

ALUMNI

Atkins is solid performer for Saints

Gene Atkins could have been a great college running back. But as a pro, he might not have made the grade.

Fortunately, Atkins changed positions as a collegian at Florida A&M, end-

ing up at free safety instead of fullback. In retrospect, it was a change for the better. In five NFL seasons, Atkins has firmly established himself as a solid performer. This year, he's one of the prime-

timers for the playoff-contending New Orleans Saints.

Atkins, who returns kickoffs and starts at free safety, is clearly happy that he made the switch in college. He is

quick to point out that Rudy Hubbard and Ken Riley are the major factors in him making a successful transition from offense to defense. Hubbard, who was the Rattlers head coach when Atkins played collegiately, decided that the former fullback would contribute more as a defensive back. Riley, the current A&M coach, schooled Atkins on the rudiments of play in the secondary. At that time, Riley coached the Rattlers' DBs.

"I had two great coaches at FAMU," Atkins said. "Rudy Hubbard and Ken Riley both did a good job with me. Coach



Where You Come From
Has A Lot To Do With
Where You're Going.

Carl Ware

Deputy President,
Northeast Europe/Africa Group,
Coca-Cola International and
Senior Vice President,
The Coca-Cola Company.

Carl Ware should know. He's been going places a long time. His career "really started at Clark College," he says. "Those years were crucial to my education, self-confidence and my focus on achievement."

That focus has certainly paid off. Today, Mr. Ware is Deputy President of the Northeast Europe/Africa Group, responsible for international operations in this region. In addition, he continues to be Senior Vice President of The Coca-Cola Company.

Carl's duties don't stop there. He was, among other things, the 1990 Chairman of the United Way Campaign of Metropolitan Atlanta, and continues to serve as Chairman of the Board of Clark Atlanta University.

Mr. Ware's long list of accomplishments leads Coca-Cola to say one thing...

Thank You,
Clark Atlanta
University.



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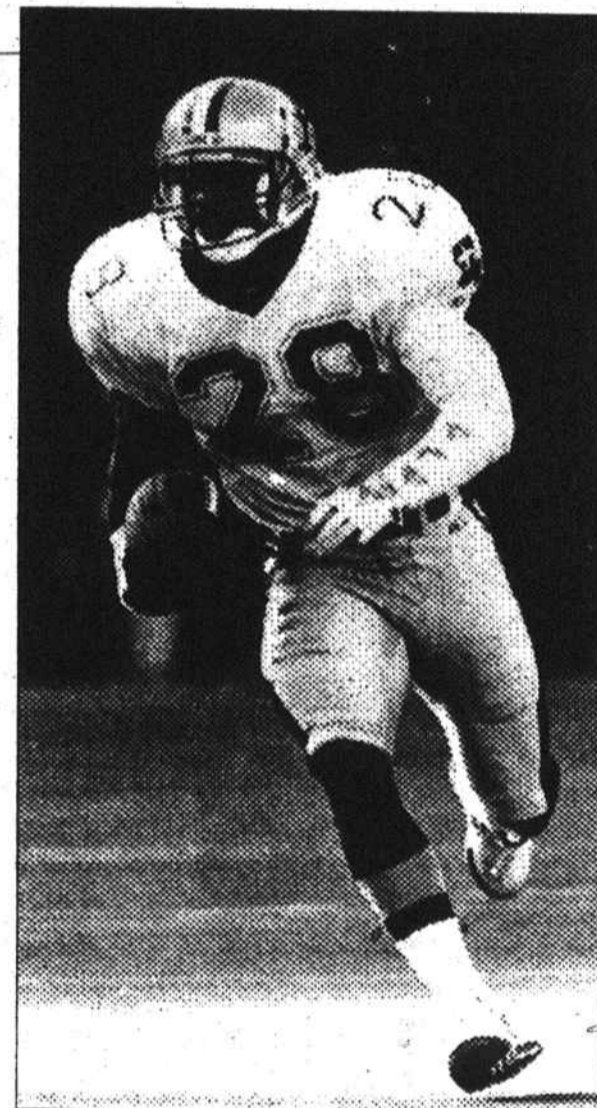


Photo courtesy of New Orleans Saints
Aside from his duties as the Saints' free safety, Atkins also doubles as a kickoff return specialist.

Hubbard gave me a lot of confidence. He said this would be a good switch for me. Coach Riley (former Cincinnati Bengals cornerback) was an All-Pro for many years. He knows more about playing in the secondary than anybody. He showed me how to prevent teams from beating you with the big play. He also taught me how to play the ball. It basically took me two years to learn the position. After that, it was smooth sailing."

As a college senior, Atkins peaked, finishing the year as an All-American and All-MEAC selection.

In 1987, he was the Saints' seventh round pick in the NFL Draft. During his first two seasons, he showed flashes of brilliance.

It didn't take long for Atkins, 6-1, 200, to get his feet wet in the NFL. As a

Please see page 15