Richardson was a four-time member of the Pittsburgh Courier Black All-America team. In addition, he was a three-time All-SWAC performer and a two-time NAIA All-America. In his final two seasons, he led Jackson State to a SWAC title and a Black College National Championship. Richardson caught 171 passes for 36 touchdowns and played safety on defense. In the pros, Richardson was a seventh round selection by the Baltimore Colts. With the Colts and Dolphins, Richardson played eight seasons, catching 195 passes for 25 touchdowns.



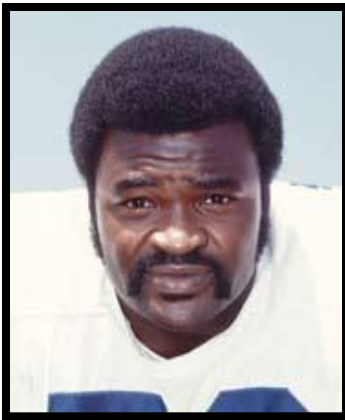
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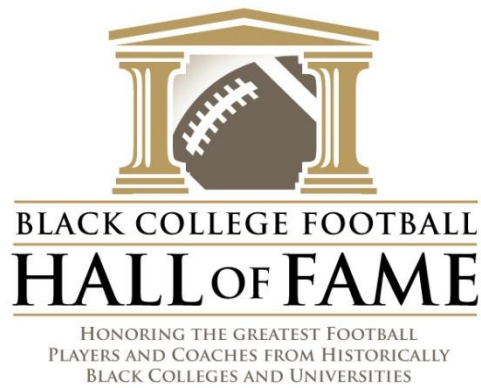
Johnny Sample

Sample was standout at Maryland State College. In 1957, playing offense and defense, he was selected to the Little All-American Team by the Pittsburgh Courier and to the All-Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Team. During his college career, he led the Hawks to an overall record of 28 wins, 1 loss and 1 tie, while averaging 21.6 points per game. In addition, they won two CIAA championships, in 1955 and 1957. He was the first player from an HBCU to be selected to play in the nationally recognized College All-Star Game. He is the only professional football player to have won all three: an NFL, AFL and Super Bowl Championship. Sample finished his 11 professional football seasons with 41 interceptions, which he returned for 460 yards and four touchdowns. He also recovered 13 fumbles, returning them for 61 yards. On special teams, he returned 68 punts for 559 yards and a touchdown, along with 60 kickoffs for 1,560 yards and a touchdown. Sample led the NFL in punt return yards in 1961.



Rayfield "Big Cat" Wright, OL

Wright was known as a great athlete for his size. After being a standout at Fort Valley State, Wright would be drafted by the Dallas Cowboys in 1967 as a tight end. After three years of playing tight end, Wright would play 166 games starting at right tackle and play in six NFC Championship games and five Super Bowls, winning two of them (Super Bowl VI and Super Bowl XII). He anchored the line for an offense that finished in the top 10 in scoring all 10 seasons in the 1970s, while helping pave the way for the first five 1,000-yard rushers in Dallas Cowboys history. Wright played at a time when the right tackle was the most important spot on the offensive line, and was usually paired against the opponent's best pass rusher. Wright broke the mold for men his size. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame 2006.



About the Coach



Cleve Abbott, Head Coach

Abbott was the eighth head football coach for the Tuskegee University Golden Tigers located in Tuskegee, Alabama and he held that position for 32 seasons, from 1923 until 1954. His football coaching record at Tuskegee, where he was also a Hall of Fame track coach, was 202 wins, 97 losses and 27 ties. This ranks him first at the school in total wins and fifth in winning percentage (.661). The football stadium at Tuskegee bears Abbott's name.

About the Contributor

Picture Not Available

Jackie Graves, NFL Scout

A former director of personnel and scout for the Philadelphia Eagles, Graves made a huge impact on Black College Football. Graves was a pioneer in bringing qualified players from the HBCU system to the professional ranks. He was recently selected to the Ourlads' Scout Hall of Fame.

The Black College Football Hall of Fame is sponsored by **The Shack Harris & Doug Williams Foundation**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization. For more information visit www.BlackCollegeFootballHOF.org