

Grambling Legends Sports Hall of Fame



BASEBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE

Juan McWilliams

Juan McWilliams' humble roots started in small Copiah County in Wesson, Mississippi. A 1981 graduate from Brother Martin High School in New Orleans, LA, Juan received notoriety in high school as an outstanding two-sport athlete in football and baseball. While attending high school he received several college scholarship offers in both sports.

Subsequently, making his final college visit to Grambling's campus he determined that "It was love at first sight".

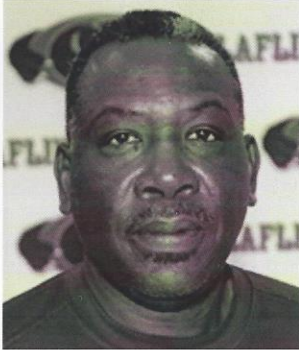
As a four-year starter, Juan was a four-time All-Southwestern Athletic Conference selection. Ending his freshman season batting .402, he was also selected Freshmen of Year by Grambling's Baseball Program and selected Freshman of the Year by the Southwestern Athletic Conference coaches. Additional honors he received during his freshmen year include being selected to the 1982 All-Louisiana All-Star team.

As a student-athlete, his hard work, unselfish play and teamwork helped Grambling's Baseball Program win three consecutive Southwestern Athletic Conference Baseball Championships (1983, 1984 and 1985.) In the 1985 Southwestern Athletic Conference Tournament, Juan was selected as the tournament's Outstanding Offensive Player.

McWilliams was selected by the Pittsburgh Pirates Professional Baseball Organization in the 1985 Major League Draft. He concluded his baseball career at Grambling by achieving two university all-time milestones, hitting the most home runs in a season and most runs scored in a baseball career at Grambling.

Juan received the Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from Grambling State University. He is currently employed as a workforce development professional and resides with his family in York, PA, where he also volunteers as a youth baseball instructor and coach.

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BASEBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE James O. Randall

From Mobile, Alabama, came James O. Randall. He graduated from C. F. Vidor High School, where he was named Most Valuable Player in baseball. James led the team in home runs, runs batted in and batting average. He pitched a one hitter against one of the best teams in Mobile County, Alabama. He was rated by the Mobile Press Register as one of the best, if not the best, high school baseball players in Mobile County.

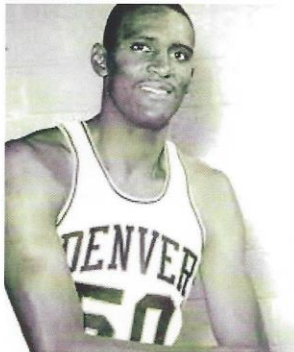
He was recruited by many institutions including Southern University and was signed by Grambling. In college, as a first baseman and outfielder, he was named Freshman of the Year. The next year, he won a place on the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) second team; and the following year, he was named to the SWAC first team. He still holds Grambling's record for doubles in a season.

James Randall was drafted in the 10th round by the California Angels. His professional career took him to the California Angels family and the Chicago White Sox. He was a Doug Lowman Trophy winner for the Most Home Runs.

James is currently employed at Claflin University, Orangeburg, South Carolina. He recently completed his 10th season as head coach of the Panther baseball team and his 13th overall. His team won the 2012 Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) Eastern Division Championship. Randall led his team to the school's first ever SIAC Baseball Championship in 2016 and was named the SIAC Tournament Most Outstanding Coach.

He is married to Wanda Davis Randall and has two daughters, Latetia and Brandi. He has one granddaughter, Hayden Dean.

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BASKETBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE Tommie Lee Bowens

From Okolona, Mississippi, Tommie was a product of the Fannie Carter High School. Bowens has a long and colorful history with basketball, and the game has influenced many of the directions his life has taken. Bowens was attending Okolona Junior College when he was recruited by Grambling. Grambling's Coach Fred Hobdy contacted Tommie's mother to ask when he would be ready to transfer to the College. The story goes that she told Hobdy that he could come get him that day. His transfer to Grambling marked his first trip out of the state.

The Okolona native was a member of the 1961 men's basketball team at Grambling College when the team became the first from Louisiana to win the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Championship (NAIA). The team won the championship at the Municipal Coliseum in Kansas City, where Grambling beat Georgetown College of Kentucky to win the NAIA Championship, with the score being 95-75.

After playing on the championship team and graduating with a degree in Physical Education and Recreation, he played with the U.S. Team through Central and South America and with the Harlem Clowns. Bowens was drafted into the Army where he proudly played basketball and ran track for the Fifth Army Unit. He credits his military career for pushing his basketball career forward. Tommie believes that the Army helped to boost his opportunities. Following his tour, he was drafted by the Atlanta Hawks and went on to play for the Denver Rockets, New York Nets and New Orleans Buccaneers during the late 1960s.

After retiring from basketball, he was employed by Braniff Airlines. Tommie returned home to Okolona after his retirement from Braniff and became a Chickasaw County Constable until he retired from that position.

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BASKETBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE Bobby Ricks

Bobby Ricks is a product of Louisiana Public Schools. He has always been a sports advocate. Upon graduating from high school, Bobby, along with the entire Eula D. Britton Varsity Basketball Team (Rayville, LA), including the team manager, was recruited by Coach Fred Hobdy to play at Grambling.

Upon graduating from Grambling, he taught and coached one year in Louisiana before being drafted by the armed forces—serving some of those years in Vietnam. Ricks then went to Chicago where he continued his coaching and teaching career, while obtaining his master's degree in Urban Education from Governor's State University, University Park, Will County, Illinois.

The majority of his coaching career was at William Rainey Harper High School in Chicago, where he coached many outstanding students, many of whom received athletic scholarships used to further their education. Ricks was named Coach of the Year; moreover, he coached the Chicago Public School A.A. Sectional Championship Blue Division Varsity Team. He was also the Boys' Basketball Coach of the Blue Central Champions. Bobby was inducted into the Chicago Public League Basketball Coaches Association (CPLBCA) Hall of Fame.

Bobby Ricks retired from coaching in 1998 after many years of outstanding service.

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TRACK AND FIELD | 2017 INDUCTEE
Brenda Gullede-Davis

In 1958, identical twins - Brenda and Linda were born in Chicago, IL. As they grew, Brenda became known throughout the community for playing softball and winning short races against the boys. As a junior at Calumet High School, the track coach observed the twins running. One day she asked them to run the 100 yard dash and was amazed how fast they could run without any training. The coach had plans for their development and started training them immediately.

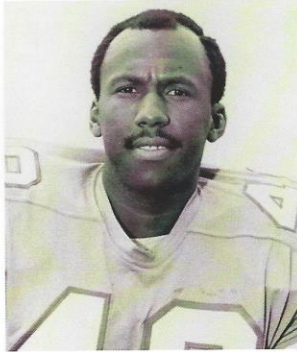
Brenda became a track team member and ran the 4x100, 4x200 relays and 200 yard dash. Also, she developed her skills to compete in the high jump. As a senior, she competed in the city, sectional and state competitions. Brenda finished 1st in the 200 yard dash, achieving a national time of 23.5 and was a member of the team that won 1st place in the 4x100 and 4x200 relays going on to win the State Championship.

She was known for her outstanding track achievements and was approached by several college recruiters. Coach Ed Stevens offered her a scholarship to attend GSU. At GSU, Brenda excelled academically and developed an outstanding track career. She excelled and was known throughout the U. S. as one of GSU's top sprinters. Brenda ran the 200 yard dash, 400 yard dash, and the 4x100 and 4x400 relays. She was a member of the phenomenal team that won individual and relay titles from Texas, Drake, Penn, and LSU track meets. She was also a member of the SWAC Championship Team.

In 1980, Brenda graduated from GSU having earned a B.S. in Business Administration. In 1998, she left her job of 13 years at Wesley-Jessen Corporation to become a substitute teacher and discovered that she loved being in the classroom with students.

In 2003, her passion for teaching led to the pursuit of a teaching certificate. In 2010, she received a master's degree in School Leadership. Currently Dean-Safety Facilitator, she has worked for the Franklin Elementary School System for 17 years. Brenda plays an integral part in developing and mentoring the youth in her community in addition to working as an Assistant Coach for the girls track and field team at a local high school in Chicago.

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FOOTBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE

Robert L. Atkins, Jr.

Born in Modesto, CA and later becoming an Atlanta, GA native, Atkins was an exceptional baseball, basketball, and football player at Luther J. Price High School and named an All-City and All-State football and basketball player. He earned a B.S. in Physical & Recreation from GSU and an M.Ed. from Prairie View A&M University.

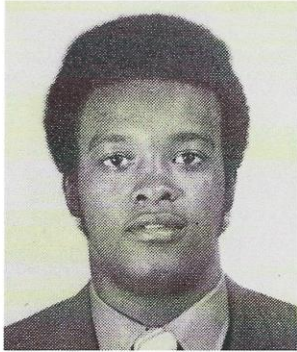
In 1968, his most productive season, he made first team All-Conference and played defensive back in the Pittsburgh Courier All-American Game. He was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals in the 2nd round as a cornerback, and played in 2 major all-star games: the 19th Annual Senior Bowl and the College All-Star Game against the NFL World Champion Green Bay Packers. After entering the NFL, Atkins purchased his family's first neighborhood business, Norwood Grocery Store, which was a viable enterprise for residents in the Thomasville, Georgia community.

After 2 years with the Cardinals, he was traded to Houston. During his 7-year tenure, he won numerous game balls and was often cited in national and local media for his outstanding game performances. After retiring from the Oilers, Atkins pursued other interests. In 1980, he went through training to become an agent for the FBI, and became owner and manager of Touchdown Barbeque and Restaurant and Kolache Shop.

He became Head Women's Basketball Coach and Assistant Football Coach at Sam Houston High School, and accepted in 1984 the first of three positions he held at Prairie View A&M University: Assistant Football Coach, Head Women's Basketball Coach, & Director of Athletic Operations. He retired from PVAMU in 2011.

Recognized by Houston's 3rd Ward Community for exemplary volunteer service rendered to the Professional United Leadership League, where he worked for 7 years with inner-city teens, he received the "Distinguished Leadership Award." Commended for scholarly presentations at national and state levels, his most recent involvement was a 2015 comprehensively-developed athletic program for youth presented to the Church Without Walls, where he holds membership. He is also a member of the National Football League Association.

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FOOTBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE
Albert R. Dennis, III

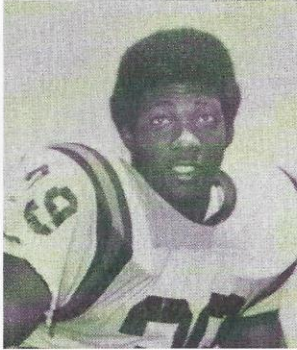
A native of Hammond, LA and graduate of Greenville Park High School, Albert played offensive tackle and served as Co-Captain of the GSU Tigers. He was selected as an All-American offensive tackle, All-SWAC in 1972 and the Pittsburgh Courier All-American in the same year. Al graduated with honors from GSU where he received his B.S. in Business Administration and an M.S. in Sports Administration.

Dennis played in the NFL from 1973-77 with the San Diego Chargers and Cleveland Browns. Upon completion of his professional football career, he returned to GSU to serve in varied fiscal-related positions in the Athletic Department from Business Manager to Athletic Director. For 26 years, he was instrumental in enhancing the fiscal procedures as well as moving the program to a different level. Al was instrumental in improving the procedure for the Bayou Classic, securing funding for the soccer field and improvements at the women's softball field, as well as the baseball and track facilities. Additionally, he served on the design team for the Fred Hobdy Assembly Center and was responsible for upgrades to Robinson Stadium including the scoreboard. He established the "Tiger Club," a fundraising organization created to provide financial support for intercollegiate athletics at GSU. Moreover, he was responsible for the computerization of ticketing operations through Ticketmaster.

Al was appointed to the NCAA Business and Finance Cabinet with a main objective to develop and allocate over 350 million dollars from CBS television to member colleges and universities. For over 30 years, Dennis has been actively involved in the Boy Scouts of America serving as adult leader and as an Executive Board member of the Louisiana Purchase Council. He also served as the Treasurer of The Grambling Legends, Inc. for four years. Currently, he is a self-employed consultant for municipalities, government contractors and small business owners.

Albert is a BSA Silver Beaver Award recipient. He was selected to the GSU Alumni Hall of Fame and was the GSU Alumni Representative to the 2016 Bayou Classic Coaches Luncheon. He was also appointed to serve as a member of the Hearing Committee with the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board.

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FOOTBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE
Robert Parham

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Robert graduated from Gordon High School in Decatur, GA. While in high school, he was a two-time All-State and a three-time All-DeKalb County first-team fullback and linebacker.

As Grambling's leading rusher from 1978-80, he amassed 2,700 yards over that span as GSU won three consecutive SWAC titles. He was three times named Black College All-American, three times named to the All-SWAC first team, and in 1980, he was named Black College Player of the Year. He was awarded the Jake Gaither Award and broke the rushing record of Paul "Tank" Younger having gained 3448 yards. Robert was a first-team All-Conference running back in each of the three seasons.

He was selected and played for the San Diego Chargers and was a free agent to the New Orleans Saints.



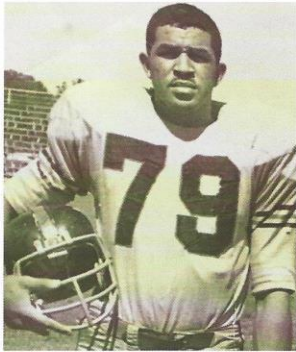
FOOTBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE
Robert Pennywell

Shreveport, Louisiana produced this competent player. Robert played high school football at Captain Shreve and Woodlawn.

He came to Grambling State University where he was successful for four years as an important entity of the football team, beginning in 1972. During his tenure, he was named All-SWAC and All-American. He was drafted in the 6th Round (168th overall) in 1976 by the San Francisco 49ers. Additionally, Pennywell played linebacker for four seasons with the Atlanta Falcons.

Pennywell served as Deacon at New St. John Missionary Baptist Church for over 20 years prior to relocating. He has also served as a Boy Scout Master.

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FOOTBALL | 2017 INDUCTEE Ernest Sterling

This Baton Rouge native attended Southern University Laboratory Elementary and High School. Ernest played varsity basketball and football in high school. His team made it to the semi-finals playoffs during his last three years of high school. He received a Single "A" State Championship Award in both sports. He was recruited by several HBCUs. Eventually, he was recruited by Coach Fred Hobdy to play basketball at Grambling.

While playing basketball, Coach Robinson told him that he could go a long way in football. He eventually left basketball and switched to football. During his tenure on the football team, Grambling won two SWAC Championships and one National Championship. During his senior year, Ernest was named Tri-Captain of the team along with Henry Davis and Richard Lee, Jr.

Ernest briefly played professional football with the Dallas Cowboys before becoming a Grambling State University coach of the defensive line. He coached several All-American linemen during his tenure. He had three players to be drafted by the National Football League in the first round. In the second and third rounds, he had four players to be drafted. Several other players were drafted in other rounds. Ernest's coaching career was very rewarding and one of the best highlights of his life. Most important to Ernest was seeing student-athletes that he had coached walk across the stage to receive their degrees upon graduating from Grambling State University.