



Cover of "They Call Me Big House"

TIMES TO REMEMBER

TAVARIS JACKSON DIES IN CAR CRASH; NEW AD AT TENN. STATE, GOLF COACH AT HOWARD

HISTORY: "Big House" Gaines at the Final Four and HBCU players on NFL teams.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

TARVARIS JACKSON DIES IN CAR CRASH:

Former NFL quarterback **Tarvaris Jackson**, a product of **Alabama State**, died in a car crash in Alabama on Sunday night. He was 36 years old.



Jackson

Jackson was killed when the 2012 Chevrolet Camaro he was driving "left the roadway, struck a tree, and overturned," a spokesperson for the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency told CNN.

The former Minnesota Vikings and Seattle Seahawks quarterback was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead. The crash occurred about 7 miles south of Montgomery, his hometown.

Jackson joined **Tennessee State** as the Tigers' quarterbacks coach in 2019 after coaching at Alabama State, his alma mater, for a year. During his 10-year career with the NFL, he accumulated 45 career touchdowns.

PURYEAR TO LEAD HOWARD GOLF:

Howard University has hired experienced golf coach **Samuel Puryear Jr.** to lead its new program.



Puryear

Puryear, who has coached at Stanford, Michigan State and Queens College, played collegiately at **Tennessee State** and will now head Div. I men's and women's golf programs that NBA star **Stephen Curry** announced in August that he would fund for the next six years. The program begins with the 2020-2021 school year.

A native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Puryear became the first African-American head coach at a Power 5 school when he was hired at Michigan State in 2008. To date, his coaching career has produced one national championship – the 2006 NCAA Championship while an assistant at Stanford – one Big Ten Championship, two Coach of the Year honors, two Conference Carolina titles and two South Atlantic Conference championships.

At TSU he played under Coach **Catana Sparks**, the first woman to coach a men's Division I golf team, a story on which the movie "From the Rough" was later based.

NEW TENNESSE STATE AD:

Tennessee State University has found its replacement for **Teresa Phillips** as TSU President **Glenda Glover** announced **Dr. Mikki Allen** to be Phillips' successor last week as athletics director.



Allen

He takes over for Phillips, who spent 16 years leading the athletics department and is retiring, and will officially assume the position on May 1.

Allen has previous ties to TSU as he earned his master's degree in sports administration in 2007 and his wife, **Jekia**, earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the school in 1999.

Allen spent the last 11 years in sports administration, including serving as the assistant director of athletics for player relations and development at the University of Tennessee. He was lauded for his work with UT's football players. Allen was a part of the Vols 1999 national championship winning team and has helped lead several fundraising campaigns for UT, raising more than \$20 million during his time at the school.

"He's a successful leader who puts student-athletes first, builds strong relationships both internally and externally from his success as a fundraiser, and ... is committed to the development of coaches and staff to achieve at a very high level," Glover said.

Ruptured Myth – 'Big House' and 'The Baron'

A Final (Four) to remember

By **LUT WILLIAMS**

BCSP Editor
(Then) AOL BlackVoices Columnist,
Edited From 2005

Adolph Rupp is no hero of mine.

Clarence "Big House" Gaines is.

When Gaines, the legendary former **Winston-Salem State University** basketball coach and Kentucky native, was honored at a 2004 University of Kentucky basketball game at Rupp Arena – the sprawling UK home court in Lexington named in honor of its legendary coach – it brought to mind the strange history of race relations in this country and how sports, particularly black college sports, has impacted it.

Gaines was born in tiny Paducah, Ky., but had to leave the state to make his mark in life. And make one he did. He was appropriately and fittingly honored by (then) Kentucky head coach **Tubby Smith** (now the head coach at High Point), a black man.

In addition to the honor in Lexington, Paducah in 2017 renamed a street and erected a monument in Gaines' honor. The celebration was part of the city's annual August Emancipation Celebration event that honored Gaines and his family.

Rupp, the legendary Kentucky basketball coach known as "The Baron," built the Wildcats into perhaps the nation's premier program winning a then-record 876 games from 1930 to 1972.

Of-remembered for his staunch opposition to integration, he got what some consider his comeuppance in the 1966 NCAA Championship Game at Cole Field House against Texas Western.

Before a national television



University of Kentucky Sports Photos

LYNCH: Adolph Rupp (r.) with lead scorer, forward Pat Riley (#42).

With this year's NCAA Final Four cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we thought it appropriate to look back at a Final Four – actually a final game – that no one will forget!

audience that included this writer, five black Texas Western starters took the floor against Kentucky's 26-1 top-ranked squad of lilly white players dubbed "Rupp's Runts" in a game that most acknowledge changed the face of college basketball. It was the first time five white starters met five black starters in the title game.

That Rupp already had four NCAA championships, was seen as the grumpy head of perhaps the greatest program in college basketball and was fairly or unfairly viewed as the symbol of opposition to integration, only added to the drama. Never mind the fact that unlike its Southeastern Conference counterparts, Kentucky routinely played teams with black players – not five black starters – and likely welcomed the challenge.

For me, an 11-year-old basketball junkie from Danville, Va., as well as most of the nation, it was a morality play.

It had all the symbolism of a modern-day Tiger Woods win at The Masters.

Texas Western methodically took apart Rupp and his 'Runts' on March 16, 1966, never surrendering the lead after going up early en route to a stunning 72-65 victory. Using seven black players and no whites for the entire game, Don Haskins' squad ran around, past, through and over the UK darlings.

Though black players had been part of NCAA championship teams dating back to the early 1950s, Kentucky's dismantling by an all-black squad on such a national stage buried another bastion of white invincibility. It had all the symbolism of a modern-day Tiger Woods win at The Masters.

Gaines was there, along with many of his black college coaching peers. The **Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association** (CIAA), to which WSSU then (and now) belongs, was having its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., along with the National Association of Basketball Coaches that always meets on Final Four weekend.

"We knew there were five (black) kids," Gaines said of the Texas Western squad. "A couple of them had gone to (**North Carolina**) **A&T**." Actually, **Neville Shed**, a starting forward for Texas Western, had played for Gaines' good friend and rival, head coach **Cal Irvin** at A&T. **David Lattin**, a center who dominated the inside play in the game, had played for **Harold Hunter** at **Tennessee State**.

Kentucky scoring leader Pat Riley – yeah, *that* Pat Riley – reportedly said of Lattin, "In those days, players didn't dunk. I hadn't seen anyone dunk. But these guys came out, and after they had dunked on me about three times, I knew they had a lot more to accomplish than we did."

What an understatement. I guess Riley had never seen a black college game.

Only a year later Gaines would become the first black coach to win an NCAA basketball title of any



WSSU Sports Photo

COACH GAINES: The legendary Winston-Salem State basketball coach was honored in 2004 by then Kentucky head coach **Tubby Smith**. Gaines passed in 2005 at 81.

system that he used, it was almost impossible to beat him at that time. He was an excellent coach and an excellent teacher.

"The only thing that we thought about him is, like with all of the coaches in the South, they all were racists.

"Oh, we've gone through hell, man," said Gaines.

Gaines and a legion of black college coaches had paved the way for that fateful day in 1966.

By winning three straight NAIA titles from 1957-59 at **Tennessee State**, **John McLendon** became the first coach to accomplish that feat and also forced integration of tournament accommodations when he threatened to not bring his defending champion team back to the tournament in 1958 unless they stayed in the same hotel as the other teams.

McLendon and his cohorts then worked to end the practice of putting all the black college teams in the same district – the infamous District 29 – where they had to beat each other before taking on the predominantly white schools.

This, no doubt, opened the doors for **Grambling State** under **Fred Hobdy** to win the 1962 NAIA crown and **Prairie View A&M** under **LeRoy Moore** to come away with the title in 1963, not to mention Gaines' title in 1967.

It also opened the door for Smith 30 years later to become the head coach at Rupp's former school.

Thank God for coaches like Gaines and for coaches like **Tubby Smith** who remembered and honored them.

Best HBCU studs for all 32 NFL teams

With the NFL Draft coming up on April 23-25, ESPN ran a story last Wednesday with the headline – *Best small-college studs for all 32 NFL teams* – highlighting the fact that "You don't have to play at a traditional college football power to achieve NFL stardom."

There were 15 former black college players – nearly half the list – highlighted from the 32 teams including, among others, Pro Football Hall of Famers **Walter Payton** of **Jackson State** and the Chicago Bears, **Jerry Rice** of **Mississippi Valley State** and the San Francisco 49ers and **Larry Little** of **Bethune-Cookman** and the Miami Dolphins.

This week, the **BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE** would like to not only share the former HBCU players selected by the ESPN writers but complete the list with the best HBCU players from all 32 NFL teams from among the many that reached stardom.

An expanded list of HBCU standouts from all 32 teams – with their accomplishments – will be posted on **Onnidan.com**, online home of the **BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE**, over the next two weeks (BCSP Xtra).

The AFC list is compiled this week with the NFC to follow next week.

AFC EAST - BUFFALO BILLS

Frank Lewis, WR, Grambling State - 1978-83
Pro Bowl selection in 1981. ... Tied for fourth with 14 100-yard receiving games. ... Ranks fifth with 4,638 yards receiving despite playing only 80 games. In his pro career, which included seven years and two Super Bowl championships with the Pittsburgh Steelers, he had 397 receptions for 6,724 yards and 40 touchdowns.

MIAMI DOLPHINS

Larry Little, OG, Bethune-Cookman - 1969-80
Little immediately became a Pro Bowl player after joining the Dolphins in 1969 and was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1983. He was one of the key cogs for the Dolphins' offense, paving the way for running backs like **Larry Csonka** and **Mercury Morris**. He was also an important member of the 1972 and 1973 Super Bowl champion Dolphins. Little was named first-team all-pro for five straight seasons from 1971 to 1975 and made the NFL's 1970s All-Decade team.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Leon Gray, OT, Jackson State - 1973-78
Voted into the Patriots Hall of Fame in 2019, Gray was a three-time AP first-team All-Pro selection. He spent five years with the Patriots before joining the Houston Oilers and then the New Orleans Saints.

NEW YORK JETS

Winston Hill, OT, Texas Southern - 1963-76
Played in 195 consecutive games, many of them protecting Joe Namath's blind side. Super Bowl champion. Four-time Pro Bowler. Four-time AFL All-Star. Voted to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2020.

AFC NORTH - BALTIMORE RAVENS

Shannon Sharpe, TE, Savannah State - 2000-01
Sharpe was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame on August 6, 2011. He played 12 seasons for the Broncos (1990-1999, 2002-2003) and two with the Ravens (2000-2001), winning three Super Bowls and finishing his career as the NFL's all-time leader in receptions (815), receiving yards (10,060) and receiving touchdowns (62) by a tight end.

CINCINNATI BENGALS

Ken Riley, CB, Florida A&M - 1969-83
Riley seamlessly made the transition to cornerback after spending his college days as Florida A&M's starting quarterback. He menaced NFL passers during his 15-year career and tallied 65 total interceptions, good for fifth all-time and easily a franchise record that will be nearly impossible to break. His name isn't as notable as former Bengals quarterback **Ken Anderson**, another small-school product with Hall of Fame numbers, but he deserves some love for an unheralded and should-be Hall of Fame career.

CLEVELAND BROWNS

Leroy Kelly, RB, Morgan State - 1964-73

The Browns drafted Kelly out of Morgan State in the eighth round of the 1964 draft. Playing behind the legendary **Jim Brown**, Kelly immediately became an NFL champion in his first season. When Brown retired two years later, Kelly became an All-Pro in his first season as the starter, then won rushing titles the following two years. Voted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1994.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

Mel Blount, CB, Southern - 1970-83
Blount is the Steelers' all-time leader with 57 career interceptions, tied for 12th on the NFL list. Blount was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1989. He won four Super Bowl championships. In 1975, Blount led the NFL with 11 interceptions and was named AP NFL Defensive Player of the Year. The Steelers won their second Super Bowl that year and Blount earned the first of his five Pro Bowl berths and the first of his two All-Pro selections.

AFC SOUTH - HOUSTON TEXANS

Jacoby Jones, WR, Lane - 2007-11
Drafted by Houston in the third round of the 2007 draft, Jones spent five seasons in Houston, contributing at receiver and as a returner. His best season with the Texans came in 2010, when he caught 51 passes for 562 yards and three touchdowns.

BALTIMORE / INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Robert Mathis, DE, Alabama A&M - 2003-16
Selected in the fifth round of the 2003 draft, teamed with **Dwight Freeney** to form one of the best pass-rushing duos in the NFL. Mathis played with a chip on his shoulder because some scouts believed he would struggle at the next level because he went to a small college. Mathis is the Colts' franchise leader in sacks (123) and was named to the Pro Bowl five times. His best season was in 2013 when he had 19.5 sacks.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

Jimmy Smith, WR, Jackson State - 1995-2005
A second-round draft pick by Dallas Smith joining the Jaguars in 1992 and went on to become the franchise's all-time leader in receptions, yards and TD catches. He had nine 1,000-yard seasons, including seven in a row (1996-2002), and made five Pro Bowls. His 12,287 yards receiving rank 23rd all-time in NFL history and is more than **Charlie Joyner**, **Michael Irvin**, **Lance Alworth**, and **Don Maynard**, all of whom are Hall of Famers.

HOUSTON OILERS / TENNESSEE TITANS

Steve McNair, QB, Alcorn State - 1999-2005
The Houston Oilers selected McNair with the No. 3 pick in the 1995 NFL draft. McNair helped lead Tennessee to a Super Bowl appearance in 1999, the franchise's first season being known as the Titans. He went on to lead the Titans to three more playoff appearances and was named to three Pro Bowls. McNair's best season was in 2003 when he led the NFL with a 100.4 passer rating and was named co-MVP with **Peyton Manning**. -- Turron Haven

AFC WEST - DENVER BRONCOS

Shannon Sharpe, TE, Savannah State - 1990-99, 2002-03
The Broncos have had plenty of success with players from smaller programs such as **Rod Smith** and **Billy Thompson**, but Sharpe leads the way. The Hall of Famer was selected in the seventh round of the 1990 draft. He arrived as a wide receiver, but was switched to tight end by **Dan Reeves**' staff. He won three Super Bowl rings -- two with the Broncos, one with the Baltimore Ravens -- and was named to eight Pro Bowls. He was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame's Class of 2011.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Emmitt Thomas, CB, Bishop - 1966-78
In 1969 when Chiefs won the Super Bowl, Thomas led the AFL in interceptions with nine. In 1974, he led the NFL with 12 interceptions. He earned one AFL All-Star selection and four Pro Bowl nods. Thomas holds Chiefs franchise records for career interceptions (58), single-season interceptions (12) and career interception return yards (927). He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2008 and returned as defensive backs coach from 2010 through 2018.

SAN DIEGO / LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

Gary "Big Hands" Johnson, DT, Grambling State - 1975-84
Finished his career with 67 sacks, which was most in team history at that time. His 17.5 sacks in 1980 still stand as the high-water mark for single-season sacks. He was a four-time All-Pro and a four-time Pro Bowl selection.

OAKLAND / LOS ANGELES / LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

Art Shell, OT, Maryland State - 1968-94
Shell participated in 24 playoff contests, including Super Bowls XI and XV, and was named to eight Pro Bowls and was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1989. In 1999, he was ranked number 55 on The Sporting News' list of the 100 Greatest Football Players. He played all of his 15 years in Oakland and was a major part of two Raiders Super Bowl victories.

ON THE MOVE

WHO'S IN AND WHO'S OUT IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

BASKETBALL TRANSFERS

• **Randy Miller Jr.**, 6-2, 190, SG - From **North Carolina Central** to Indiana State - Preseason all-MEAC played in only eight games in 2019-20 (14.3 ppg.).

• **Blake Harris**, 6-foot-3, 195, PG, Jr. - From NC State to **North Carolina A&T** - Left NC State in late October. Played in 30 games as a sophomore, averaging 3.1 points and 1.5 assists.

• **Michael Weathers**, 6-foot-2, 180, SG, RS So. - From Oklahoma State to **Texas Southern** - Had off-court issues at OSU, dismissed midway through the 2018-19 season. Averaged 9.2 points after sitting out following transfer from Miami (Ohio).