

SWAC REPORT

Edney Credited for Improving SWAC Leadership

Norris Edney is credited with stopping a sinking ship.

If it wasn't for the leadership of Edney, the Southwestern Athletic Conference might not exist.

He is credited with preventing the demise of the SWAC after becoming its president in 1975. When he took over, the SWAC had no automatic berths. But it did have three lawsuits pending against it and was \$130,000 in debt.

When he stepped down in 1984, the league had automatic berths in baseball, men's basketball and football, its legal problems had been resolved and the conference was on sound financial footing.

"If there was any one man to do the job, it was Norris Edney," Mississippi Valley athletic director Chuck Prophet said. "He was very instrumental in getting the SWAC back on its feet."

Former Jackson State athletic director Walter Reed concurred.

"Edney's leadership saved the conference," said Reed, who is now athletic director at Florida A&M. "After stepping down as president, the conference was operating at about \$500,000 in the black. It is a contribute to his astute leadership and organization."

For his efforts in guiding the SWAC through difficult times, Edney was inducted into the SWAC Hall of Fame recently along with 16 other former athletes, coaches and administrators. Ceremonies took place at the Hotel Inter-Continental in New Orleans May 28.

While Edney is pleased with the honor, he is quick to point out that it wasn't just his efforts that saved the conference.

"It was a challenge that a group of people undertook," Edney said. "I helped to contribute, but it was a strong group of athletic directors and coaches that didn't want to see this conference die. This conference was a dear thing to us."

Edney spent several long — and most of the time unpaid — hours working to keep the conference alive.

"In my opinion he was a savior for the SWAC," said Southern athletic director Marino Casem, who was athletic director and football coach at Alcorn during the time. "When he took over, the conference was in pretty bad shape. He walked us through the rough times. To me, this conference is beholden to Norris. He was a unifying force."

Edney, a native of Natchez, currently serves as director of the Division of Graduate Studies at Alcorn. He attended Tougaloo on a basketball scholarship.

"I've always had a love for sports," Edney said. "My strength is that people are willing to help me."

Others going into the Hall of Fame were:

ALABAMA STATE

George H. Lockhart, who served Alabama State for 42 years and who



coached ASU's Laboratory High School in eight national tournaments.

Dr. John H. Jones, ASU's track and field coach from 1948 to 1961 and also an assistant professor of English and speech.

ALCORN STATE

Samuel Crump, an all-conference running back from 1951 to 1954 and also a standout at baseball, track and field and baseball player.

GRAMBLING STATE

Willie Brown, track standout and four-year football letterman who went on to play with Houston, Denver and Oakland before his induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1984.

A native of Yazoo City, Miss., played for the G-Men from 1959-62, serving as senior class president before graduating with a degree in health and physical education.

Brown, at 6-1, 210 pounds, played split end on offense and linebacker on defense at Grambling.

He picked off a record 54 interceptions during his 16-year NFL playing career. He still shares an NFL record with four interceptions in one game, that feat coming against the New York Jets in 1964.

Fred C. Hobdy, Grambling athletic director who won more college games (567) than any other coach in Louisiana basketball history.

A 1993 inductee into the Louisiana

Basketball Hall of Fame, Hobdy retired from active coaching after the 1985-86 season with a collegiate record of 567-287 during a 30-year tenure. His G-Men team won 20 or more games 15 times and captured eight SWAC championships, nine NAIA regional titles, two NCAA regional championships and one Midwest Conference crowns. His 1960-61 team won the NAIA national championship, while his 1962-63 team won second place.

Known for his fastbreak style of basketball, Hobdy assumed the head basketball post at GSU in 1956 after serving as an assistant to Eddie Robinson for four years. He also served as an assistant football coach.

A native of Winnfield, La., Hobdy, 69, became athletics director at Grambling in 1989 after having served as assistant AD the previous 14 years. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, he was a standout athlete in the sports of football, basketball and baseball at GSU before receiving his baccalaureate degree in health and physical education in 1949.

JACKSON STATE

Dr. John A. Peoples, former varsity football player, tutor and student body president before becoming JSU's sixth president and first alumnus president in 1967.

Willie Richardson, former 1967-68 All-Pro wide receiver with the Baltimore Colts who still holds most of the Tigers'

receiving records.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE

Curtis G. Maddox, associate vice president of Norfolk State University who coached baseball, basketball and football at MVSU from 1959 to 1967.

Dr. William Ware, former coach and administrator who has been a leading figure in higher education at four U.S. universities—Southern California (1972-72), California State (1973-78), Mississippi State (1979-83) and Mississippi Valley State (1990-present).

PRAIRIE VIEW

Barbara J. Jackett, former distinguished athlete and retired coach who was head women's track and field coach for the 1992 U.S. Olympic team.

A 1958 graduate of Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University), Jackett came to Prairie View nearly three decades ago and immediately began to transform the women's track program into a national powerhouse. In fact, before she retired from coaching at the university in June 1991, she had captured over 20 national championships, nine SWAC indoor titles, six SWAC outdoor titles and six SWAC cross country crowns.

Consequently, Jackett received a total of 22 SWAC coach of the year awards as well as five NAIA best coach awards.

Jackett coached 57 All-Americans at

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