

Celebration of the First Black Athlete at Kansas State University Fall 2024



AGENDA

- Background and History
 - Athletes
 - Coaches
- Committee Members
- Planning Partners
- Prospective Opportunities

BACKGROUND:

Kansas State University has been a leader in sports, since the late 1800's, with many teams gaining remarkable attention over the past half century. Most recently K-State was only one of three institutions to advance to championship games in both basketball and football.

Kansas State participates in the NCAA Division I FBS (Football Bowl Subdivision) and is a member of the Big 12 Conference since 1996.

Previously, Kansas State competed in the following:

- Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference until 1912
- Big Eight Conference from 1913 to 1928
- Big Six Conference from 1928 to 1947
- Big Seven Conference from 1947 to 1957
- Big Eight Conference from 1957 to 1996

Kansas State University president, Milton Eisenhower, was responsible for implementing several “firsts” at K-State.



Harold Robinson

Manhattan High School Graduate

K- State President Milton Eisenhower supported social justice. He decided that K-State would become the 1ST Institution to integrate collegiate athletics within the conference (formerly Big 7).

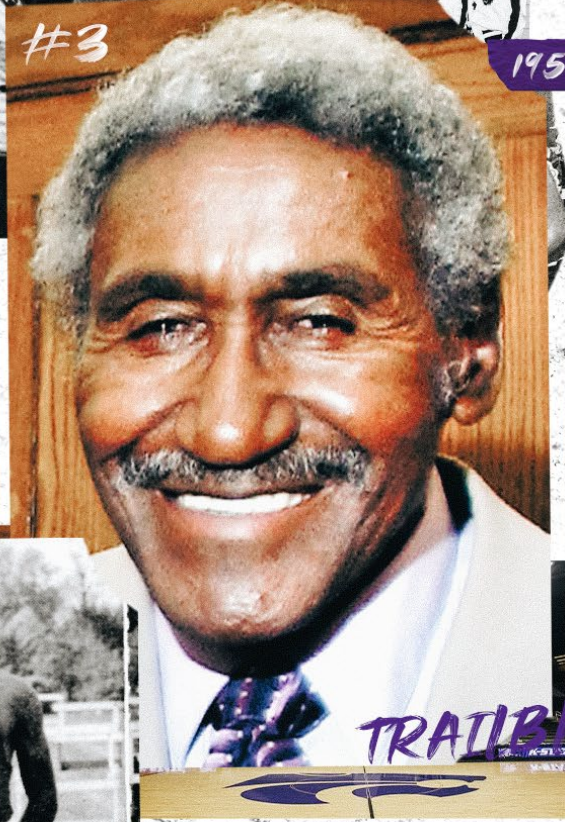
- **Harold Robinson** (despite not receiving a scholarship in 1949) enrolled and paid his expenses by washing dishes and mopping floors.
- New head coach Ralph Graham granted Robinson a football scholarship in 1950.
- After K-State, Robinson served his country during the Korean War, earning a purple heart.

GENE WILSON – 1ST BLACK BASKETBALL PLAYER IN THE BIG 7



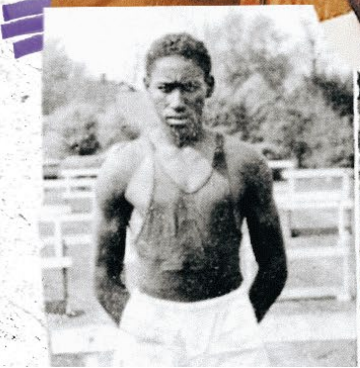
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1954-1956



KANSAS STATE BASKETBALL & TRACK

GENE WILSON



BIG 12 TRAILBLAZERS

FIRST BLACK BASEBALL PLAYER IN THE BIG 7



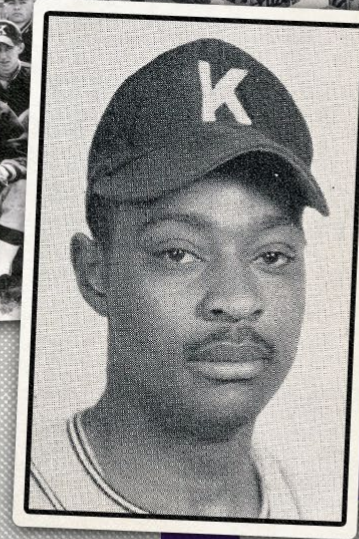
**KANSAS STATE
BASEBALL**

EARL WOODS

1952-1953

BIG 12 TRAILBLAZERS

1952 baseball squad—top row: Earl Woods, Don Prignore, Gene Stauffer. Second row: Paul Reah, Bob Parker, Gene Kubicki, Jim Jacobs, Roger Bruton, Sam Sinderson, Sax Stone. Third row: Dick Myers, John Boyer, Nugent Adams, Ray Holder, Walt Kelly, Jerry Schmitzer, Asst. Coach Holder. Bottom row: Jim Pollan, Don Childs, Richard Hill, Jack Dillman, Don Morris, Rex Wade, and Coach Wauthier.



1996 OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL IN TRIPLE JUMP AND SET AN OLYMPIC RECORD



**KANSAS STATE
TRACK & FIELD**

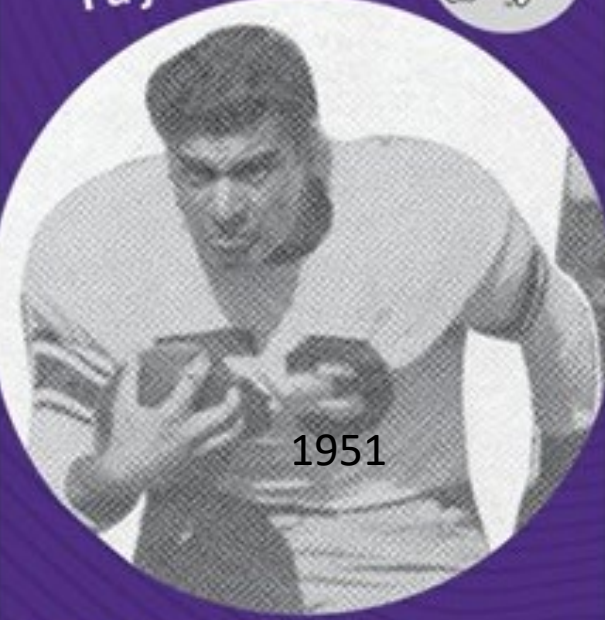
**KENNY
HARRISON**

BIG 12 TRAILBLAZERS



WILDCAT FIRSTS

ray romero



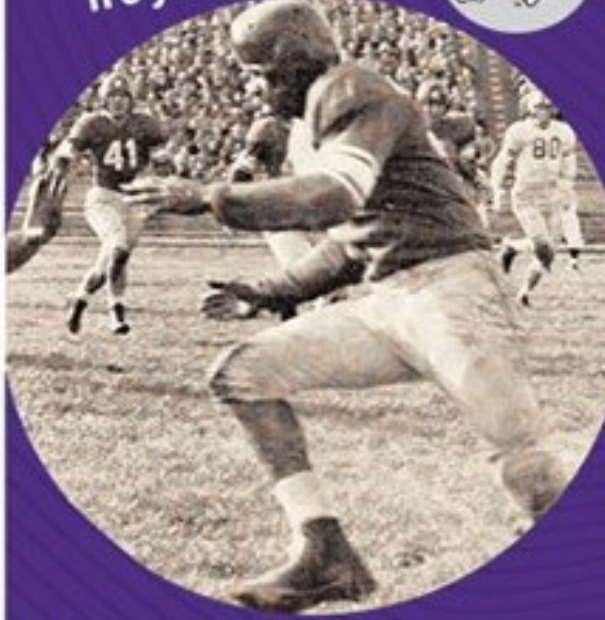
1951

Athlete 1946-49
First Hispanic athlete to play in the National Football League

1949 Graduate

1951 Free Agent- Philadelphia Eagles
1952 Drafted by the Army-Korean War
1953 Released from Philadelphia Eagles
1954 Romero Brothers tried out for the Chicago Bears- both made the team

hoyt givens

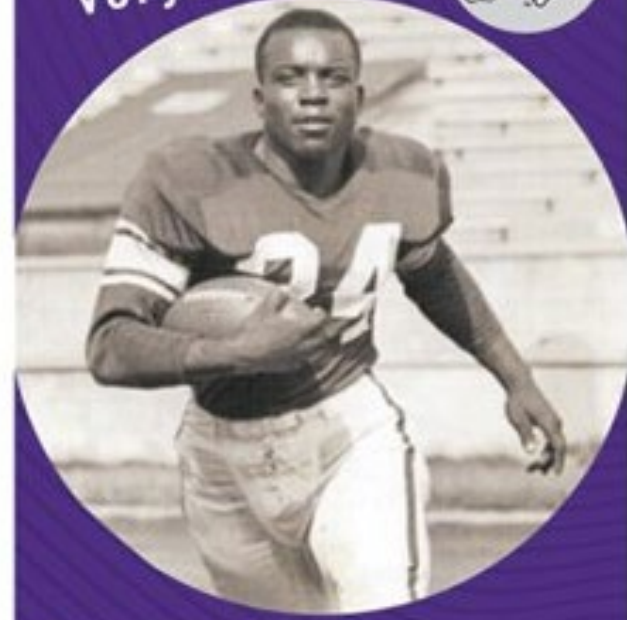


Athlete 1949-50
First African American, non-scholarship player in Kansas State & Big 6 Conference

1952 Graduate

Givens, Robinson & Switzer became not only the first 3 black athletes to compete at K-State, but the first 3 in Big 7 conference history.

veryl switzer



Athlete 1951-53
First African American scholarship player to graduate in Kansas State History

1954 Graduate

1954 NFL Draft-Green Bay Packers
1956-58 U.S. Air Force 1ST Lieutenant
1974 Masters Degree

PRISCILLA GARY SWEENEY



After graduating from K- State, Sweeney served in the U.S. Air Force as a contracting specialist and retired at the rank of Senior Master Sergeant. She was the Department of Defense Female Athlete of the Year and Air Force Female Athlete of the Year in 1988. She also played semi-professional basketball from 1996-1998.

WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD



Akela Jones

Only NAIA Championship pentathlon competitor to clear six feet in the high jump (1.83m/6-00.00)

Took first at 2014 NAIA Indoor National Championship in the pentathlon and 60 meter hurdles...Holds championship record in the pentathlon (4,153)...Only NAIA Championship pentathlon competitor to clear six feet in the high jump (1.83m/6-00.00)...2014 IAAF World Junior Championships long jump champion...First athlete from Barbados to win a medal of any color at World Juniors...2014 CAC Juniors long jump champion.

Shadae Lawrence



Shadae Lawrence competes in the discus.

Shadae set a new Jamaican national record and went down as the 10th-best throw in collegiate history.

**JAMAICAN TWINS
COMPETED ON & OFF
FIELD AT
KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Shardia Lawrence



**NCAA Outdoor Champion
in the triple jump
(13.99m/45-10.75)**

ROWING TEAM



Leah Roane

Major: Food Science & Industry
College of Agriculture: MANRRS
Cats Cupboard Advisory Board

FIRST BLACK HEAD COACHES



Dave Baker (1978-83): First Black Head Baseball Coach at a Big 8 Conference and the only Black Head Baseball Coach in K-State history, as well as Big 8 (and Big 12) history. Guided the Wildcats to 137 wins from 1978 to 1983.



Ron Prince (2006-08): Head Football Coach at K-State in 2006. Made history by becoming K-State's First and only Black Head Football Coach and first in the Big 12. Prince guided the Wildcats to a Bowl Game appearance in his first season.

HEAD COACHES



Jordan Smith (2015-Present): Helped rebuild K-State Women's Tennis as assistant coach, including the first NCAA Tournament berth since 2003. Selected to lead the tennis program in summer of 2018 -became K-State's First Black Head Tennis Coach.



Jerome Tang (2022-Present): Selected as the 25TH Head Men's Basketball Coach at Kansas State in 2022. First Black Men's Head Basketball Coach in school history and fifth diverse Men's Head Coach in school history.

WOMEN'S ASSISTANT COACHES



Ebony Gilliam
Women's Assistant Basketball Coach



Kennedy Felice
Women's Assistant Rowing Coach



Ebony Haliburton
Women's Assistant Basketball Coach

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- David Baker: Community Member, First Black Kansas State Baseball Coach and Historian
- Andre Bean: Athletics-Assistant AD of Evans Competitive Advantage Program/Chief Diversity Officer
- Joyt Gray: 1974 Kansas State University Alumnus
- Shawna Jordan: Faculty Athletics Liaison
- Payton Lynn: Student Government Association (SGA)
- Brandon Moreno: K-State Alumni Association
- Corey Williamson: Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

PLANNING PARTNERS

- Patrick Burt: Vice President for Communications and Marketing
- Regina Bolin: K-State Athletics, Director of Digital Media
- Jenn Hunter: Chief Impact Officer- Big 12 Conference

PROGRAM & EVENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- August 31: Golden Cats Football Weekend, Hall of Fame, Ahearn Fund Member Appreciation Day, Junior Wildcats Club
 - October 26: Homecoming, Varsity K Club Weekend
 - November 13: KSUnite- Manhattan Campus Program
 - January 27-31: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance Week
 - Athletic Sports Events: Acknowledge Trailblazers for each sport during home competitions across the academic year
 - 75 Years of Trailblazers Event: Dinner & Program at the Shamrock Zone
- Celebrate Mr. Robinson as the first Trailblazer at K-State & the Conference. The program will celebrate the many Trailblazers at K-State over the years!

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY TOURS:

Combine K-State Campus & Manhattan Tours

Organize yearlong celebratory events with university and community historian tour guides.

- K-State Athletic Facilities Tour
- Manhattan historical landmarks (Douglas School, Green Book facilities, Yuma Street, etc.)



MURAL/DISPLAYS/LANDMARK CONSIDERATIONS

- Include Harold Robinson in the K-State Ring of Honor
 - o Unveiling of Statue/Display of Mr. Harold Robinson- Inside the Vanier Family Football Complex
 - o Introduction of Road to acknowledge 75TH Year Anniversary of First Black Athlete
 - Black Trailblazer Way - Located outside between the football & basketball arena to commemorate the historic event
 - o Welcome Center interactive display board of K-State Athlete/Trailblazers
 - o Display of Mr. Robinson in Anderson Hall near Admissions Office
 - o Temporary rotating display highlighting historical timelines of firsts
- Acknowledge athletes' admission to K-State for all sports: Basketball, baseball, football, golf, rowing, soccer, tennis, track and field, volleyball.

PROSPECTIVE LOCATIONS FOR DISPLAYS:

- Courtyard, K-State Student Union
 - Program to engage students/capture their attention.
- Kemper Art Gallery, K-State Student Union
- K-State Alumni Center Memorabilia Room
- Mark A. Chapman Gallery, Willard Hall
- Cassias & Chang Galleries, ADP
- Hale Library- DOW Center
- Multicultural Student Center
- Beach Museum of Art
- K-State Athletics facilities
- Justin Hall

COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN:

Create Commemorative 75TH Anniversary News Article

Extend invitations to living KSU enrollees, and/or surviving family members of the first Black KSU athletes.

***Extend invitation to the family of Tiger Woods in recognition of Earl Woods**

o Develop webpage with historic timeline of noted athletes, other graduates, and accomplishments after graduation.

o Create logos, insignia, and narrative, reflective of the 75TH Year Anniversary Celebration

O Compile and display previous news articles and photographs for slide show

- Stories through K-State Alumni Association
- K-State Libraries historical information

o Identify Varied Media for Promotion:

- K-State Magazine – 3x per year
- Alumni email newsletters – Monthly
- Social media channels

QUESTIONS?

