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The purpose of this study was to examine the history and analyze the influence of the women's track and field team at the historically black college, Tennessee State University located in Nashville, Tennessee. The study was divided into three major sections. The first part examined the founding, early development and growth of the TSU women's track and field program beginning in 1944. The second section examined the social changes and transformations of the TSU track and field program and its athletes during the heart of the civil rights and women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The third section examined the decline in the TSU track and field program during Coach Edward Temple's last years as head coach, particularly examining how and why the Tigerbelles program lost its athletic dominance during this time period. Additionally, this third part reflected on the historical legacy and influence of the Tigerbelles and the renewed efforts to return the TSU track and field program to its past glory under the last Temple-era Olympian, Chandra Cheeseborough.

FIRST TO THE FINISH LINE: THE TENNESSEE STATE TIGERBELLES 1944-1994

by

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“To Mom – For Everything. For all the love, the support, the “Ole Sis Goose” and the
“Pinch-on-It” Money. It was all greatly appreciated. I love you. Thanks.”

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION: SEARCHING FOR THE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY TIGERBELLES AND THEIR UNIQUE PLACE IN SPORT HISTORY.....	1
II. THE EARLY YEARS (1912-1950).....	50
III. THE ED TEMPLE WAY (1950-1959).....	79
IV. THE GOLDEN AGE (1960-1968).....	138
V. THE FORGOTTEN TIGERBELLES (1950-1994).....	171
VI. THE END OF AN ERA (1969-1994).....	202
VII. CONCLUSIONS.....	236
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	249
APPENDIX A. LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE SUBJECT.....	270

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: SEARCHING FOR THE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

TIGERBELLES AND THEIR UNIQUE PLACE IN SPORT HISTORY

To be a “Tigerbelle” is to be something very, very special. It requires more than just being a member of the women’s track team at Tennessee State University. A Tigerbelle has to excel, not only on the track, but in the classroom and in her everyday living. Earl Clanton III, former sports information director at Tennessee State, is the man credited with naming the school’s women’s track team “Tigerbelles.” But it was Coach Ed Temple who set the standard under which a girl can properly be called a “Tigerbelle.” Not only is being a “Tigerbelle” special, its an honor and a testimonial to having been the best.¹

F.W. Williams, *The Tennessean*

When examining the history and influence of women’s collegiate sports teams in the twentieth century it would be extremely difficult to find any women’s athletic program that could rival the national and international success of the historically black college Tennessee State University (TSU) women’s track and field program. Under the long-term leadership of head coach Edward Temple, the talented and versatile athletes that competed for TSU became world renowned by their collective team nickname, the Tigerbelles. From the early 1950s until the late 1970s, Tennessee State University (TSU) produced world-class women’s collegiate track and field teams, including several of the greatest individual track and field athletes in American and Olympic sports history.

¹ Dwight Lewis and Susan Thomas, *A Will To Win* (Tennessee: Cumberland Press, 1983) p.113.

Over a forty-four year period, the Coach Temple-led TSU Tigerbelles won thirty-four Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) national team championships including a remarkable string of twelve straight titles from 1955 to 1968.² Tennessee State University Tigerbelle squads dominated track and field competitions equally, winning sixteen indoor championships and thirteen outdoor championships, including five junior championships.³ With small teams, a rigorous training schedule, and athletes capable of participating in multiple events, Temple created a winning formula that transformed a virtually unknown black college in Nashville, Tennessee into the home of the most prominent and successful collegiate track and field program in the world.

On the international stage, starting in 1951, the TSU Tigerbelles began competing in the Pan American Games, collecting thirty medals throughout the entire course of Temple's coaching era.⁴ During Temple's tenure as head coach, not only did TSU teams succeed in Pan American Games competition, forty Tennessee State University Tigerbelles represented their home university in Olympic competitions, thirty-five athletes competing for the United States and five other team members representing their native countries of Panama, Jamaica, Bermuda, and Trinidad.⁵ These athletes won a total

² Ed Temple, *Only The Strong In Heart Survive* (Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1980), p.21.

³ Bob Burns, *Olympic Golden Moments: The Story Of The Tigerbelles* (Missouri: Sprenger McCullough & Co, 2004), p. 109.

⁴ Lewis and Thomas, p. 296-7.

⁵ Gail Dent, *NCAA Hall of Champions to honor Olympic-Decorated Tennessee State Tigerbelles Track Program, September 30 and October 1, During Circle City Class Week*, NCAA news release, September 21, 2004, p. 1-2.

of twenty-seven Olympic games medals, fifteen gold medals, eight silver medals and four bronze medals.⁶ From 1952 to 1968, Tigerbelles were major players on the U.S. Olympic teams with TSU team members dominating the 100-meter races with three consecutive Olympic titles, the 200 meter races with two consecutive Olympic titles, as well as making up the majority of five straight medal-winning Olympic 4 x 100 and 4 x 400 relay teams.

Overall, from 1943 until 1994, the Tennessee State University track and field program amassed thirty-one Olympic medals, counting the twenty-seven medals earned by Tigerbelles and the four medals that were won by non-Tigerbelle TSU track and field athletes. Standout collegiate long jumper and Olympic hopeful, Ralph Boston, trained with Coach Temple and serve as a big brother and mentor to several teams of Tigerbelles. Boston won three medals, a gold, silver, and a bronze, at the 1960, 1964, 1968 Olympics respectively.⁷ Additionally, Ms. Audrey Patterson was the only Tennessee State University athlete to win an Olympic medal in track and field and not be coached by Ed Temple. She was also the first TSU athlete to ever win an Olympic medal earning the bronze medal at the 1948 Olympics in the 200 meters.

Numerous TSU Tigerbelle athletes have broken, set, and held individual collegiate, American, World, and Olympic track and field records. Many of these records are still held by Tigerbelles today. They have earned and received several significant

⁶ Matt Fulks, *Behind The Stats: Tennessee's Coaching Legends* (Nashville: Eggman Publishers, 1996), p. 217.

⁷ Arthur R. Ashe, Jr., *A Hard Road To Glory: Track and Field* (New York: Amistad, 1988), p. 87-89.

sporting honors and accolades from the prestigious Sullivan Award to numerous Hall of Fame inductions. As *Sports Illustrated* magazine dubbed them in the 1960s, the TSU Tigerbelles were “the Notre Dame of women’s track and field.”⁸ The Tigerbelles were legendary trailblazers for all female athletes, but they would also become extraordinary symbols of achievement and determination for African American women athletes.

Long-term TSU Tigerbelle head coach, Edward Temple is one of the most respected and honored coaches in track and field history. As a former standout collegiate athlete, academic scholar and educator, he valued both athletics and education very early in his career. Temple served as head coach of the U.S. Women’s team for the European Tours (1958, 1960, 1970), Pan American (1959, 1975) and Olympic games (1960, 1964) as well as being named head coach of the entire U.S. Olympic team in 1980, the year the Americans would boycott the Moscow games.⁹ As sportswriter Matt Fulks observed, “not only is Temple often thought of as the best women’s track coach in the world, he could also be thought of as a visionary, with his stress on grades and gender equity.”¹⁰

The meteoric rise and athletic dominance of the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles is a remarkable achievement considering that not only did this program develop within a small historically black college in the segregated South, but throughout the program’s history, the team was regularly under-funded, saddled with substandard

⁸ Carole A. Oglesby, *Encyclopedia of Women and Sport in America* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1998), p. 277.

⁹ Fulks, p. 216.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.207

training facilities, completely overlooked by the media, and only enthusiastically supported by their college administration as a second tier athletic program to the TSU men's football and basketball teams. As Coach Temple reflected, "President Walter Davis was broadminded enough to provide for a track program, but if he had had any idea it would ever surpass football, he wouldn't have turned it loose."¹¹ Throughout the years, the Tigerbelles did not only exceed expectations, but also create new standards for women's athletics.

Further, the TSU Tigerbelles came to prominence in an era when women's participation in competitive sports was still considered unfeminine and unladylike, even in the black community where female participation in physical activity was viewed quite positively. Despite the fact that the Tuskegee Institute's Tigerettes and numerous women's track and field sport clubs had long been established since the 1930s, the Tigerbelles would still be challenged to walk a fine line balancing their roles as socially acceptable young college women and competitive elite athletes. Coach Temple was well aware that the American public of the 1950s and 1960s could possibly view his black female athletes as competitors in a masculine sport and that there was the potential to reinforce "disparaging stereotypes of black women as less womanly or feminine than White women."¹²

¹¹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007.

¹² Susan Cahn, "Cinderellas of Sport", In *Coming On Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 112.

Therefore, Temple purposely instituted a strict conservative dress code and demanded that his athletes always engage in ladylike behavior. Nearly every single young woman that participated in Temple's program complied with his strict rules of behavior and personal presentation with the exception of Willye White, who chafed under Temple's rules. Temple's strictly enforced social control of his female athletes could easily be considered highly sexist and extremely paternalistic with modern day female athletes of the late twentieth and early twentieth-first century. Yet, in the 1950s and 1960s, his tough team rules and no-nonsense disciplinary actions were viewed differently by many of the Tigerbelles and their families, who saw Temple as a father figure. Yet, regardless of how Temple's controls of his Tigerbelle teams are perceived, there is a question of whether the individual choices of his female athletes were limited or muted by his restrictions.

The greatest Tigerbelle squads competed during the difficult period of racial segregation and the turmoil of the Civil Rights movement, but they were strongly encouraged to avoid getting involved in civil rights activism or protests. As Coach Temple's wife, Charlie B. Temple reflected, "we advised them to get an education and not use the track team as a political forum."¹³ Once again, the majority of the TSU Tigerbelles complied with the wishes of their coach, even though there would be a few who engaged in some civil rights activism. During these eras, the Tigerbelles existed in a strange socio-cultural dynamic; they had to project a socially acceptable version of

¹³ Unknown, "The Rest of the Temple Story", Tennessee State University, *Accent*, Fall 1993, p. 8-9.

femininity while performing as world-class athletes. They served as Olympians and as goodwill ambassadors representing the United States in numerous countries from Australia to Uganda, but were denied equal rights at home. This same social paradox also denied them the opportunity to openly protest the difficult conditions in which they lived and competed.

In addition to battling the complex issues of sexism, racism, and black femininity, the TSU Tigerbelles and Ed Temple also faced a black community that questioned such significant dedication to competitive college athletics when during the 1950s and 1960s there was no such thing as an athletic scholarship or professional career for women athletes. One of the keys to Ed Temple's success was his understanding of the value of a college education to young black women in the time before the civil rights and women's movements.

Temple always placed education before athletics. He understood that a quality college education served his athletes long after their competitive athletic years ended. As Temple has been well quoted in saying, "athletics opens the door, but education keeps it open."¹⁴ Not only did the Tennessee State Tigerbelles establish a reputation as an elite sport program for African American women, the program represented a significant and valuable opportunity for young African American women from socially and economically limited backgrounds; poor, working class, mostly rural and southern; to gain a quality education, upward mobility, and valuable life experiences.

¹⁴ Tracy Dodds, *Indianapolis Star*, Indianapolis, IN, 2002, p. 1.

Of the forty Tigerbelles that served and competed as Olympians under Coach Ed Temple's tenure, thirty-nine completed their college degrees, with the exception being Willye White, who was dismissed from the team for disciplinary reasons.¹⁵ Even this negative fact became a success, because White completed her undergraduate degree at Chicago State University. The majority of Temple's Olympians did not end their educational careers at the undergraduate level; twenty-eight earned master's degrees and six would eventually earn Ph.D.s.¹⁶ During Temple's forty-three years as a coach at Tennessee State University, "over 90 percent of all Tigerbelles graduated within five years."¹⁷

As important as earning a college degree was to the young women that competed at Tennessee State, their opportunities after graduation were still limited to the small number of professions available to African American women of the era. In the 1950s and 1960s, participation in athletics was not going to result in any endorsement deals or a career as a professional athlete. Many Tigerbelles became office workers, schoolteachers, principals, ministers, and businesswomen, with several following in the footsteps of their coach Ed Temple and becoming sport coaches or physical educators. Yet, even with these employment limitations, the earning of a college degree created

¹⁵ Fulks, p. 206.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 206.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 204.

opportunities and options that many of these young women would have never had without it.

The athletic and educational success of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles laid the foundation for expanded opportunities for future women athletes of all races. The fact that they had enjoyed such tremendous success with limited resources and without the aid of traditional sport scholarships, helped pave the way for the creation of athletic scholarships for women athletes and the emergence of Title IX legislation. Athletic programs for women and girls got a significant boost from the passing of Title IX. This legislation was “an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, applicable to institutions receiving federal funds: No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”¹⁸ Title IX resulted in major changes to recruitment and funding strategies for women’s athletics, resulting in substantial new opportunities for female athletes across the nation. Therefore, the very things that made the TSU Tigerbelles successful, limited program funding and marginalized recruitment opportunities, led to the diminishment of their track and field program. Racial integration after the end of the Civil Rights movement, the successful passing of Title IX legislation, and the ability to offer sport scholarships changed women’s collegiate sport, including the TSU Tigerbelles’ program, forever.

¹⁸ Swanson, Richard A. and Spears, Betty *History of Sport and Physical Education in the United States – 4th Edition*, (Boston: WCB McGraw-Hill, 1995) p. 324.

In today's world of women's collegiate athletics, some of the methods and ideals of Coach Edward Temple would be extremely difficult to enact or use. Temple's legendary summer camps, notoriously rigorous practices and training methods, and his strict rules of discipline would be in many cases restricted, prohibited or unenforceable under most National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulations today. Women athletes now have the opportunity to attend any college of their choice without the same financial limitations that many of the TSU Tigerbelles faced. In the post-Civil Rights and women's movement eras, young women can defy conventional stereotypes of femininity and create their own ideal of an elite collegiate female athlete. Times have changed for black women in sport, leaving behind many of the difficulties and obstacles that Coach Temple and his legendary squads endured.

As the prestige and power of the Tennessee State University program has faded in the national and Olympic arenas, the last great TSU Tigerbelle and new head coach, Chandra Cheeseborough, is trying to rebuild the track and field program in a new era. As she attempts to return the program to the top of college and Olympic women's track and field, there is an understanding that she may not be able to totally recreate the golden age of the TSU Tigerbelles. As Coach Temple acknowledges, "I don't know if they'll ever get back to that level, everyone has their time and we certainly had ours."¹⁹ Yet, Coach Cheeseborough who rose to the challenge as an athlete at TSU, is determined to build a new Tigerbelle legacy in her own way and in her own time.

¹⁹ Craig Greenlee, "Rekindling Wilma's legacy: Tennessee State University struggles to revive Olympic tradition" *Black Issues in Higher Education*, August 8, 1996, p. 3.

I'm looking at it as an honor that I do have somebody to follow and have high standards to set. Everyone is saying that Coach Temple's shoes are hard to fill. But Coach Temple shoes are filled. I need to fill my shoes. I'm not looking at Coach Temple did this and that. I'm just going to do what I can.²⁰

As Coach Cheeseborough's words reflect, the legacy of the TSU Tigerbelles is more than just finding success in athletics and academics; but it is about developing the unwavering ability and faith to overcome any obstacle or challenge no matter the odds. For the women who trained and competed during Coach Temple's era their collective motto was known as "pure determination."²¹ Just like the tiny and humble educational institution they represented when they competed, the women athletes of the Tennessee State University track and field team thrived and survived in difficult circumstances because of their dedication, talent, determination, and willingness to follow an equally talented and determined coach. As Coach Temple remarks, "I don't think there will be another program like we had. Not here, not anywhere. We had some determined young athletes."²²

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the history and analyze the influence of the women's track and field team at the historically black college, Tennessee State University located in Nashville, Tennessee. The primary research focus is the Tennessee

²⁰ Wendy Smith, "Cheeseborough likes it in Temple's shoes" *Nashville Banner*, December 13, 1994, p. 1.

²¹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

²² Burns, p. 102.

State University teams under the tenure of their long-term coach, Mr. Edward Temple, who coached the team from 1950 until his retirement in 1994. The study was divided into three major sections. The first part examined the founding of the TSU women's track and field program in 1944, as well as reviewing the program's early development and growth under its various head coaches from the late period of Jim Crow racial segregation in the late 1940s through the early period of the civil rights movement, the early to mid-1950s.

The second section of the study examined the social changes and transformations of the TSU track and field program and its athletes during the heart of the civil rights and women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s, especially trying to understand how the TSU Tigerbelles overcame racial segregation and discrimination as well as gender stereotyping and bias toward African American female athletes to become one of the elite collegiate athletic teams in sports history.

Last, the third part of this study examined the decline in the TSU track and field program during Coach Temple's last years as head coach, particularly examining how and why the Tigerbelles program lost its athletic dominance during this time period. Additionally, this third section reflected on the historical legacy of the Tigerbelles, the overall impact and meaning that being a TSU Tigerbelle had on its female athletes and the renewed efforts to return the TSU track and field program to its past glory under the last Temple-era Olympian, Chandra Cheeseborough.

During this study the following questions were researched and discussed:

- I. What was the importance and influence of having the opportunity to participate in competitive collegiate sport on the lives of these young black women? How did this athletic opportunity change their lives?
- II. What was the importance and influence of having the opportunity to earn a college education on the lives of these young black women? What made education a priority for the team members, coaching staff, and university administration? How, ultimately, did attaining an education affect or change their lives?
- III. How did these women navigate different racial and gender stereotypes, racially segregated environments, and other related social, political, economic, and cultural issues? How did they view their participation and their roles within the team in relation to their social standing in American society? For example, what was it like to serve as an Olympic athlete with the knowledge that they were being denied their civil rights by the very country they were representing?
- IV. Why did Coach Temple impose a strict regimen of physical training, academic study and personal character development upon his athletes? How did these young women adjust and function under Coach Temple's strict rules of social and academic discipline as well as his heavy physical training regimens? Should Coach Temple's philosophies toward coaching women athletes and his team policies for his female athletes be viewed as sexist?

V. What positive or negative effects did Temple's team policy have on the structure of his teams as well as individual athletes? For example, Temple would waive his strict rule of no single mothers on the team when future superstar Wilma Rudolph became pregnant the year before her entrance to Tennessee State. Why did Temple make such an exception and how did Rudolph's teammates respond to the exception?

VI. How did the actions and achievements of the Tigerbelles contribute to or influence African Americans' quest for racial equality in the segregated South? Did these student-athletes view themselves as groundbreaking agents of racial social change or as role models for the black community during the Civil Rights movement? When, if they had the opportunity, did these athletes take advantage of their momentary high profile positions to contribute to the Civil Rights movement?

VII. How did the actions and achievements of the Tigerbelles contribute to or influence the quest for gender equality for women in sport and education? Did these female student-athletes view themselves as groundbreaking agents for gender equality in American society? Did these young women see themselves as role models for other women? Did they ever feel torn between their race and their gender? Did they embrace feminist ideals or did they support the traditional view of women's place in society?

VIII. What is the legacy of the TSU women's track program? What contributions have the Tigerbelles made and what challenges have they faced in their post-TSU careers? Did their successes and achievements pave the way for the future of women's sport? Is women's collegiate and professional sport, particularly women's track and field, any better off than it was during the Tigerbelles' period of dominance? What is the current status of the twenty-first century TSU women's track program? Do any of Temple's teaching philosophies and training methods remain in place?

For the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles, the conflicts and struggles they endured as they sought to realize their interests in sports and education were formidable. Yet, through hard work and determination team after team of Tigerbelles found success both on the field and in the classroom. The research revealed there were multiple perspectives as to how that journey was accomplished and the meanings behind those achievements. The challenge of this study was to shed light on those diverse experiences of the TSU Tigerbelles and examine the influence of their history as a program.

This first chapter served as an introduction to the general historical record of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles under the tutelage of long-term head coach Edward Temple and an overview of the historical research methods employed to complete this study. The second chapter addressed how women's athletics, particularly women's track and field was introduced and developed on the campus of Tennessee State University by President Walter S. Davis. Why was the development of a women's track and field team such a

progressive move during this period? This chapter also chronicled and examined the creation and early development of the Tennessee State University women's track and field program under the direction of head coaches, Jesse Abbott (1943-45), Tom Harris (1946-50), and Clyde Kincaide (1950-53). What issues did these coaches face in building a track and field program for women? Did these coaches contribute anything to the foundation or the legacy of the Ed Temple-led TSU Tigerbelles?

The third chapter focused upon the transitional and preparatory years, (1953-59) of Coach Edward Temple. How did Coach Temple turn what was basically a collegiate sport club team into a highly competitive athletic team that would win its first national title within two years of him being named head coach? What issues and obstacles did he face? How was Temple able to direct and control the Tigerbelle program as he envisioned? The fourth chapter analyzed and discussed the golden era years of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles (1960-68) when sprinting superstars, Wilma Rudolph, Wyomia Tyus, and Edith McGuire emerged to dominate collegiate and international track and field events. How did these young women manage to perform at such an elite level during one of the most racially charged periods of American history, when African American women faced both racial and gender discrimination, particularly black female athletes?

The fifth chapter addressed the TSU Tigerbelles that have been forgotten by sport history because they were not Olympians or if they were Olympians did not earn a medal. These women were major contributors to the national championships titles earned by the Tigerbelles and significantly added to the overall strength of the track and field program.

The sixth chapter addressed the slow decline of the Tennessee State Tigerbelle dynasty during the program's final years of producing Olympic level athletes (1969-79). What factors or conditions contributed to the major loss in athletic dominance for the TSU Tigerbelles? Additionally, this chapter marked the final years of the Edward Temple era (1980-1994) at Tennessee State and the legacy he and his many world-class athletes would leave behind. Where exactly do Ed Temple and the Tigerbelles belong in track and field history? Lastly, the state of the TSU Tigerbelles program since the retirement of Coach Temple is briefly examined, as well as a short evaluation of the re-introduction of some his coaching philosophies and training methods since his last Olympic champion, Chandra Cheeseborough, was hired to replace him.

Justification and Significance of the Study

Established in 1943, the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles became undisputedly the premier women's collegiate track and field program in the United States from the late 1950s until the late 1970s, producing some of the greatest collegiate and Olympic athletes in track and field history. Despite their tremendous individual and team athletic and academic successes, squad after squad of TSU Tigerbelle teams were virtually ignored by the mainstream national sports press, treated with relative indifference by their own university and overlooked for in-depth study by sport historians. As sport historian Susan Cahn notes, "the most striking feature of the historical record on black women athletes is neglect."²³ With track and field being one of

²³ Susan Cahn, *Coming On Strong: Gender And Sexuality In Twentieth-Century Women's Sport*. (New York: The Free Press, 1994) p. 126.

the first sports in which substantial numbers of African American women participated in, the women's teams of the Tuskegee Institute Tigerettes and the TSU Tigerbelles were the first in a long line of black female athletes to have their competitive careers historically overlooked.

This early neglect of African American women athletes had a cumulative effect that would have significant repercussions for later scholarly research on African American female participants in track and field. Many documents, correspondence, photographs, videos, and memorabilia from the early beginnings and golden era of the Tigerbelles have been lost, destroyed, or deemed of little importance for future research collection purposes. Racial and gender discrimination during the height of success for the TSU program also contributed to the lost opportunities for personal interviews, recorded film footage of events, and personal interest stories of Tigerbelle athletes. During the dominant period of the TSU Tigerbelles, the mid-1950s until the late-1970s, female athletes, particularly African American female athletes would have rarely received extensive media coverage from the white mainstream sports media. The Tigerbelles were no different despite their brilliant collegiate and international performances, including their prominent roles on U.S. Olympic teams.

As the years have passed since Tennessee State University's dominance of the sport, those teams and their achievements still remain in the background of collegiate and international sports history with the exception of Olympic superstars, Wilma Rudolph and Wyomia Tyus. Due to their extraordinary athletic performances under historically difficult circumstances, Rudolph and Tyus have both overshadowed their equally talented

teammates in public memory and serious sport history. The public interest and media fascination with Wilma Rudolph's rags-to-riches personal story and historically groundbreaking athletic achievements has even overshadowed Tyus' equally groundbreaking athletic performances and Tigerbelle legacy.

Numerous other members of TSU Tigerbelle teams are often lumped together as one giant black female monolith of track and field competitors despite the fact that their individual athletic achievements were standout performances at the time. There are clearly plenty of untold stories amongst the numerous other members of Tigerbelle squads. The lives and careers of Mae Faggs Starr, Lucinda Williams Adams, Edith McGuire Duvall, Isabel Daniels Holston, Mamie Rallins, Martha Hudson Pennyman, Willye T. White, Madeline Manning Mims, Lucinda Williams Adams, Barbara Jones Slater and many others are all more than worthy of in-depth study. For example, consider Mae Faggs Starr, who is directly singled-out as the athlete that first put the Tigerbelles "on the map"²⁴, serving as the role model for all the Tigerbelles that would come after her and setting the competitive tone for the entire women's track and field program. Another Tigerbelle of specific interest is Willye B. White, who would become the first American track and field athlete to qualify for five straight Olympic games, after emerging from the segregated South and continuing to compete despite her early dismissal from TSU. White viewed her athletic opportunities as such; "Athletics was my flight to freedom: freedom from prejudice, freedom from illiteracy, and freedom from

²⁴ Unknown, Tennessee Hall of Fame induction ceremony program for Mae Faggs Starr, p.16.

bias. It was my acceptance in the world.”²⁵

Even Mamie Rallins, who never won an Olympic medal, serves as one of the most compelling and overlooked Tigerbelle stories with her late entrance into collegiate athletics at the age of thirty. Rallins attended Tennessee State University with one of the first true athletic scholarships the women’s track and field program would ever offer. As Rallins remembers, “it was a challenge, but I was able to get my college degree in office administration and also make the Olympic team.”²⁶ Rallins’ story, like many of the other lesser-known Tigerbelles is just as compelling and inspiring as the most famous TSU Tigerbelle, Wilma Rudolph.

If a researcher agrees to set aside the lack of historical documentation on individual Tigerbelles, one could and would think that the program as a whole should have generated tremendous media and scholarly interest, but this is not the case. Even after nearly thirty years since the last Tigerbelle competed in the Olympic games, much less won a medal, no detailed, comprehensive research study of the entire Tennessee State University women’s track and field program has ever been undertaken or produced. Considering the tremendously successful history of the TSU Tigerbelles, this historical omission is somewhat surprising.

²⁵ Frank Litsky, “Willye B. White, the First 5-Time U.S. Track Olympian, Dies at 67”, *The New York Times*, Other Sports, July 2, 2007, p. 6.

²⁶ Fahizah Alim, “Auntie Mamie: Veteran will coax the best right out of her athletes.” *Sacramento Bee*, Sports, July 20, 2000, p. 2.

Long-term Tigerbelle coach Ed Temple takes an extremely positive and personal view of this failure to properly document the history and athletic achievements of his world-class track and field program. As he remarked in an interview for this project, “it really doesn’t matter if anyone writes anything about us or not, our story is right there in the record books.”²⁷ Temple is, of course, quite correct in his assessment; the names of Tennessee State Tigerbelles still dominate collegiate and international competition record books. In fact, there are records held by Tigerbelle athletes that are highly unlikely to ever be repeated or broken. For example, 1968 Olympian Madeline Manning Mims still remains the only U.S. woman to win a gold medal in the 800 meters and her teammates, Wyomia Tyus (1964, 1968) and Edith McQuire (1964) remain the only competitive tandem to come from the same small town, high school, and the same university, to finish first and second in the same Olympic event. So, while it is extremely generous of Temple to dismiss the absence of the TSU Tigerbelles from their rightfully earned place of prominence in sports history, this is an unacceptable circumstance for admirers and supporters of women’s track and field and the Tennessee State Tigerbelles.

As an elementary school student and burgeoning track and field athlete, I had the opportunity to meet Wilma Rudolph. I really had no idea who she was, but I was strongly aware that she was a famous athlete. It would be many years later before I was able to put her name in proper historical context. As pleased as I was to have had the opportunity to meet an Olympic and TSU Tigerbelle great such as Wilma Rudolph, I was

²⁷ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

always greatly troubled that I did not know the history and influence of the program. Role models have a purpose in athletics; they can provide a path to failure or achievement. The story of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles can serve as a guide to the kind of preparation and determination necessary to succeed in collegiate athletics and international competition, but that story needs to be told in full to be understood.

As an African American woman who would become a competitive athlete in multiple sports ranging from basketball to rugby to track and field, who battled many of the same racial and gender discrimination issues that many of the Tigerbelles faced years earlier, it would have been quite helpful and uplifting to know the full history of their athletic triumphs and achievements. It can be argued that for any female athlete regardless of race, athletic ability, or level of competition, detailed knowledge of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles' program would be of invaluable interest, not to mention of historical importance. As Olympic medalist and International Olympic Committee member, Anita DeFrantz relates, "the Tigerbelles helped me believe that African American women could be athletes, what they went through, the good, the bad, and the ugly, was amazing. It's a very important part of our history."²⁸

Lastly, the story of the TSU Tigerbelles is more than the well-known fairytale of Wilma Rudolph's triumph over illness and economic hardship to win Olympic gold. Rudolph deserves to be more than this mythical sport heroine without personal flaws or hardships after her glorious triumph on the athletic field. Rudolph and the Tennessee

²⁸ Burns, p.108.

State University women's track and field program are too often viewed as historical moments in sport instead of a long history of sacrifice, hard work, and determination to overcome numerous obstacles to achieve success. The numerous women who made up the various Tigerbelles' squads of those years deserve to have their stories told and to have their achievements placed in the right historical context. This study can serve as a small beginning to achieving that goal.

Methodology

Standard historical methods were primarily employed in this research. Both extensive document research and the collection of oral interviews were utilized. History is often simply defined as the study of change over time, but of course the study of history involves much more complexity than just shifting circumstances over an extended period. History is also "the story that is understood, told, or written about the facts of what happened in the past."²⁹ Further, when examining history, the historian must maintain a careful balance of telling a particular story that is "consistent with all the available facts."³⁰

Yet, the reality is that history can be strongly influenced and shaped by individuals and events even with the availability and accuracy of factual information. And who gets to interpret that history? All too often history is a reflection of the

²⁹ Charles Ciciarella, *Research in Physical Education, Exercise Science and Sport Historical Research Methods*, (New York: American Press Publishers, 2007) p.143.

³⁰ Ibid, p.143.

perspectives and perceptions of “the dominant culture or power system at a given time.”³¹

The absence of certain voices from a historical study, even with an accurate reporting of facts, can leave a large portion of a history untold.

There is a famous African proverb about the importance of who actually records history for posterity. As the proverb states, “until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter.”³² For many African Americans, the recording and the interpretation of their history has all too often been controlled by the perceptions and perspectives of others, for the purposes of others not always interested in reflecting African Americans positively or accurately.

Yet, over the last few years, numerous historical studies have been written about African Americans that more accurately portray their struggles and successes as citizens in the United States. From the study of American slavery to the Civil Rights Movement, the conflicts and contributions of African Americans have been recorded with more emphasis on the perspectives and perceptions of Black Americans. The rise of the academic disciplines of Black Studies and African American Studies have intensified and increased the number of scholarly studies focused primarily from a black perspective.

In terms of sports history, the study of African Americans and sport is still relatively new. Physical educator and civil rights activist Edwin B. Henderson became

³¹ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.4.

³² Unknown author, http://thinkexist.com/quotation/until_lions_have_their_historians-tales_of_the/180551.html

known as the “father of black sports history”³³ with his works, *The Negro in Sports* (1939, 1949) and *The Black Athlete: Emergence and Arrival* (1968). Henderson used his studies on African Americans and sport as a way to inspire and uplift African Americans with his collection of athletic triumphs by black athletes during a period when African Americans were denied so many other opportunities and subjected to racial discrimination. His work laid the foundation for other historians to pursue additional studies about African Americans. Yet, as groundbreaking as Henderson’s work was for African American athletes, he also helped reinforce gender stereotypes of female athletes by regularly describing them as girls instead of women. While Henderson was supportive of women participating in sport, his depiction of them as girls diminished their participation in competitive sport to secondary status.

Many of the early studies of African American athletes were mostly recollections of sporting events or biographical studies of black male athletes. African American women athletes often found themselves overlooked or regulated to minor occasional studies such as Henderson’s “*Negro Girls in Sport*”³⁴ published in 1949 or brief mentions within the only other early black sports history text, A.S. Young’s *Negro Firsts in Sport* (1963). As Walters contends, “in the history of sport, as is true of African

³³ David Wiggins, “Edwin Bancroft Henderson, African American Athletes, and the Writing of Sport History” in *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997), no specific page cited, the entire chapter is devoted to establishing Henderson as the father of Black Sports History.

³⁴ Edwin Henderson, *The Negro in Sports* (Washington, DC: The Associated Publisher, Inc., 1949)

American sports, the emphasis has mostly been on male athletes.”³⁵ The primary reason that most studies conducted on black sports history involved male athletes more than female athletes is due to the limited opportunities in sport for women. It was not until slightly before and after World War II that African American women began to have significant opportunities in track and field, basketball, baseball, bowling, golf and the Olympic games.

Only in the last twenty to twenty-five years have in-depth historical research studies begun to focus on the struggles and achievements of African American women athletes. The increase in race and gender related scholarly studies have strongly benefited sport historians who desired to study the effects of the “double burden”³⁶ of being black and female on African American women involved in competitive collegiate and amateur sports. As sport historian Nancy Struna asserts, major strides have been made in studying the history of women in sport and the importance of addressing gender in historical research: “Even historians who persist in treating sport as a predominantly male domain no longer wince at the possibility that it was and is a gendered domain, nor do historians of women as commonly interpret gender to mean women’s experiences as they once did.”³⁷ With this change in historical perspective, African American women

³⁵ John Walters, “*The Changing Status of the Black Athlete in the 20th Century United States*” (<http://www.johncarlos.com/walters.htm>, 2001) p. 4.

³⁶ The term “double burden” was coined during the early days of the Black Feminist movement in order to distinctly capture the plight of African American women battling both racial and gender issues.

³⁷ Nancy Struna, “Social History and Sport”, In *Handbook of Sport Studies*, Edited by Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000) p. 193.

athletes found themselves the center of several studies, but despite the change in scholarly research focus, black women athletes presented new challenges to sport historians.

Even with the strides made regarding studying black women there were still issues and obstacles to capturing their history. As black feminist and political activist, Francis M. Beale argues, there is still much work to be done in terms of placing African American women in a social-historical context that captures their unique life and historical experiences. As Beale remarks, “In attempting to analyze the situation of the black woman in America, one crashes abruptly into a solid wall of grave misconceptions, outright distortions of fact, and defensive attitudes on the part of many.”³⁸ Beale’s comments reiterate the importance of historians in pursuing and collecting the oral histories of African American women to have the opportunity to learn their stories in order to gain the perspective necessary to analyze their experiences.

In African American culture and history, oral history has served a crucial role in preserving the heritage of African Americans that could and would have remained undiscovered or lost forever. Oral history dominates the early historical record of African American’s perspectives of life in America. Collected interviews with newly freed slaves and slave narratives like *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass* provided an important insight into the everyday lives of slaves and offered an extremely different view of human bondage. One of the first African Americans to understand the importance

³⁸ Frances Beale, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female”, In *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought*. (New York: The New Press, 1995) p.146.

of collecting first-person accounts of black history and cultural traditions was novelist and researcher, Zora Neal Hurston. Her collections of oral history recordings of folktales and songs from the Deep South would inspire and lead others to recognize the importance of preserving vanishing voices of black history.

By interviewing black female athletes a historian can move beyond the simple recitation of race results and personal biographies, but instead move toward in-depth study of the challenges uniquely faced by African American women in competitive sport; examples include the socio-cultural differences of how women participating in sport are viewed in the black communities in comparison to white communities or how the lives of African American women are specifically impacted by participation in competitive sports.

Particularly in terms of the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles, these are extremely important and valid questions that have not been adequately explored or answered. In the 1950s and through the late 1960s, the TSU Tigerbelles did not become an elite athletic team in a historical vacuum. Their accomplishments outside of athletics were equally impressive in terms of African American women's history of their generation. Therefore, it is crucial to discover how these women survived difficult circumstances and substantial obstacles to achieve their athletic and educational goals.

Data Collection Procedures

A review of documents (undergraduate projects, masters' theses, doctoral dissertations, archival materials, official reports, academic seminar publications, newspapers, magazines, photo collections, athletic event programs, correspondence,

journals, personal memorabilia, award and ceremonial programs, official athletic records, films, videos and materials from internet) and the use of personal oral interviews will constitute the two primary research data collection measures employed for this project.

Review of Literature/Documents

In the review of primary documents, this study relied heavily upon the Special Collections library and Edward Temple Collection maintained at Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee. A significant amount of time was spent at the TSU Special Collections library researching, reviewing and collecting documentation and archival material related to the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles track and field program. Since the TSU Special Collections department does not allow patrons to check out documents and materials, these resources were copied and collected a substantial number of these materials. Additionally, rare copies of videotapes, photographs, and recorded interviews were acquired from the TSU Tigerbelle program history. Past copies of Tennessee State University's student newspaper, *The Meter* were also stored in the Special Collections department and those publications provided extensive information on the Tigerbelles.

The Tennessee State University Sports Hall of Fame that is located within the university library on the TSU campus is limited to student artwork, personal memorabilia, and photographs from Tigerbelle history. None of the materials on exhibit were of significant use in terms of research other than assisting with confirmation of certain dates and athletic records. There are also two special Edward Temple rooms that feature a large depository of Coach Temple's personal papers, manuscripts, newspaper

articles, awards, artwork, photographs, trophies, medals, and memorabilia from his lengthy coaching career. From Temple's collection, a significant majority of these documents and materials have been copied or duplicated for the TSU Special Collections library for public use and access.

The public library located in the City of Nashville has been invaluable in terms of local and state newspaper archives. The library is home to the entire archives of the *Nashville Banner*, the second longest running newspaper in the city. The *Nashville Banner*, which ceased publication in 1998, was a conservative publication that only rarely mentioned African Americans in general much less as competitive athletes. There was some minor coverage of the TSU Tigerbelles during their era of dominance, but not the kind of coverage one would expect of local area athletes achieving national and international fame.

The library also maintains a full collection of Nashville's only remaining principal daily newspaper, the *Nashville Tennessean*. The *Nashville Tennessean* is a liberal publication and historically more progressive in terms of recording the lives of African Americans. The Tennessee State University and its athletic program received regular coverage from the *Tennessean*, but often this coverage was relegated to the back pages of the newspaper. More often than not, TSU Tigerbelle coverage was regulated to the obituaries section of the newspaper instead of the sports page.

TSU Tigerbelle coverage in the *Nashville Tennessean* changed somewhat in the late 1950s and early 1960s when long-term *Nashville Tennessean* sports journalist, F.W. Williams began writing about the Tigerbelles in his daily sports column, *Sportscope*.

Williams was the first white mainstream sport journalist to take a sincere and consistent public interest in the TSU women's track and field program. His sport columns and TSU Tigerbelle program profiles were sometimes instrumental in exposing the limited facilities and shoestring budgets with which Coach Temple operated his teams. Williams' articles continue to represent the most substantial mainstream sports press coverage of the TSU Tigerbelle program during their dominant period in track and field history.

A considerable amount of time was spent reviewing the collection of documents and records held at the Los Angeles '84 Foundation Sports library (LA84 Foundation) located in Los Angeles, California. The LA84 Foundation Sports library does not have a large collection of Tennessee State University Tigerbelle related documents, but they do have a couple of rare dissertations about or connected to the TSU Tigerbelle program, as well as several hard to attain books on African American women and sport. The LA84 Foundation Sports library does have some rare TSU Tigerbelle photographs, however public access to these items was restricted to paid copies and the high cost of those copies made their acquisition prohibitive for this study.

There were very small collections of minor documents related to the Tennessee State Tigerbelles at sport halls of fame located in Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee, as well as the USA Track & Field Hall of Fame at the Armory Foundation in New York City. The majority of these documents consisted of written correspondence between the sport halls of fame and top-level Tigerbelle Olympic athletes to set up special award ceremonies or personal memorabilia donations.

The most valuable materials at these organizations were the personal memorabilia collected from TSU Tigerbelle athletes. Of course there is no access to these kinds of materials other than visiting the exhibits and recording whatever information may be available. There was really no groundbreaking information acquired during these visits, but the data collected was especially useful for confirmation of other collected research data. Additionally, it was enjoyable for nostalgic purposes to observe the personal memorabilia that various Tigerbelle athletes have donated.

There is a major exhibit of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles Olympic history within the Hall of Champions in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Museum located in Indianapolis, Indiana. Early last year, there was a fire at the museum and the Hall of Champions suffered significant fire and water related damage. The NCAA Museum has been closed since and the scheduled re-opening has been delayed. Availability and accessibility to any documents the museum may have is unknown at this time. Therefore, access to ascertain if any documents of use can be acquired may not become available before the completion of this study.

The local college libraries in Indiana were extremely useful for this research project. DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana had a few documents primarily related to the short period during which Olympic champion and TSU Tigerbelle superstar, Wilma Rudolph was employed at the university. Most of these documents were personal interviews for the student newspaper and press releases connected to her work. The National Track Hall of Fame, which maintains its holdings in the Historical Research library in the Rare Books and Special Collections section of the Irwin library at

Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana, also has some interesting materials related to the Tigerbelles. Indiana University had a couple of hard to locate dissertations on African American women and sport.

From informal pre-interview discussions with several former Tigerbelles such as Isabel Daniels Holston, Edith McGuire Duvall, Mamie Rallins, Lucinda Williams Adams, and Chandra Cheeseborough, it is quite obvious that several of these athletes have retained and maintained their own personal collection of documents and memorabilia from their competitive athletic years at TSU. While these personal collections may represent a significant research opportunity for this dissertation project, many of these former Tigerbelles are currently working on their own personal autobiographies or planning to write autobiographies in the near future, so there was some reluctance to share some of their personal archival materials. This factor was not a significant hindrance to the interviews or overall research study as many of the interviewees have been quite generous in sharing many of their stories and materials.

In terms of published first person accounts, Wilma Rudolph's 1977 autobiography entitled *Wilma: The Story of Wilma Rudolph* remains the only widely published autobiography of any athlete in the Tigerbelle program. Rudolph's autobiography was actually ghostwritten by famous sportswriter and filmmaker, Bud Greenspan.³⁹ The book covers Rudolph's tumultuous childhood of life-threatening illness and poverty, ending with the triumphs of her collegiate and Olympic athletic career. Rudolph was quite frank

³⁹ First editions of this publication singularly credit Wilma Rudolph as the sole author, but subsequent editions list Bud Greenspan as co-author or sole author.

about her struggles as an unwed teenage mother and her fears as a developing elite athlete. She also reflects on the racism she encountered during her career and her frustrations with her post-athletics career.

Madeline Manning Mims' autobiography entitled *The Hope of Glory* was independently published in 2000. Manning primarily details her impoverished upbringing in Cleveland, Ohio and on-going involvement in track and field that led to her becoming a Tennessee State Tigerbelle. Additionally, Manning related her long-term experiences as an Olympic athlete from her gold medal triumph at the 1968 Olympic games to her devastating experience as an athlete during the Munich Massacre at the 1972 games. Her autobiography also related her strong belief in Christianity that fueled and empowered her throughout her life and athletic career.

Wyomia Tyus' autobiography, *Running the World: The Story of Wyomia Tyus and The Tennessee State Tigerbelles* still remains unpublished. Inquiries were made to review the unpublished manuscript off the record, but Ms. Tyus refused due to her desire that previously unpublished information not be recorded in another publication before her actual autobiography is published. There is a lengthy first person account of Tyus' 1968 Olympic experience in historian David Wiggins, *A Documentary History of The African American Experience in Sport* (2003) and in Lewis Carlson's *Tales of Gold: An Oral History of the Summer Olympic Games Told by America's Gold Medal Winners* (1987). Tyus relates her feelings on becoming the first American female athlete to win back-to-back gold medals in the 100-meter dash in consecutive Olympic games and about the controversial protest of her teammates, Tommy Smith and John Carlos.

The autobiography of long-term Tennessee State University Tigerbelle coach Edward Temple, *Only the Pure in Heart Survive*, published in 1980, serves as the only in-depth, first person historical record of Temple's track program development, coaching philosophy, and training methods. His autobiography also relates his numerous coaching opportunities in collegiate and Olympic competitions outside of his Tennessee State University teams and his reflections on the successes and setbacks of those competitions. Lastly, a large portion of his autobiography recounts his reflections of Wilma Rudolph's historic triumph at the 1960 Olympics.

The main problem with his autobiography is that it only covers his early personal life and his coaching experiences with the Tennessee State University teams from 1950 until about mid-1978. Since Temple did not retire until 1994, this represents a significant gap in TSU team history from the coach's perspective. Further, this autobiography is more of a chronological history of significant events and the personal philosophies of Temple's career instead of a reflective study of the socio-cultural, racial and gender discrimination issues that he and the TSU Tigerbelle must have encountered during the years before the civil rights and women's movements.

Much of the writing devoted to the study of the Tennessee State University Tigerbelle is limited in terms of historical perspective and vision. Large portions of secondary resource materials on the Tigerbelle are biographical entries of individual team members, Coach Edward Temple, and sometimes the entire Tigerbelle program. Another major portion of the secondary sources on the Tigerbelle consists of yearly compilations of individual and team statistics and records from collegiate, international,

and Olympic competitions. There are some important works that give some attention to the influences and effects of socio-cultural, race and gender issues on the history of the Tigerbelle program and its athletes. Lastly, there is a collection of historical essays and graduate research studies on the history of the TSU Tigerbelles program with varying degrees of limitations and shortcomings.

The comprehensive biographical texts and articles are invaluable in terms of personal historical overviews, but the majority of the time, these biographical entries are limited to only the TSU Olympians such as Mae Faggs, Wilma Rudolph, Willye White, Edith McQuire, and Wyomia Tyus (Bentley, 1983; Hendershott, 1987; Ashe, 1988, 1993; Porter, 1995; Lamb, 1996; Tricard, 1996; Layden, 1997; Wiggins, 1997; Markel & Smith, 1997; Oglesby, 1998; Emerson, 1999; Wiggins, 2004). In many cases, these entries are limited to only Rudolph and Tyus (Johnson, 1996; Leder, 1996), or in some cases it was just Rudolph alone (Smith, 1993; Jones, 2000) or vice versa. These historical entries often provide insight to the Olympic experiences of the other TSU Tigerbelle Olympians whose performances are noted, but their personal expressions about those achievements are overlooked.

For example, in *Life* magazine's special commemorative book edition, *The Olympics – From Athens to Athens* (2004), Wilma Rudolph's triumphant 1960 Olympics performance is the sole highlight from the long history of Tennessee State University Tigerbelle Olympic participation. The trend of recording only Wilma Rudolph's 1960 Olympic performance continues in most chronological or reflective studies of Olympic history (Lentz, 1960; Kieran & Daley, 1969; Guttmann, 1984, 1991, 1994; Collins, 1996;

DK Publishers, 1998). In terms of a collection of the overall Tigerbelle individual and team statistics, there are several texts available that have compiled the U.S. National and Olympic team statistics of the TSU teams (Durant, 1961; Wallechinsky, 1984, 1988; Page, 1991; Davis, 1992; Baldwin, 1996), but fail to offer in-depth details for TSU Tigerbelles other than for Wilma Rudolph.

Considering that Rudolph's fellow Tigerbelle, Wyomia Tyus, won four medals in her Olympic career, including gold medals in the 100-meter race in back-to-back Olympiads, an athletic feat that had not been achieved by any other Olympic track and field female athlete at the time, it is hard to understand why Tyus' story was continuously under-rated or overlooked in Olympic studies. For example, in both editions of David Wallechinsky's *The Complete Book of the Olympics* (1984, 1988), Wyomia Tyus and other Tigerbelles get brief acknowledgement of their Olympic achievements, but he devotes extensive coverage only to Rudolph's personal story and Olympic victories.

Another interesting omission is the absence of any significant mention of Tigerbelles in studies about the controversial 1968 Olympic games. Several Tigerbelles would have been affected by the proposed boycott of the 1968 Olympics, spear-headed by Professor Harry Edwards. Tigerbelle members of the 1968 Olympic team, Wyomia Tyus, Willye White, and Madeline Manning Mims, only receive slight mentions in the numerous studies on the proposed boycott and the actual protest enacted by Tommie Smith and John Carlos. (Edwards, 1970; Guttman, 1984, 1994; Harrison, 2000; Mallozzi, 2000; Schaffer & Smith, 2000; Bass, 2002; Hartman, 2003).

The exclusion of 1968 Tigerbelle Olympian from this particular event is important because Harry Edwards failed to include the black female athletes that made the 1968 Olympic team in the initial discussions of the proposed boycott. It was assumed that the black women would go along with the decisions of the black male athletes. Very little about this exclusion of the black female athletes' opinions regarding the boycott are mentioned in other studies. Secondly, after learning of the boycott, the black female athletes decided to compete anyway. Therefore, it should be of some interest if they encountered any backlash or criticism for failing to follow behind the proposed plans of the black male athletes. Lastly, the reactions, perspectives, and opinions of 1968 Tigerbelle Olympian to the Smith/Carlos protests and the aftermath is regularly overlooked. For such a controversial and historical moment in the Olympic games, it seems rather limiting to exclude their points of view.

Even Wilma Rudolph has still not received the intensive or extensive studies that one would expect to find devoted to an athlete of her caliber and historical influence. Wilma Rudolph could be considered the greatest individual female athlete in Tennessee State University athletic history and arguably one of the greatest female athletes in sporting history, yet there is a shocking lack of significant serious academic research about her life and career. Given Rudolph's legendary status as an Olympian and her triumphant and tragic personal life, it would be imagined that she would have a great deal of scholarly attention dedicated to examining her life and career.

The majority of written work devoted to her life and career are primarily children's books and teen audience non-fiction (Biracee, 1988; Coffey, 1993; Sherrow,

1995; Flanagan, 2000; Krull, 2000; Conrad, 2002; Harper, 2004; Schraff, 2004; Braun, 2005; Smith, 2006). These works are highly formulaic and repetitive in their narrative construction, portraying Rudolph in the one-dimensional role of sporting heroine, triumphing over poverty and illness to Olympic glory, but often times glossing over the racism and sexism Rudolph encountered.

Further, considering Coach Ed Temple's extraordinary success with the Tigerbelles and his personal achievements as an Olympic coach and committee member, the fact that his life and career had not generated at least one recent in-depth historical sport study beyond his own 1980 autobiography, a minor masters thesis on his coaching philosophies (Hirst, 1998) and Matt Fulks' essay on Temple in his book, *Behind The Stats: Tennessee's Coaching Legends*, is somewhat remarkable. Yet, when one considers that other successful African American athletes and coaching legends such as collegiate football legend, Fritz Pollard, collegiate basketball great, Clarence "Big House" Gaines and ground-breaking long distance track coach and educator, Dr. Leroy Walker have only recently had biographical studies completed on their lives and careers, the fact that Edward Temple has been forgotten for the moment is not so unusual.

There are several published sources on black sports history that, based on their publication dates, should have included the contributions of African American women athletes, particularly the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles, but fail to even mention black female athletes at all. Jack Olsen's *The Black Athlete* (1968) ignores black female athletes completely and Ocania Chalk's *Black College Sport* (1976) offers the following feeble excuse for not addressing any achievements of black female athletes.

The black female athlete has not been discussed in the pages that follow. Any effort possibly would have been presumptuous and certainly would have been inadequate. A work of quality, backed by in-depth research, has long been needed. To have treated the black woman athlete cursorily would have compounded the sins of the past as has too often been done with the black male athlete. The writer awaits a definitive treatment on the accomplishments of black women in sports.⁴⁰

Adding to this trend of omitting black female athletes from sport studies on the black athlete is scholar David Wiggins, in his work *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (1997), which also fails to mention any African American women athletes.

There have been several groundbreaking scholarly articles on African American women in sport including analysis of the Tuskegee Institute and Tennessee State University women's track and field programs, including their standout athletes. These essays challenged the conventional stereotypes of black female athletes and recorded the numerous obstacles of racism and sexism that African American women faced in order to compete in competitive sport (Harris, 1981; Birrell, 1990; Smith, 1992; Birrell & Cole, 1994; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998). Additionally, there have been some interesting and extensive studies completed by sport historian, Linda Williams, on the similarities and differences between black and white media coverage of African American women in their early days of competing in Olympic and amateur sport (Williams, 1987, 1994, 1995). With fellow scholar Angela Lumpkin, Williams also completed a comprehensive

⁴⁰ Ocania Chalk, *Black College Sport*, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1976), Foreword.

analysis of *Sports Illustrated* feature articles on African American women in competitive sports. (1991)

The most significant and inclusive studies of African American women athletes in track and field have been compiled in a small collection of historical theses and dissertations and a series of in-depth essays. The majority of these unpublished studies and essays compare and contrast particular aspects of the Tuskegee Institute's Tigerettes track and field program with the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles track and field program. (Nicolussi, 1966; Thaxton, 1970; Clemons, 1975; Cahn, 1994; Gissendanner, 1994; Festle, 1996; Smith, 1998). A smaller grouping of scholarly research addresses the Olympic history of the Tigerbelles, Tigerettes, and other black female athletes (Adkins, 1967; Watkins, 1980; Gissendanner, 1996).

Interviews

Personal interviews were the most time consuming portion of this research study. Due to the limited media coverage of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles during the most dominant periods of the track and field program and the limitations of secondary resources devoted to covering the overall history of the Tigerbelles program, personal interviews were of significant importance to fill in the historical gaps and to attain personal perspectives of Tigerbelle history. Nine former Tigerbelle team members or individuals affiliated with the Tennessee State University track and field program, ranging from former team members, coaches, team managers, university personnel, students, and journalists were interviewed for this project.

A preliminary interview request letter was mailed to selected members of

the forty Tennessee State University Olympic team medalists, to selected members that participated in international competition without earning a medal, and to selected team members that did not have the opportunity to compete in international competition. (See appendix A for a copy of this letter). The interviews specifically targeted several former TSU Tigerbelles that were not Olympians for personal interviews because these women made significant contributions to the championship collegiate TSU teams and have been historically overlooked because they were not Olympians. Follow-up telephone calls and additional letters were utilized to secure personal interviews.

Personal interviews were conducted with the following former Tigerbelles; Isabel Daniels Holston, Edith McGuire Duvall, Mamie Rallins, Lucinda Williams Adams, and Willye White. The interview pool for this project represented a strong and diverse mix of Tennessee State Tigerbelles who competed in the Olympics, world championships, collegiate championships, and general competitions over the established historical period of this study. Personal interviews were also completed with retired long-term TSU head coach Edward Temple as well as the current TSU head coach and former Tigerbelle team member, Chandra Cheeseborough. Unfortunately, the opportunity to conduct a personal interview with Coach Temple's wife, Charlie B. Temple, who was also a significant and substantial supporter for the TSU track and field program, was denied due to her deteriorating health. Further, Mrs. Temple passed away on March 29, 2008.⁴¹ When the

⁴¹ Tennessee State University Sports Information, Release Date 3/31/2008

interviews were conducted, subjects were asked about Mrs. Temple's contributions and role with the program.

Former TSU athletic great and Olympic champion Ralph Boston, who was also coached by Coach Temple, was also interviewed and very helpful in assisting with contacting former Tigerbelles. TSU alumnus and *Nashville Tennessean* Editor Dwight Lewis was interviewed about his experiences as a student athlete and journalist at TSU during the 1960s and about his TSU sports history book, *A Will to Win* (1983).

Multiple interviews were extremely important to this project in order to attain a diverse perspective of the history and influence of the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles' track and field program, its athletes, and their experiences. Further, these interviews were of great assistance in obtaining valuable personal and historical perspectives of the lives and athletic careers of three key members of the Tigerbelle family who are now deceased; the "Mother of the Tigerbelles"⁴² Mae Faggs Starr, 1960 Olympic Champion Superstar Wilma Rudolph, and five-time Olympian Willye T. White.

Additionally, these interviews provided a bit of extension on the limited information available on the creation and early development of the TSU women's track and field program. Unfortunately, Jesse Abbott and Tom Harris, the early coaches for the TSU women's track and field program are both deceased and the documentation of their coaching tenures is very thin in terms of historical coverage. Further, Ms. Audrey Patterson, the first Tigerbelle athlete to win an Olympic medal died in 1996, so the

⁴² Lewis and Thomas, p. 121.

primary written record of the beginnings of TSU women's track and field is limited to the small collection of archival documents available at Tennessee State University and a few scant mentions in secondary sources. I used these personal interviews to confirm the limited available facts, extend the history, and confirm other research information that now can only be considered speculative. I developed a substantial interview guide to help maintain the primary focus of my study, yet allow the flexibility to attain data about the TSU Tigerbelles that may not have been originally considered or known.

Data Analysis

Since the review of the primary archival documents and secondary sources related to the history of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles track and field program was completed before the collection of the person-to-person interviews, those materials were prepared without making any firm assumptions about the data and documents already amassed. The research materials were organized into file folders categorized by various subjects such as specific files on each individual TSU Tigerbelle athlete to be included in the study, each individual coach, outside support to the TSU Tigerbelle program, trainers, managers, or boosters, etc.... Additional examples of the organization of the research was the cross-coding of research data on specific events related to TSU Tigerbelle history such as specific Olympic games, Pan American Games, national collegiate meets, etc....

This filing system made it easy to retrieve specific data and materials without having to pore through multiple pages of data repeatedly. Notes from these categorized files have contributed to easing the process to analyze and confirm data through the triangulation method of using multiple sources to confirm individual accounts and events

and to “minimize distortion from a single data source or from a biased researcher.”⁴³

Using this system, I was strongly prepared to incorporate the data retrieved from the transcripts of my oral interviews without having to spend significant amounts of time re-reading research materials. I have been able to make connections and additions quickly since the oral interviews were completed. Additionally, throughout my project I maintained my bibliography as a continuous work-in-progress, contributing to the strong organization of my resources by making clear all materials and data available for crosschecking and triangulation during analysis. This process also made the completion of my final bibliography substantially easier.

Several interesting questions and possibly perplexing arguments emerged in regard to analyzing the documents and materials. Some historical inaccuracies and conflicting interpretations arose, impressing upon me that care needed to be taken when analyzing this research data. I don't want to make assumptions or over-generalizations about the Tennessee State University women's track and field program and the women who participated in this program over the years. Where the history of segregation and the civil rights movement may be somewhat static in terms of historical fact, the effects of these histories on the TSU Tigerbelles was not. The experiences of individuals are not universal, as there is not one universal-race or universal-gender related experience, so I wanted the data that I collected, both primary and secondary to stand exactly as it was presented when collected. During analysis of the research data, particular ideas, themes

⁴³ Laura Krefting, “Rigor in Qualitative Research: The Assessment of Trustworthiness,” *Cases in Qualitative Research*, ed. Andrea K. Milinki (Los Angeles, Pyczak), p. 177.

and/or categories emerged and became apparent, but I always tried to be sure to remain open-minded to any new possibilities that might have emerged from the collected data.

Entering into the subject interview area of my dissertation research, I was mindful of remaining objective at all times. In my initial research collection I had found myself being angry and frustrated at the racism, sexism and other acts of unfairness and inequality that Coach Temple and the Tigerbelles endured. I worked hard to remember that in the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans and women faced significant social, cultural, and political obstacles to pursuing opportunities in sport and education. These are facts of history that could not be changed and my twenty-first century perception of freedom and equal opportunity had to be muted in order to understand and analyze the challenges they faced in their era.

As an admirer of the TSU Tigerbelles and their remarkable accomplishments, I expected my objectivity to be challenged by my personal biases and prejudices. I did not enjoy reading or hearing about the often-difficult experiences and circumstances that many Tigerbelle athletes endured and suffered. I was particularly dismayed to discover how much the achievements of these women were disregarded or dismissed during their heyday and I was further disturbed that as much as the Tigerbelles contributed to putting their tiny university, Tennessee State on the historical map, that the university still struggled mightily in celebrating their legacy. I worked hard to remember that it is my place to analyze, not judge history.

Even though the number of personal interviews collected for this project was small in terms of the overall number of women who participated in the TSU track and

field program during Coach Ed Temple's tenure, the small number of interviewees did not limit the scope of the overall study. The Tigerbelles picked as interview subjects were chosen because of their ability to address extensive portions of TSU Tigerbelle track and field history. My interview subjects were more than capable of validating research data and contributing to the overall understanding of TSU Tigerbelle history. The data collected from the personal interviews played an important role in the triangulation method I employed for verifying data and details collected from secondary research documents and archival materials.

I looked to the personal interviews to provide a wide perspective of Tennessee State University track and field history because the program produced many different kinds of athletes who will have varying perceptions of their experiences as a Tigerbelle athlete and student. I wanted to use these diverse experiences to my advantage to maintain a balance between the Olympian and the non-Olympian Tigerbelles. My only concern about reliability in the interviews came from some faltering memories due to the age of some of the athletes and due to the reluctance of any Tigerbelle to speak negatively about another Tigerbelle, their coach, or the program because of their immense respect for one another and Coach Temple.

Reliability was of some concern in terms of the accuracy of certain collected secondary documents and materials about the TSU Tigerbelles track and field program. One of the major drawbacks of the failure of mainstream sports media and TSU university officials to expansively and adequately records the achievements and accomplishments of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles at the time they actually occurred is

that many of the program's facts and records have been recorded incorrectly or lost. Years later, when interest in the TSU Tigerbelles was renewed, limited or incomplete records were regularly repeated as the complete history.

For example, the Tigerbelles Olympic medal count is routinely incorrectly reported in nearly every single publication examined for this project. This inaccuracy often gets repeated due to differing interpretations of how the medals should be counted and credited. Some sources count relay medals as one medal, other sources count each medal won by an individual, and in many cases, the medal count is just wrong. For the purpose of this study, I have decided to use the Olympic medal count that credits each individual TSU Tigerbelle with a medal earned, whether that medal was won in an individual or relay competition.

The triangulation method was employed to crosscheck many of the historical facts and records regarding the Tennessee State University women's track and field program. This method was extremely helpful in maintaining a consistent historical timeline of the TSU program, a more accurate record of TSU Tigerbelle athletic records and educational achievements, and the career records of Coach Edward Temple.

Summary

For the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles, the conflicts and struggles they endured as they sought to realize their interests in sports and education were formidable. Yet, through hard work and determination team after team of Tigerbelles found success both on the field and in the classroom. In the research conducted for this project there were multiple perspectives as to how that journey was accomplished and the meanings

behind those achievements. The challenge of this study was to shed light on those experiences of the TSU Tigerbelles and examine the influence of their history as a program.

CHAPTER II
THE EARLY YEARS (1912-1950)

There were those who believed President Davis to be an idealist, a dreamer. He was both. But as the years passed, his dreams came true, and his idealism became realism.⁴⁴

Howard Gentry, TSU Athletic Director (1961-1976)

At the start of the twentieth century, Tennessee remained the only state with legal racial segregation that did not have at least one public state college for its African American citizens.⁴⁵ In 1907, African American leaders in Tennessee learned of state plans to build several new public colleges and demanded that these plans include at least one school for African Americans. Two years later in 1909, an expansive educational act was passed by the state of Tennessee's General Assembly containing a special provision to provide a federal land grant and state provided financial appropriations for general operations to establish the first state-funded normal college for Negroes near the Cumberland River area located in Nashville, Tennessee.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Lewis and Thomas, p. 6

⁴⁵ Bobby L. Lovett, *"Tennessee State University"* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998) p. 1

⁴⁶ Lester C. Lamon, *Blacks in Tennessee 1791-1970*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1981) p. 70

The state support for this proposed higher education school project was only grudgingly granted by legislators with the condition that “the institution had to serve a distinctly definite, different and important purpose and the courses of study...shall be of such practical nature as to fit the conditions and needs of their race.”⁴⁷ In the early years of the post-reconstruction era, for white legislators, the expected and accepted form of higher education for African Americans was principally based on teaching agricultural and farming procedures, in addition to teaching manual trade and industrial skills. The African American leadership that fought for and supported the development of this new school would have higher aspirations for its future students and faculty.

Despite the African American leadership’s high expectations for this new college, the state legislature hampered this educational venture by failing to include construction funds to purchase materials to build the campus and further only granted the school \$16,700 in funding in comparison to the \$33,430 granted to each of the three new proposed white schools designated to be built the same year.⁴⁸ The local black Nashville leadership responded by organizing a fund-raising group, the Colored Agricultural and Industrial Normal Association.⁴⁹ The school’s future principal and president, William Jasper Hale led the association and help raise nearly \$100,000 in additional school

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 70

⁴⁸ Lamon, p. 70

⁴⁹ Lovett, p.1

funding over the next three years. This fund-raising campaign was the first in a series of innovative measures that Hale undertook to overcome obstacles to the fledging school.

When the Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School for Negroes officially opened its doors on June 19, 1912, its first long-term principal and president William Jasper Hale enacted the expected industrial and agricultural educational training, but quickly and quietly included high school level, pre-collegiate coursework into the college's then two-year curriculum. Hale even managed to secretly create "a black history course and called it Industrial Education "with emphasis on Negro problems."⁵⁰ President Hale fostered a collegiate environment that depended on everyone connected to the institution to contribute to developing a solid foundation he could build upon. Everyone from the handpicked thirteen faculty members to the original entering class of 247 students to the administrative staff "worked to keep the institution running in its early years, from clearing rocks and harvesting crops to carrying chairs from class to class."⁵¹

Despite overseeing an ambitious academic agenda for a black college in the early 1900s, President Hale maintained and enforced extremely conservative social and cultural standards for his faculty, administrative staff, and students. All students were required to attend on-campus church services and work at an on-campus job two hours per day.⁵² "Hale required that faculty members and students observe a curfew and refrain

⁵⁰ Billie P. Pursley, "William Jasper Hale" (<http://www.tnstate.edu/library/digital/hale.htm>) p. 1

⁵¹ Unknown author, "Past Tennessee State University Presidents" <http://www.tnstate.edu/interior.asp?mid+442>, p.1

⁵² Lovett, p. 1

from political activity.”⁵³ Despite these constraints, it is unclear that Hale was directly interested in controlling the working and personal lives of his faculty, staff, and students, but that he was supremely more interested in making sure the school survived and thrived in extremely difficult racial and economic circumstances. The rules and restrictions that Hale created for the campus seemed more likely as a preventive measure, reducing the possibility that any of the school’s faculty, staff, or students could make a mistake or offense that would create an additional issue or problem for the institution.

From all accounts, President William Hale was a shrewd, but practical man, who clearly understood the tenuous status of his fledging institution. Hale rarely complained when the state short-changed the college on state funding, “preferring to accept “half-loaf” appropriations rather than to complain aggressively and risk loss.”⁵⁴ Hale understood that in the South, white state legislators and education officials held serious misgivings about formally educating African American students. Hale chose to appeal to the racially biased beliefs of state officials, appearing to comply with the educational standards they believed suited black students, while quietly enacting his own personal agenda.

In order to maintain his limited state funding, Hale held annual visitation days and special dinners for white state legislators and other officials. These state officials were chauffeured to campus by the A&I State Normal students, who then upon their arrival to

⁵³ Bobby L. Lovett, “*William Jasper Hale 1874-1944*” (Nashville: Tennessee Historical society, 1988) p.1

⁵⁴ Lamon, p. 72

campus, were treated to student conducted campus tours. Officials observed students in vocational classes, watched uniformed students working on the school farm and engaging in other manual labor tasks, including cleaning school dormitories and classrooms.⁵⁵ At the end of the visit, officials were “dined, served, and entertained by faculty members and students.”⁵⁶ Lastly, President Hale presented each visitor “with a freshly dressed turkey from the school’s farm.”⁵⁷ This well-orchestrated visitation process paired “with the school’s motto, “Enter to Learn; Go Forth to Serve,” and the words on the school’s seal, “Think; Work; Serve,”⁵⁸ greatly served Hale in convincing state officials that A&I Normal school students were being educated according to their expectations.

Using this system, Hale, in an era when African Americans were still expected to know their place and accept subordinate positions socially and professionally, he managed to expand and develop Tennessee A&I with relative freedom. In 1922, the college was upgraded from a two-year to a four-year, bachelor degree granting teachers college. That same year, the institution dropped the “normal” from its name and became known as Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State College (Tennessee A&I). Hale awarded the first undergraduate degrees in 1924 to eight students, seven men and one

⁵⁵ Lovett, p. 1

⁵⁶ Pursley, p.1

⁵⁷ Lovett, p.1

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.1

woman.⁵⁹ When the state of Tennessee's General Assembly "authorized the State Board of Education to upgrade substantially the educational program of the college"⁶⁰, Tennessee A&I became one of the few historically black colleges in the country that offered graduate courses and a masters degree in education for African American students. The college also became the main training ground for black educators in the state of Tennessee.

Under Hale's tenure, this tiny school built on twelve acres of rocky, undeveloped backwoods hillside developed a significant vocational and intellectual curriculum taught by top-notch faculty, on a campus with multiple new buildings and structures including a football stadium and half-track oval. Despite the college being under-financed during his entire tenure, Hale established a strong reputation for being able to accomplish a great deal without major funding and consistent state support. Hale successfully kept the doors of the college open during the devastating financial crisis of the Great Depression when most black institutions were forced to close due to lack of funding and students. Hale was also responsible for introducing physical education and team sports to Tennessee A&I.

President Hale embraced physical education and athletics from the beginning of his tenure at the college. In 1912, he hired retired professional baseball player Howard

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 1

⁶⁰ Unknown author, "Tennessee State University Historical Statement", p. 1, <http://www.tnstate.edu/interior.asp?mid=399>.

Robinson as a physical education coach and instructor.⁶¹ With Hale's blessings, Robinson started Tennessee A & I's first football team. Yet, the physical education and football programs were limited due to Hale's unwillingness to invest the college's limited finances toward multiple athletic activities and expensive athletic equipment. Considering that throughout Hale's presidency, the school was run on an extremely tight budget, his reluctance to spend school funds on extracurricular athletic activities and training facilities is understandable.

Hale's primary support of physical education classes at the school was more directly connected to his belief in the ideals of "muscular Christianity," the belief "that a sound mind could not be achieved without a sound body"⁶² than the need to have his students involved in competitive sports. As part of his yearly welcoming speech listing his expectations to incoming students, Hale included this reference to the importance of physical fitness: "to attend physical education classes to secure ease and gracefulness of carriage and the general development of the shoulders, chest, and body to normal size and strength."⁶³ Hale's views about physical education and sport were in step with numerous other leaders of historically black colleges, who understood the importance of physical activity and sport teams as a form of discipline and character building for their students.

⁶¹ Lewis and Thomas, p.3

⁶² David Wiggins, *African Americans in Sport – Volume 1: A-L*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2004) p. 150

⁶³ Lewis and Thomas, p. 2

As sport historian Patrick B. Miller argues, black educators in the South began to believe that physical education and sport could serve multiple purposes on historically black college campuses. First, athletics could be used as an effective tool for recruitment of black students, who might be interested more initially in the pursuit of sports than scholastic study. Second, competitive collegiate sports on black campuses could be used to instill school pride and unity, improving alumni relations and fundraising efforts. As Miller states, black educators believed that “athletic accomplishment could strengthen the sense of racial pride among black southerners and at the same time encourage them to indentify with “national” past times.”⁶⁴

Third, historically black colleges were often located in isolated rural areas with the nearest urban cities being a significant distance away. Even if there was a way to reach the nearest city, these areas were predominantly white and heavily segregated. Jim Crow segregation laws and rules would have been in full operation, particularly in the deep south of Tennessee. African Americans would have been barred or restricted from receiving service from most business establishments and in some instances being located in such a town after sundown could have serious repercussions. Black college students also would have been strongly discouraged from pursuing services and activities in the nearby white cities and would have been encouraged to remain close to campus.

⁶⁴ Patrick Miller, “To “Bring the Race along Rapidly”: Sport, Student Culture, and Educational Mission at Historically Black Colleges during the Interwar Years” in *The Sporting World of the Modern South*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), p. 129.

Therefore, athletic activities and sport competitions were used to keep students entertained and occupied on campus.

Therefore, the development of competitive sports at Tennessee A & I were not limited because Hale was in any way against competitive sports, but because he valued spending the school's meager college funds on academic programming first. Hale clearly wanted his students to have every opportunity available because he wanted his them to feel that they were not being denied anything that was offered at white institutions. Another reason why Hale was so hesitant in developing a full-fledged athletic program was because of the on-going apprehension and intense consternation from leading black educators and intellectuals about a series of athletic scandals at traditionally black institutions. "Unethical recruiting practices, the disbursement of athletic "scholarships," and the use of "ringer" or "tramp" athletes on varsity teams"⁶⁵ had black leaders like W.E.B. Du Bois extremely fearful that athletics were being valued over academics and threatened "to subvert the educational mission of institutions large and small."⁶⁶ Being the cautious and prudent man he was known to be, President Hale would have proceeded carefully with organized sports at Tennessee A&I, in order to avoid any of the conflicts between academics and athletes encountered at other black institutions.

Throughout his tenure, Tennessee A&I had a consistent physical education program and an under-funded competitive athletics program engaging principally in the

⁶⁵ David K. Wiggins and P. Miller, *The Unlevel Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American Experience in Sport*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 137.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 137

sport of football. In 1943, after more than thirty years of service as the president of Tennessee A&I, William Hale retired. It seems very appropriate that he was replaced by one of his former students and faculty members, alumnus Walter S. Davis. When Walter Davis received the call requesting that he consider serving as the next president of Tennessee A&I, he was reportedly surprised by the offer.⁶⁷ He really should not have been surprised by the invitation. Davis was an excellent representation of the “New Negro”⁶⁸ that was emerging from the black community in the early 1930s. Mississippi born and raised, Davis was well educated, experienced, ambitious, and shrewd, adept at negotiating the segregated South as well as the racial discrimination of the North. He was an excellent choice to move Tennessee A&I forward into the heart of the twentieth century.

Davis’ acceptance of the college’s presidency in 1943 marked his second tenure at the college. In 1933, after earning a masters degree from Cornell University, Walter Davis had returned to his alma mater as the eighth head college football coach and professor of agriculture.⁶⁹ He served as head coach for four seasons, compiling a career coaching record of 19 wins, 7 losses, and 4 ties.⁷⁰ In 1936, Davis left Tennessee A&I to pursue a Ph.D from Cornell, which he completed in 1941. Over the next two years,

⁶⁷ Lewis and Thomas, p. 18

⁶⁸ African American scholar Alain Locke is credited with coining the phrase “New Negro” during the Harlem Renaissance era to describe the change in African Americans from the period of slavery and reconstruction to the new age of the twentieth century.

⁶⁹ Tennessee State University Library staff, <http://www.tnstate.edu/library/bldgs/wsdavisbio.htm>

⁷⁰ Unknown, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/walters.davis>

Davis had worked hard at earning a national reputation at a teacher and researcher in the field of agricultural sciences. When Davis returned to Tennessee A&I as its second President, he was in a significantly powerful position to lead the students, faculty and staff to the college's next phase of development.

From his first day as college president, Davis launched an aggressively ambitious plan to expand and enrich the educational and athletic programs offered at Tennessee A&I. During his twenty-five years tenure, the college went through an era of tremendous growth, constructing twenty-four new buildings, ranging from administrative centers to student housing. Davis added recreational facilities and athletic fields including improving the football stadium and building a basketball gym. At the time of his appointment, the student body increased “from 670 students in 1943 to 5,092 by the fall quarter 1965.”⁷¹ The faculty expanded “from 32 in 1943”⁷² to “approximately 250 by 1966.”⁷³ Davis substantially increased the number of academic majors available to black students, far beyond the limited industrial or agricultural training offered at most historically black colleges. By 1951, the college officially received university status and the name was changed to Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University. In 1958, the institution was granted full-fledged land-grant university status from the Tennessee State Board of Education. Shortly after Davis' retirement in 1968, the

⁷¹ Tennessee State University Library staff, <http://www.tnstate.edu/library/bldgs/wsdavisbio.htm>

⁷² Ibid. p.1.

⁷³ Ibid, p.1.

university formally dropped “Agricultural and Industrial” from its name to officially become Tennessee State University.

President Davis led Tennessee A&I to significant strides academically, but what set Davis apart from his predecessor William Hale, was the recognition that Davis brought to the college through its world class athletic programs. As a former collegiate football player himself, Davis believed that athletics was just as important as academics and envisioned developing an athletic program at Tennessee State that competed and excelled with the same equality and commitment that it exhibited academically. As long-term TSU athletic director Howard Gentry noted.

When Walter Davis came along, having himself been an athlete, coach, and educator, he looked at sports differently. He didn't set it aside as a stepchild. He included it as another educational activity. With that philosophy in mind, he wanted a school where you could find not only good math students and good chemistry students but good athletes too.⁷⁴

From the first moment of his arrival on campus, Davis began pursuing and hiring not only the best academic instructors he could find, but the best athletic coaches as well. During Davis' presidency, athletes from “Tennessee State commanded the attention of the nation and the world by winning national championships in football, basketball and swimming, and national titles and Olympic medals in track and field.”⁷⁵ Further, TSU gained a national reputation for producing collegiate All-Americans and world-class

⁷⁴ Lewis and Thomas, p. 1

⁷⁵ Unknown, “Past Tennessee State University Presidents”, <http://www.tnstate.edu/interior.asp?mid=442>.

Olympic champions. Despite Davis' open and intense support of the TSU men's football and basketball programs, it was his decision to incorporate the sport of track and field at Tennessee State that garnered the greatest dividends for the university.

Davis' primary interest in collegiate track and field was based on the fact that track and field was the only intercollegiate and amateur sport that had not embraced complete racially segregated competition at the national and international levels. Davis' beloved Tennessee State University football program had endured "black-only" competition since its inception in 1912 and Davis' believed this severely limited the chances of his football program to truly measure its athletic achievements and prowess against the best competitors available. Davis was greatly troubled by the impact of segregation on collegiate athletic competitions. As TSU alumnus Homer Wheaton observed.

Dr. Davis knew that we would hardly be able to convince people that we were equal to other folks if they kept us separated. He knew that as long as you kept white people playing in one area and never let them play together, nobody would ever know how good we were.⁷⁶

For President Davis, track and field represented a unique opportunity to change perceptions about African American athletes.

In track and field, black athletes could compete against white athletes equally at predominantly white institutions in the North and during the Olympic games. In the early

⁷⁶ Lewis and Thomas, p.199.

to mid 1900s, the sport of track had enjoyed tremendous popularity and growth in the United States with the Olympic games being the centerpiece competition every four years. “Of all the major sports played in America, track was the most universally known and the easiest to arrange.”⁷⁷ Track and field represented one of the few sports where African Americans could compete and know with certainty where they ranked in terms of pure talent and competitive determination.

Despite being barred from competing on and against certain white club teams and at certain Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) sponsored events, African Americans had developed their own club track teams, competitions, and organizations. Black athletes from high school to college participated in track events sponsored by the Colored Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA). Black collegiate athletes faced some disadvantages because many black colleges did not have the facilities or funding to maintain a high quality and competitive collegiate track program beyond intramural competitions or travel to the yearly Penn Relays Invitational Carnival⁷⁸ or the Tuskegee Relays Invitational Carnival founded by the athletic director of the Tuskegee Institute, Cleveland Abbott.

Despite these limitations, at the start of President Davis’ tenure at TSU, several black collegiate athletes had already broken through at both black and white collegiate institutions to achieve success at Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and Olympic games

⁷⁷ Arthur R. Ashe, Jr., *A Hard Road To Glory: The African American Athlete in Track & Field*, (New York: Amistad, 1988) p.76

⁷⁸ The Penn Relays was a racially mixed track and field competition known during the 1920s as the “Negro Olympics.”

competitions. Track and field legend, Jesse Owens had set a nearly impossible to match standard of excellence at both the collegiate and Olympic levels with his dominating performances at the 1935 Big Ten Conference championship, the National Intercollegiate Championships and at the 1936 Olympics. The young women at Tuskegee Institute were enjoying a multi-year reign of dominance in collegiate women's track and field. And in 1932, Louise Stokes and Tydie Pickett had broken barriers by becoming the first African American women to make a U.S. Olympic squad.

President Davis viewed the creation of a Tennessee State University track and field program as a unique opportunity for black TSU athletes to compete equally against white athletes at all levels of competition. Additionally, starting a very basic track and field program was relatively inexpensive for a black college running their sport teams on a very tight athletic program budget. Beyond hiring a coach and minor uniform expenses, collegiate track programs needed very little equipment to get started. It was up to the new TSU track coach and his athletes to figure out how to deal with the significant limitations of competing without the proper practice facilities and limited or non-existent travel and recruitment budgets.

Davis could have easily satisfied this competitive ambition by simply creating a men's track and field program, but he made the progressive decision to include a women's team as well. While President Davis was genuinely interested and vigorously supported the idea of creating a competitive women's track and field team at TSU, but it is reasonable to wonder if he would have been so interested in developing a women's athletic program had he not been knowledgeable of the success of the women's

track and field program at Alabama's Tuskegee Institute. The Tuskegee Institute Tigerettes had started under the leadership of the school's athletic director and long-term football coach "Major" Cleveland Leigh Abbott. Already enjoying tremendous success with the men's athletic program, Abbott became one of the earliest pioneer coaches and supporters of women's collegiate athletics, particularly in track and field and basketball.

Tennessee State University President Davis strongly believed that the success of Cleveland Abbott's track and field program could be duplicated at his college. His idea of what made a successful team at Tennessee State was also quite clear.

Good physical training...and good discipline would be good for the girls rather than harmful...We knew that there was nothing to prove that competitive sports was harmful. And we decided to go into it...We had seen Abbott win the AAU with Negro girls, and being a geneticist I know that individuals are born equal...and it's the environment that makes the difference.⁷⁹

Davis, armed with the knowledge of Tuskegee's long history of dominance at the women's National AAU Track Championships from 1937 until 1942, set his sights on building a similar program at TSU.

The Tennessee State University women's track and field program would be forever connected to their soon-to-be rivals at Tuskegee Institute when Davis hired Major Cleveland Abbott's daughter, Jessie Abbott as TSU's first head coach in early 1943. President Davis had been so determined to hire Ms. Abbott that he drove down to

⁷⁹ Nolan Thaxton, *A Documentary Analysis of Competitive Track and Field for Women at Tuskegee Institute and Tennessee State University*, Springfield College, 1970, p. 66

Tuskegee to personally recruit her.⁸⁰ Abbott accepted Davis' coaching and teaching offer, beginning with the fall quarter of 1943. Davis could not have made a better choice to start a women's track program, because not only was Jessie Abbott a graduate of the Tuskegee Institute, she was also a former competitor on the Tuskegee Institute's women's basketball and track teams. Abbott had been a member of the team that won Tuskegee's first national title at the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) games in 1937. As part of that team, Abbott finished fourth in the 100 meters and second as part of the 400-meter relay team.⁸¹ She also occasionally participated in the discus and 200 meter events.

A dedicated physical education instructor, with undergraduate and masters degrees in physical education, Abbott was a significant addition to the Tennessee State University faculty. Ms. Abbott enthusiastically pursued the task of developing this new women's team despite having no regular college funding for uniforms, training equipment, recruitment of athletes or team travel. In fact, Abbott did not in actuality have a track to practice on. Her athletes had to train in a grassy field near the football field. Despite these obstacles, Abbott, from all available accounts, dedicate herself whole-heartedly to the development of women's track and field at TSU.

Shortly after arriving on campus, Abbott advertised on the campus bulletin board for women's track team tryouts. Seven students eventually signed up to join the new

⁸⁰ Yevonne R. Smith, "Sociohistorical Influence on African American Elite Sportswomen" in *Racism in College Athletics: The African American Athlete's Experience*. Edited by Dana Brooks and R. Althouse, (West Virginia: Fitness Technology, Inc., 2000.) p. 179.

⁸¹ Ashe, p. 14.

team. Ms. Peggy Williams, who was one of those first athletes to sign up for the team, spoke fondly about her experiences on that team and being under the tutelage of Coach Abbott.

We practiced in the field beside the football field. Miss Abbott was very strict, but she was a lot of fun too. We would go out there and practice every afternoon after classes. It was really hard work. I lived right down the road from the school, and I can remember that after I'd walk home in the evenings, all I could do was eat my supper and fall into bed.⁸²

Ms. Abbott's training methods was been many of these young women's first experience with serious physical training and competitive preparation. The first TSU women's track and field team for the 1943-44 season included Peggy Williams, Mamie Brown, Dorothy Davidson, Belle Doughtry, Elizabeth Hurd, Flora Jordon, and Grace Prather.⁸³

After several tough weeks of practice, Abbott's fledging team was ready for their first competition. The college managed the small expenditure of purchasing one new white t-shirt and matching shorts for each girl on the team. In spring 1944, the Tennessee State University women's track team participated in the annual Tuskegee Institute Relays. Despite Miss Abbott's tough conditioning program and intense coaching, her young, inexperienced athletes did not win or place in the top three of any competitive races at that event. Abbott had three athletes finish fourth in the long jump (Elizabeth

⁸² Lewis and Thomas, p. 109

⁸³ Ibid, p. 109.

Hurd); the high jump (Flora Jordon); and the 440-meter relay (Mamie Brown, Peggy Williams, Grace Prather, and Elizabeth Hurd).⁸⁴

In the following school year 1944-45, Abbott led the TSU women's team back to the Tuskegee Relays and the team enjoyed some limited success. Several of Coach Abbott's athletes placed in the top three in several events. From the newest team members, TSU had Helen Porter placing third in the javelin and Mary Wilson winning the 200-meter dash. And teaming with Mary Wilson, second year team members Mamie Brown, Elizabeth Hurd, and Belle Doughtry, placed second in the 440-meter relay.⁸⁵ Jesse Abbott's second year as head coach of the TSU women's track and field team had to be considered a major improvement from the first year. The team had enjoyed some considerable success at the one competition they prepared for all season and garnered one individual title. For such a small squad, TSU had performed quite well.

In the following 1945-46 season, Coach Abbott and Tennessee State University again enjoyed some success at the Tuskegee Relays competition, winning two individual competitions and placing in the top three in several other events. Thelma Bracey won both the 200-meter race and the basketball throw. Veteran team member Mary Wilson placed second in the 80-meter hurdles and the long jump. Her teammates, Emma Reed finished second in the high jump and Naomi Epps finished second in the basketball

⁸⁴ "Official results, Sixteenth Annual Women's Track and Field Championships", Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, May 12, 1944.

⁸⁵ "Official results, Seventeenth Annual Women's Track and Field Championships", Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, May 8, 1945.

throw. There was a setback for the 440-meter relay team, which finished dead last in this event.⁸⁶ The Tuskegee Relays marked another year of improvement for the TSU women's track and field program, but it also raised serious questions about the stability of the overall program. It is an indisputable fact that this season marked Jesse Abbott's last year at TSU as faculty, but it is very difficult to discern exactly if Jesse Abbott had actually coached the team during the 1945-46 season all year long, just in part or at all.

Unfortunately, beyond the official records of the track and field championships held at the Tuskegee Relays and a few interviews with a couple of athletes from those early teams, there is scant documentation of the early years of the TSU women's track and field program. There are no records to indicate that Abbott ever attempted to recruit any athletes beyond her physical education classes or the TSU campus and there is no indication that Abbott ever received any financial support beyond minor expenditures for uniforms, etc... Additionally, Abbott was hired not only as the women's track coach, but she was also hired as the first coach for the TSU women's basketball team. There is no available information regarding her experiences developing and coaching the women's basketball team other than the fact that she would only coach the team her first year and pass the reigns to Lula Bartley in 1945.

In fact, even Jesse Abbott's departure from the faculty and coaching staff at Tennessee State is subject to confusion and conflict. Some resources state that at the conclusion of the 1944-45 school year, Abbott had decided to quit coaching and focus on

⁸⁶ Thaxton, p. 132.

her teaching and administrative duties at the college.⁸⁷ There is no available record that proves without a doubt that Jesse Abbott quit coaching in her third year at the college. School records clearly note that Abbott was a member of the faculty for the 1945-46 school year and the track team did compete for a third consecutive year at the Tuskegee Relays. There is an asterisk next to Abbott's name in the 1946-47 college catalogue, but no explanations provided.⁸⁸ Further, no letter of resignation from Ms. Abbott is provided. Since there is no documentation or other indication that the young women were coached by someone other than Jesse Abbott, it is really difficult to conclude that Abbott did not in fact coach the women's track team for a third year. Lastly, it is also hard to conclude when and why Jesse Abbott actually stepped down from her coaching and teaching positions at the college.

Part of the difficulty in gaining a clear view of Jesse Abbott's tenure as the head Coach and instructor at Tennessee State are primarily based on the fact that Ms. Abbott was an extremely private person, rarely if ever granting personal interviews to anyone. She rarely spoke about her athletic or teaching career and did not leave behind any written record of her professional endeavors. Further, Ms. Abbott's tenure at TSU has been diminished by second-hand interpretations of her time as head coach of the women's team by long-term TSU head women's track and field coach Edward Temple and subsequent historical interpretations by sports media, academic scholars and sport

⁸⁷ Lewis and Thomas, p.109.

⁸⁸ Unknown author, *Tennessee State University College Catalogue*, 1946-47

historians. Over time, despite no documentation to support such perspectives, Jesse Abbott has been labeled as a volunteer or intramurals coach.⁸⁹ Coach Temple referred to Abbott and her teams in the following manner, “she wasn’t a real coach, it was more of a club team.”⁹⁰ In most other historical studies and records of the TSU Tigerbelles, Jesse Abbott is briefly mentioned or completely forgotten.

The research evidence available clearly does not hold up to the idea of labeling Jesse Abbott as a volunteer coach or collegiate intramurals coach. Abbott clearly had the education and athletic pedigree to serve as a college level athletic coach and she was clearly pursued by Tennessee State to be an athletic coach by President Walter Davis. Additionally, Abbott most certainly took her duties quite seriously, holding tryouts and cutting individuals from the team in order to have the best athletes available. There is no evidence that Abbott engaged in creating intramural competitions once her first team was established and there was no reason to cut athletes from the team if her program was only supposed to be an on-campus club sport. From interviews with her former athletes, Abbott engaged in serious training methods and vigorously prepared her athletes for serious competition. Abbott deserves credit for serving as the first coach for the TSU women’s track and field team. The legacy of Ms. Abbott’s service as the first Tennessee State track coach may not have resulted in anything but a few minor competitive

⁸⁹ Vivian Bernice Lee Adkins, “The Development of Negro Female Olympic Talent.” Ph.D diss., Indiana University, 1967, p. 32.

⁹⁰ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

successes, but her efforts had generated a great deal of excitement and heightened interest in the women's track program on campus.

Instead of being discouraged by the resignation of his first coach, President Davis became even more passionate about continuing the development of a competitive women's track and field program. As TSU's future athletic director Howard Gentry related, "Dr. Davis started to get real interested in women's track. He really wanted it more than the athletic director, Henry Arthur Kean, did at the time. It was Dr. Davis who you could say nurtured and burped the women's track program at Tennessee State."⁹¹ President Davis quickly hired a new head track coach. That coach was Tom Harris. As a high school student, Mr. Harris had been an All-American football player at Tuskegee Institute where he also ran track and played tennis. At sixteen, Harris became one of the youngest African Americans to earn All-American status because Tuskegee played at the collegiate level in sports despite being strictly a trade and high school in the early 1920s.⁹² In 1931, Harris also qualified for the U.S. Olympic trials as a quarter-miler. He completed his undergraduate degree at Central State University in Ohio.

His first coaching and teaching job was as an industrial education teacher and track coach at Wilberforce University in Ohio until 1942. In 1942 until 1946, Harris served in the army where he coached both football and boxing, organizing leagues and athletic tours all over Europe. Upon his discharge from the military, Harris joined the

⁹¹ Lewis and Thomas, p. 109.

⁹² Joe Louis Simmons, "*Biography of Coach Tom Harris*", Coach Tom Harris Alumni Chapter, Virginia Union College, Virginia, <http://tomharrisalumnichapter.com/id14.html>, p. 1.

faculty and staff of Tennessee State University as a physical education instructor and as the coach for the TSU boxing, tennis, and track teams. In addition to coaching the women's track team, he also coached the men. Harris won four straight boxing championships, two consecutive tennis championships, and produced three Olympic participants.⁹³ Additionally, during his teaching and coaching career at TSU, Harris also worked to earn a Master's degree from the university. His tenure at TSU was brief as well, lasting only four years, but Coach Harris made four major contributions to the college's track and field program.

Coach Harris' first contribution was creating what could be loosely referred to as the university's first practice track. Just like Coach Abbott before him, Harris was stuck training his athletes with substandard facilities and limited funding. Harris told one interviewer that over the entire four-year period he coached both the men's and women's track teams at TSU, that his budget never exceeded one thousand dollars to coach both the men's and women's track and field teams.⁹⁴ Also like Jesse Abbott, Harris had no funding for new equipment, much less a real track oval. Harris described his experience with the substandard training facility for the track teams: "When I first came to Tennessee State, there was no track, there was only a horse-shoe shaped walkway-like path around part of the football field. We didn't have any choice but to practice and run

⁹³ Simmons, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Thaxton, p. 136.

there.”⁹⁵ Harris made due with this limited practice field, until one day during a practice session he noticed a pair of dump trucks filled with crushed rock and dirt passing down the road near their training area. He waved the truck drivers down and asked them to spread some of their rock and dirt mix down into a makeshift partial track oval. Harris could only manage to create three-fourths of a track, so his runners could only run 300 yards, then have to turn around and run right back.⁹⁶ Even though it had serious limitations, it was through Harris’ ingenuity and resourcefulness that Tennessee State acquired their first official practice track. This track later became known as the infamous “cinder” track, that many of the early TSU Tigerbelles practiced and trained on in the near future.

Harris’ second major contribution to the women’s track and field programs at TSU was increasing the number of competitive events for his athletes to participate in each year. During his tenure, his women’s teams continued to participate in the annual Tuskegee Relays, but also participated in national and international competitions. Increased competition raised the profile of Tennessee State University’s women’s track program and within two years, Harris produced the first female Olympians for Tennessee State, Emma Reed and Audrey “Mickey” Patterson.

Coach Harris’ third major contribution was bringing the concept of recruitment to Tennessee State University women’s athletics. Despite lacking the funds to properly

⁹⁵ Lewis and Thomas, p. 110.

⁹⁶ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

recruit athletes, as well as any resources to offer to his potential recruits, Harris pursued elite female athletes for his track program. Under his tenure, Coach Harris managed to lure the first top-notch female athletes to the university. One of his first recruits was Emma Reed, hailing from Redwood, Mississippi. In 1946, she joined the team as a high jumper. The following year, she failed to qualify for the 1948 Olympic team in her specialty event, the high jump, but made the team in the long jump, an event she had never competed in before the qualifying meet. Unfortunately, she did not earn a medal at the 1948 Olympic games.

Also joining the TSU team in the spring quarter of 1948 would be Audrey “Mickey” Patterson. Patterson had started her academic and athletic career at Wiley College in Texas, where she had become the indoor champion in the 200-meters and an AAU All-American.⁹⁷ She transferred from Wiley at the behest of her parents after a student strike had occurred on campus. Joining her TSU teammate Emma Reed, Patterson made the 1948 Olympic team and earned a permanent place in track and field history. At the 1948 Olympics, Patterson became the first African American woman to win an Olympic medal. She earned a bronze medal in a closely contested 200-meter race.

Her fellow Olympic teammate, Alice Coachman, who made sports history herself at the very same Olympics by becoming the first African American woman to win a gold medal, reminisced about Patterson.

⁹⁷ A.D. Emerson, *Olympians Against The Wind – The Black American Female Difference*, (New York: Welcome Rain Publishers, 1999), p. 11.

Mickey was filled with lots of nervous energy and was very talkative prior to her competition. She relied upon me to calm her down and our conversations, obviously, worked since she received a bronze medal in her race. She was a great person and a good friend and Olympic teammate.⁹⁸

Upon their return from London, both Patterson and Reed were both honored by the TSU administration, students, and faculty in a special ceremony held on October 5, 1948.⁹⁹

Shortly after her return from the 1948 Olympics, Patterson married fellow TSU student, Ron Tyler. She competed one more year for TSU and was named “Woman Athlete of the Year” by the AAU in 1949.¹⁰⁰ The 1949 season served as a low point in the TSU women’s program with the ranks dwindling down to three members, Patterson, Mary Hardaway, and Jean Patton.¹⁰¹ Later that same year, Patterson transferred from TSU to Southern University, where she completed her undergraduate degree. Audrey “Mickey” Patterson became the first celebrated female athlete from Tennessee State.

Even after leaving TSU, she continued her career in track and field by founding her own track club, Mickey’s Missiles in 1964. She coached for many years with her club, producing and training two Olympic sprinters. In 1975, Patterson’s groundbreaking medal win was diminished by the discovery of a finish-line photo that revealed that Shirley Strickland of Australia had actually finished ahead of Patterson in the race. For

⁹⁸ Emerson, p.12.

⁹⁹ Thaxton, p. 148

¹⁰⁰ Unknown, “First Black Female Olympic Medalist Audrey Patterson-Tyler Dies at 69.” *Jet*, September 9, 1996, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Lewis and Thomas, p. 111.

record books and Patterson, this revelation didn't change anything. For Patterson, the opportunity to compete was her most important achievement. As she reflected in *Essence* magazine in 1984, "at the time I competed you know, we were still sitting at the back of the bus and eating at separate lunch counters. Just imagine what it was like for me."¹⁰²

Coach Harris had two other standout recruits, Jean Patton, who Harris had begun recruiting in high school, that emerged as a promising athlete in the spring season of 1949. Cynthia Thompson came from Jamaica to Nashville to join the TSU team. After arriving on campus at Tennessee State, Thompson set records in the 100-meters at the Central American and Caribbean Games and she won the same event at the British Guiana Games. Not only did Harris introduce the practice of recruitment of female athletes at TSU, he also offered the first scholarships to female TSU athletes. These were not athletic scholarships, but work-aid grants. Each athlete was required to work an on-campus job for several hours each week and in return, their tuition and other school fees were waived.

Ultimately, Coach Harris' greatest contribution to the Tennessee State University women's track program was his significant role in bringing future Tigerbelles Coach Edward Temple to the campus. In 1946, Harris had personally recruited Ed Temple to the college for the track team as well as the football team. Four years later, when Temple was graduating from Tennessee State, Harris decided to leave TSU to pursue a promotion to the position of athletic director and head football coach at Virginia Union College. This

¹⁰² Darlene Clark Hine, *Facts On File Encyclopedia of Black Women in America – Dance, Sport, and Visual Arts*, (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997) p. 119.

left President Davis in need of hiring a new coach for both his men and women's track teams. Davis actually hired the university's athletic department's business manager, Clyde Kincaid to be the new head coach of the men and women's track program, but Kincaid was not actually expected to coach the women's track team.

Clyde Kincaid was not exactly an athletic coach, with his primary job being the athletic business manager for the entire college. He was also a member of the faculty in the Health and Physical Education department. At the start of the fall semester in 1950, he was technically be the head coach of record for the men and women's track and field programs, but in reality, his assistant coach Edward Temple was coaching both teams. As President Davis remembered, "he was in there to give assistance to Temple. Not with track, but for the business management."¹⁰³ As history soon reflected, Edward Temple did not need much assistance; he had his own directives in mind for the Tennessee State University women's track and field program.

¹⁰³ Thaxton, p. 213.

CHAPTER III
THE ED TEMPLE WAY (1950-1959)

There's a song the girls sing while they do their warm-up exercises, and the phrase they keep singing is, "It's so hard to be a Tigerbelle...it's so hard to be a Tigerbelle..." Well, let me tell you something. It's awful hard to be a Tigerbelle coach.¹⁰⁴

Edward Temple (TSU Women's Track Coach 1950-1994)

In 1950, when Edward Temple assumed his duties as head coach of the Tennessee State University men's and women's track and field teams, he was just twenty-three years old, only a few years older than the young people he was going to be coaching. Temple had only recently graduated from TSU himself and he only had very limited experience coaching men, with absolutely no experience coaching women at all. At the start of his first season, Temple was also newly married and pursuing graduate studies in physical education and sociology at the college. In addition to his coaching duties, he was also be working full-time at the campus post office. Temple soon found himself juggling a new wife, his graduate studies, a new on-campus job, and coaching a fledging track and field program on the tiny salary of \$150 a month. For those that didn't know Edward Temple personally, it would have been easy to bet against him succeeding with so many new responsibilities, but for those that would get to know him, Temple did not disappoint

¹⁰⁴ Lewis and Thomas, p. 59.

them. As a young man, he had experienced racism as a high school student athlete in his native Pennsylvania, enjoying tremendous success in both athletics and academics despite those negative experiences. As a collegiate student athlete, Temple made the best of a disappointing situation to achieve success in athletics and earn a college degree. It seemed that from an early age, Temple seemed to be wiser and more experienced than his years reflected. His personal determination and intense focus served him well in his many years at Tennessee State University. As his long-term secretary B'Lou Howard Carter described him.

He is a strict disciplinarian, yet a gentle person; he is humorous, yet all business. Temple is unashamedly patriotic and has been an excellent goodwill ambassador all around the world. He is a man of quiet determination and integrity. He can be very formal, yet he is at his best with his own comfortable, colloquial way of talking.¹⁰⁵

Temple needed all of these traits and skills to build his track and field program at TSU and his athletes gained tremendously from Temple by not only learning his athletic training skills, but the life lessons that he himself had learned at a very early age from his own father, teachers, and coaches.

Edward S. Temple was born on September 20, 1927 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He attended elementary and middle school in Harrisburg. Temple attended John Harris high school, just as his father had many years before him. His father, Christopher Temple, had been a standout track star in his own years at Harris high school and he

¹⁰⁵ Temple, Preface, p. 1.

devoted each morning to practicing track techniques with his son.¹⁰⁶ It was from his father that Temple became a “great believer” in repetitious training methods, of doing the “little things, the mechanics, extremely well.”¹⁰⁷ In high school Temple became a tremendous athlete, lettering in basketball, football, and track. He became a standout in all three sports in his home state. He was All-State in football, basketball, and track and became the first African American captain of both his basketball and track teams. Temple was a sprinter and a relay race specialist, who won state championships in the 100-meter and 200-meter races, the long jump, and the mile relay.

When it came time to pick a college, Temple had several scholarship offers. He had originally planned to attend Penn State University, Cheney State Teachers College or Westchester College, but he ultimately got sidetracked in his endeavor to attend college locally.¹⁰⁸ Coach Temple has claimed that more than a bit of trickery was involved to get him to attend Tennessee State University. Temple had never heard of the school, until his neighbor Tom Harris, who was heading down to TSU to become the new head track coach, encouraged him to follow him down South. As Temple laughingly remembered.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew S. Young, *Negro Firsts in Sports* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., 1963), p. 269

¹⁰⁷ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

Harris wanted me to come to Tennessee and he wanted Leroy (Leroy Craig) too. Leroy was my archrival in high school, and neither one of us had any intention of coming to Tennessee. I had never been in the South in my life.”¹⁰⁹

Yet, Harris lived up to his nickname of “Tricky Tom” by using Temple’s rivalry with Leroy Craig, who as a high jumper and hurdler had enjoyed as much success in track and field as Temple, to trick them both into signing with TSU.

Both Craig and Temple had enjoyed a ferocious rivalry as track and field athletes in high school and now they were both competing for collegiate athletic scholarship opportunities. Tom Harris told both young men that each individual was planning to attend TSU. With both athletes knowing nothing about Tennessee State, both young men assumed that TSU had a top-level track program. Not wanting to be outdone by the other, both Craig and Temple decided to attend Tennessee State. Temple stated “that both of us thought Tennessee State must have had some track program and neither one of us was about to let the other have the upper hand if that was the case. So, we both went down there”¹¹⁰

Soon after arriving in Nashville, both Leroy Craig and Ed Temple quickly learned that they had been cleverly hoodwinked by their new coach, Tom Harris in more ways than one. As Temple remembered.

¹⁰⁹ Lewis and Thomas, p. 114

¹¹⁰ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

Well when we got there the track program couldn't go anywhere but up. Because *there wasn't any*. We didn't have scholarships, just work-aids. I had never even had a black teacher or been in an all-Black class before coming South. In Pennsylvania, there were just six black students in our entire graduating class of 200. And we weren't used to none of that "back-of-the-bus" and "side-door-of-the-theater" routine either. We had just been "took."

Despite the discovery that he was actually part of building a brand new track team and not joining an established track and field program. Temple decided to make the best of a difficult situation. He went to school, he worked and he played sports at Tennessee State with great intensity and determination. Temple and Craig performed well at TSU, but the men's track program never garnered much attention.

When I was running track at TSU, folks never paid too much attention to the men's program. We always had a small team and we didn't really compete that often. There just wasn't that much enthusiasm for us track fellas when I was going to school. Football and basketball was king of sports at TSU.¹¹¹

Despite the disappointment of his athletic career, Temple graduated from Tennessee State in 1950 with a degree in health and physical education and a minor in sociology.

It was during that summer after graduation that TSU President Walter Davis decided that Ed Temple was the right young man to improve the college's track and field program. For Temple, the track and field coaching job was a bit of a tough sell because he was really more interested in a football or basketball coaching position; "I

¹¹¹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

wasn't thinking anything about coaching track."¹¹² Yet, President Davis was persistent in convincing Temple to take the job. As future athletic director Howard Gentry remembered, "President Davis had faith in Temple, not because of his great record in coming here to Tennessee State, but because he saw something in him. He had a hunch he would do well."¹¹³ With no alternative coaching job prospects and the opportunity to further his education, Temple accepted President Davis' offer to become the manager of the university's post office and the assistant coach of the TSU women's track team.¹¹⁴ Davis further sweetened his offer by agreeing to employ Temple's wife, Charlie B in the post office as well. Temple was grateful for the opportunity.

I was looking for a job, and nobody else wanted it. I didn't know the first time about coaching women. But fate is a weird thing. W.S. Davis gave us an opportunity. It wasn't much of an opportunity, but it was an opportunity. Today, we'd call it affirmative action.¹¹⁵

No matter the small size or the limitations of his opportunity, Coach Temple vigorously began re-building the TSU track and field program.

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Lewis and Thomas, p. 116

¹¹⁴ As previously stated in the second chapter of this study, despite the title of assistant coach, Edward Temple was in reality acting as the head coach for both the men's and women's track and field programs at Tennessee State University.

¹¹⁵ Burns, p. 103

In 1950, Coach Temple had extremely limited resources at his disposal for the track program. His first team consisted of four men and two women; Jean Patton and Frances Newburn, all athletes he inherited from Coach Tom Harris. He also had only one scheduled competition for his athletes, the Tuskegee Relays in Alabama. He also only had a budget of three hundred dollars. And that budget allotment of “the three hundred bucks was supposed to cover everything...travel, uniforms, equipments....anything and everything.”¹¹⁶ Further, in his first year as coach, Temple only had three work-aid scholarships to offer to new recruits. He also inherited the same shabby partial track that ended with a dumpsite, that became another unexpected chore for him to deal with.

We had a track that was barely a step above a cow pasture; it wasn't nothing but an old cinder track next to the agricultural department's hog pen. Running anything longer than 400 meters was impossible and when it got hot, shoot...you just sorta lost your motivation for running. I had to work that track everyday. First I would have to shovel and rake to clean out the pig slop and cow piles, then I would hitch up a roller to the back of my old car and drag it around and around until that old track was somewhat smooth. Then I would mark the track for practice. I did that every day for over twenty years.¹¹⁷

Instead of focusing on the limitations of his program, Temple made the most of what resources he already had and make them stretch as far as he could. In these early fledging years of his tenure as the track and field coach at Tennessee State, Temple was

¹¹⁶ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹¹⁷ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

primarily concerned with preserving the program's survival more than he was interested in expanding the program.

In his first season as coach, Temple enjoyed some low-level success, starting with one of the past recruits of his former coach, Tom Harris. Jean Patton was the first Tennessee State University athlete to set an American record in the 100-meters at the 1951 AAU National indoor meet. That same year, she won two gold medals in the inaugural Pan American Games held in Buenos Aires. Upon her return from the Pan American Games, Patton was celebrated at Tennessee State as the "world's fastest woman" and be honored with an on-campus parade. Patton was also be rewarded by being named an All-American by the AAU at the conclusion of the 1951 track season. Unfortunately, this season marked the pinnacle of Patton's track and field career.

In the 1952 season, Patton suffered a serious leg injury and she performed poorly throughout the entire season, failing to qualify for the 1952 Olympics. Further, Patton struggled with being the main standout competitor on the team and often the lone TSU representative on the track during nationals. During the years Patton was competing, interest in participating in track and field had fallen heavily at TSU. From the time she joined the TSU track team in 1949, Patton had an infrequent and ever-changing number of teammates. As Patton later admitted, "I found training a very lonely experience because most of the time I was the complete team."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Thaxton, p.237

Despite the groundbreaking number of Jean Patton's achievements, including being an AAU All-American and a member of the first U.S. women's team at the Pan American Games, Patton is often forgotten in the overall history of Tennessee State University women's track. The fact that she was not an Olympian like Audrey "Mickey" Patterson and not a part of the TSU Tigerbelle era that began after her graduation in 1952, added further to the ability to overlook her athletic accomplishments. It is unfortunate that Jean Patton has faded into obscurity as a TSU athlete; her contributions to TSU's track program certainly deserve to be remembered as important early stepping-stones to the building of the overall women's track program.

Other than Patton, Temple's first three years coaching at TSU was somewhat unremarkable in terms of team competitions whether it was the men's or women's track squads. At the conclusion of the 1953 season, TSU athletics business manager and part-time coach Clyde Kincaid decided that he wanted to take over coaching the men's track team full-time. In response to that development, Ed Temple was officially named the head coach of the TSU women's track and field team. With three years of coaching under his belt with the dubious title of assistant coach, Temple was perfectly fine with coaching just one team. As he said, "Some thought I was stuck with the leftovers, but I have never had that hang-up about women. As far as I was concerned, whatever team I had was going to be a challenge."¹¹⁹ This change gave Temple the opportunity to really begin making his mark on the women's track program at Tennessee State.

¹¹⁹ Temple, p. 19

In the 1952 season, Temple gathered one of the key pieces he believed he needed to establish a strong track program; a talented first-class athlete with the ability to garner national attention. That athlete would be teenage sensation and two-time Olympian, Mae Faggs. Temple was thrilled to attract an athlete of Mae Faggs' caliber, but he was less than pleased that Tennessee State was unable or unwilling to support his new star athlete. After an extremely limited competitive 1952 season, Temple could not get the school to fund Faggs' defense of her national indoor AAU title in the 100-meters. Despite the fact that the AAU would have paid half of her fare to New York City, Temple could not convince the school to cover the rest of her expenses.

They just didn't understand what was at stake. President Davis didn't know a thing about indoor track. Shoot, we didn't even have an outdoor track at TSU at the time, so why would he think that indoor track competitions were important? They just didn't understand.¹²⁰

The failure of TSU to support Faggs' title defense nearly resulted in the young sophomore leaving the school. Faggs had enough of living in the South and living with segregation and the limitations of the TSU track program only contributed to her disappointment. As Temple remembered, "we almost lost her."¹²¹ It took some very fast-talking from her coach to convince Faggs to stay. To Temple's surprise, she stayed.

¹²⁰ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹²¹ Ibid

Despite our failure to look after her when she first arrived at TSU, Faggs stuck with us. I don't know why. She would be the spark that set off our program, the backbone. She was more than one stick of dynamite. In many ways she had more experience than me and she willingly shared what she knew. She was like an assistant coach. Faggs was the only one that knew something about running indoors.¹²²

Despite her decision to stay, Faggs still occasionally missed events because of the lack of funding for the women's track program.

Temple did not dwell on the financial limitations of his program. He just continued to focus on recruiting athletes that could compliment Faggs' superior talent. He surrounded Faggs with good athletes like field event specialist, Patricia Monsanto and sprinter, Cynthia Thompson. By the 1954 season, the TSU Tigerbelles nearly won their first national title, losing that meet by Temple's estimation of "just five to six points."¹²³ During this same period, he also began establishing the structure, standards and rules that would shape and provide the backbone of the TSU track program for many, many years. It was the establishment of Coach Temple's particular kind of track and field program that separated him from other coaches of this period. The Tennessee State women's track program may have been originally modeled after the women's track program at Tuskegee Institute, but the difference was that Tuskegee's track program was formed to give women athletes an opportunity to compete, while Temple shaped his track program to

¹²² In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹²³ Ibid

produce elite female athletes capable of winning national championships and Olympic medals.

In the 1950s through the 1960s, Coach Edward Temple was a unique coach developing an unusual athletic program for women. As Temple stated about his coaching philosophy.

My coaching philosophy is a mix of my experiences and influences from my middle school and high school coaches. I learned from my experienced athletes and from international coaches. But a lot of it was just me. I would never stop looking for new techniques or how to perfect old techniques. I just believed in my way of coaching. My philosophy as you call it would result in a ton of medals and trophies and awards for the Tigerbelles and the United States.¹²⁴

Throughout the years, Ed Temple's coaching style simply became known around Tennessee State and other track and field circles as "Ed Temple's way."¹²⁵

Further, Coach Temple had decided from his first day that he would coach as he lived his life; "my long-time philosophy had always been to walk softly and carry a heavy stick."¹²⁶ He made clear to his athletes that he was in charge and he never wavered from maintaining that control. He operated under what he referred to as a "three strikes, you're out"¹²⁷ discipline system. Temple described his system as such.

¹²⁴ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Ibid

¹²⁷ Ibid

The first time a girl messed up, I would call her into my office and talk to her. That was strike one. The next time, I called her folks, talked to them, then I would talk to the girl again. That was strike two. If they messed up again, that was strike three and they were outta here. No discussion.¹²⁸

Temple did not exact such strict discipline to control his female athletes, but to maintain team discipline and team standards. He constantly reminded his athletes that they were “ladies first, students second, and athletes third.”¹²⁹ He had three strict rules that he called “his three laws.”¹³⁰ One, all of his athletes were required to complete their college education. Two, all of his athletes had to be on time for absolutely everything, never even one minute late. Three, there was always a strictly professional relationship between him and his athletes, strictly coach-athlete or professor-student.

He never raised a fuss over any athlete’s success or failure; he maintained an even tone with everything his athletes would do, “no yelling, no shouting, no cheering, no hugging, I just let folks know they needed to get the job done, I would smile, then every once and a while, I would say good job...it was strictly business.”¹³¹ Temple understood that he was working with impressionable young women and he did not want anything he did to be misconstrued by anyone. He preferred to be viewed as a surrogate father figure and for many of his athletes that is what he became. Further, Temple required a strict

¹²⁸ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Ibid

curfew for his athletes, particularly for freshman and sophomores. He did also not accept excuses for missing practice or classes, pressuring his athletes not to coast in their classes. Temple became infamous for having the particular rule about none of his athletes riding around in cars. No athlete was allowed to have a car on campus in her first two years, but Temple just flat-out did not want his athletes rolling around town unsupervised in vehicles. He didn't mind if his athletes dated, but he frowned on steady boyfriends. He didn't want his athletes distracted from school and training. Temple remembered.

I just wanted to make sure that they stayed focused and didn't get in trouble. Every single one of these girls had never really been away from home. I was responsible for them. I felt responsible for them. I had promised their parents I would look after them and that's just what I did.¹³²

Further, Coach Temple knew from the beginning that he faced more than budget, equipment, and recruiting limitations, but also public resistance to highly competitive female athletes. Additionally, Temple knew that he faced particularly different circumstances by coaching black female athletes.

There was a real dilemma over young women participating in sports. Not exactly in the black community because many of our young ladies were allowed to play sports, but their parents were worried about them getting hurt and a lot of folks, black and white believed that if girls got muscles they could never have babies. So, playing sports was okay in grade school, but black folks got funny about their daughters playing sports as maturing young women. I ran up against that more than once. I just became determined to overcome that kind of crazy stuff. I was

¹³² In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

absolutely determined to prove to the world that you could be a very feminine young woman and still get the job done on the track or on the field. It wasn't always an easy thing to accomplish.¹³³

Based on this ideal, Temple, when he was recruiting, looked for young women who were not only good athletes, but attractive. He repeatedly stated, "that I didn't want oxes, I wanted foxes...I wanted nice looking young ladies who took good care of themselves, but could also run like the wind."¹³⁴ Coach Temple wanted his athletes to be undistinguishable from any other sophisticated and educated young black women of the era.

What I wanted was that no matter where we went, people, perfect strangers would wonder what my young ladies did, were they on debate team or the glee club, whatever. I wanted folks to be surprised to discover they were members of an athletic team, pleasantly surprised.¹³⁵

Temple required his athletes to be impeccably dressed for each and every competitive meet and when they were competing, their uniforms were expected to be neat and clean. After they finished competing, they were expected to fix their hair and wipe their sweaty faces before facing any cameras or reporters. For Temple, there was nothing wrong with

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹³⁵ Ibid

a young woman being lean and muscular, he just believed that they could present themselves as feminine as well.

As hard as Temple worked on maintaining his athletes femininity, he also did not shy away from training his athletes as hard as possible. Where the previous TSU track coach, Tom Harris, had maintained separate workouts for the men and the women, Temple made no such distinctions. Despite the fact that Temple primarily recruited sprinters, hurdlers, and long jumpers, he trained all his athletes like distance runners. He had numerous reasons for training his athletes in this manner. First, Temple only wanted athletes with “pure hearts and mental toughness.”¹³⁶ His opening year practices were especially tough, in order to weed out the athletes that came out to walk-on the team and to gauge the early toughness of his work-aid scholarship athletes. Temple became notorious for using his long and strenuous practices to eliminate “the weak from the strong.”¹³⁷ Second, due to the financial limitations of his track program, particularly in terms of traveling, Temple preferred to keep his squads very small. From 1953 to 1959, no Tigerbelle squad was smaller than six athletes and the largest team was in 1959 had twelve. Temple specialized in small teams with talented athletes that could competitively perform in multiple events. Therefore, he needed his athletes to be able to physically stand up to racing in multiple heats during race events and to avoid injury due to fatigue. TSU Tigerbelles like Margaret Matthews and Willye White, who were both sprinters and

¹³⁶ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹³⁷ Ibid

long jumpers really benefited from this kind of tough training, not to mention his sprinting champions like Mae Faggs, Wilma Rudolph, Edith McGuire, and Wyomia Tyus who often ran the 4x100, 4x200, and 4x400-meter relay races in the course of one competition.

Third, Temple was a serious stickler for mechanics and technique. His practices involved a nearly endless series of repetitive drills that focused on maintaining the right posture and the correct running form. Temple strongly believed that by his athletes getting the mechanics of running down pat, that it eliminated any errors in competition. With superior endurance and impeccable technical skill, Temple believed that his Tigerbells was unbeatable and unstoppable. Temple also strongly believed that his techniques turned his natural athletes into highly skilled performers and his average ability athletes into steady confident performers. It was often from his practice sessions, that Temple discovered hidden gems amongst his Tigerbells; someone who may not become a superstar, but could become a regular consistent performer; who was capable of scoring valuable points in competitions to push the Tigerbells to the top. As a key part of his coaching philosophy, Temple strongly believed the following: “Everybody can’t be a superstar. I realize that. But I also realize that everybody can put forth a tremendous effort. And there is no use being here if you can’t make a contribution.”¹³⁸ Fourth, Temple trained his athletes hard in order to keep them focused on track training and quite frankly too worn out to get into any kind of trouble. As Temple reflected.

¹³⁸ Lewis and Thomas, p. 156.

I worked them hard to keep them on track. I was always on them about their weight. I wanted them too tired to overeat. That's why I started the early part of the season with two or three practices a day. I wanted them focused on nothing but school, work, and track. If a girl wanted to go out carousing around after I wore them out at practice, she was a pretty tough customer.¹³⁹

For some of Temple's athletes, his strict rules and tough practices was extremely difficult to handle at times, but slowly but surely the majority of his athletes gained an understanding of his system and begin to thrive. Part of the key to his athletes getting immersed into his program quickly came from Temple's practice of handpicking high school athletes early in their career and inviting them to participate in his summer clinics. Many of his future Tigerbelles were selected from those groups of young ladies that trained during those summer programs. Several of those participants attended Temple's clinics over multiple summers. And since he incorporated many of the same rules and training methods in his summer programs as he did in his regular TSU track programs, the girls that ultimately enrolled at TSU had a long history of being exposed to the way Temple did things. This early immersion resulted in young athletes ready to perform in the "Ed Temple way" from the first day.

Temple's recruiting and training paid off in the 1954 season. The TSU Tigerbelles performed extremely well at the AAU nationals and nearly missed winning the national title. It was in 1955, with the addition of the highly anticipated new freshmen, Isabelle Daniels and Lucinda Williams, that Temple and his Tigerbelles won

¹³⁹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

their first national championship. This was an amazing accomplishment considering that his team was comprised of only six athletes. It was an even bigger accomplishment for TSU because it was the first time in school history that a TSU athletic team won a national championship. As proud as Temple was of this landmark achievement, many at Tennessee State failed to recognize its importance.

In 1955, we won our first outdoor national championship. It was a great thrill for me, but it was a disappointment too. I was on cloud nine because I knew it was the first time a black school had won a national championship. But the people at Tennessee State didn't appreciate it. They were still thinking of us as a black team who won the black championship. They didn't know the significance of being a national champion. Really, we just advanced too fast for the school at the time. There is no doubt about it. We were way ahead of them.¹⁴⁰

Unfortunately, as it had been when Temple competed in track as a student at TSU, men's football and basketball took major precedence over any other sport at Tennessee State, especially any women's sport. Many on campus were just not interested enough in women's athletics to comprehend the importance of their national title win.

Temple did not dwell on the understated response to the Tigerbelles' first national title, he did not have time. The TSU Tigerbelles was the team to beat nationally in 1956. Temple's years of hard work really began to pay off. That year, the TSU Tigerbelles had begun attracting arguably the best female track athletes in the nation. The 1956 Tigerbelles were literally a stacked team. With experienced veterans like Mae Faggs, Isabelle Daniels, and Lucinda Williams, Temple added up and coming stars like

¹⁴⁰ Lewis and Thomas, p. 118.

Margaret Matthews, Willye B. White, and Wilma Rudolph. Not only did the TSU Tigerbelles dominate the AAU nationals and win their second straight national title, they made history at the 1956 Olympic trials. The TSU Tigerbelles became the first school to have six members to qualify for the Olympic team and it was also be the first time that the entire 400-meter relay team was composed of athletes from the same college team.

At the 1956 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, the Tigerbelles made their first serious team mark on international competition. Willye White won a silver medal in the long jump and the 400-meter relay team won the bronze medal. The team also made a very strong showing at the British Empire Games held shortly after the Olympics. When the Tigerbelles returned home to campus, the response was a bit different than when they won their first national title. The Tigerbelles did not garner a lot of national press, but they were celebrated at home at Tennessee State. After their outstanding performances at the Olympic games, the TSU Tigerbelles kept up their winning ways in the 1957 and 1958 seasons, taking the national titles in both the indoor and outdoor championships. The 1959 season was pivotal. It was a track season heavily dominated by various Tigerbelles working hard to prepare and qualify for the upcoming Olympic games in 1960. The team participated in dozens of meets and was once again win the indoor and outdoor national championship titles. There was a clear definite change in U.S. women's track and field by 1959. In a few short years, the TSU Tigerbelles had become the team to beat nationally and by the end of the 1959 season, they were poised to become the team to beat internationally.

The years of 1950 until 1959 were not only the formative years of TSU Head Coach Edward Temple, but they were also the major ground-breaking years for establishing what kind of athletes became TSU Tigerbelles. These early years, particularly starting after 1953, represented the first period where the young women who competed for TSU were, without a doubt, Ed Temple's personal recruits and were trained according to his methods and techniques. These nine years resulted in a definitive pattern of recruitment, training, and focus on education and personal character.

During this era, Temple attracted a significant number of talented, but raw student athletes to his track program. Many of these young women became part of the most exceptionally talented and skilled national and international stars in track and field history.

In the following sections, several of these standout TSU Tigerbelles have been selected for in-depth profiles. Several of the athletes profiled here were also members of TSU Tigerbelle teams of the track program's "golden era" of 1960 to 1968, but their participation and achievements will not be recounted at this time. These sections will primarily focus upon the athletes that performed for Ed Temple during his early years as head coach from 1953 until 1959. Their personal stories are unique and strongly contribute to what made the Tennessee State track and field program different for its time. Further, there was an outstanding core group of athletes who arrived on campus between the years of 1950 through 1959 and it was these early Tigerbelle athletes that set the high standard of what it meant to be and compete as a Tennessee State University Tigerbelle.

Aertwentha Mae Faggs Starr

Aertwentha Mae Faggs was born in the small town of Mays Landing, New Jersey on April 10, 1932. She was one of five children and the only girl. She was born during the tail-end of the Great Depression that had ravaged large portions of the United States, Faggs' parents struggled to make ends meet for the family. Her parents were blue-collar workers with extremely limited educations, with her mother regularly working as a domestic servant and her father as a factory worker. During her childhood, Faggs' family was forced to move several times due to financial difficulties, resulting in her missing significant portions of school. She began participating in running as an elementary school student and as a teenager when she became a member of the Police Athletic League team in Bayside, New York.

Faggs quickly became a standout athlete as a teenager, earning the nickname the "human rabbit."¹⁴¹ She was a natural sprinter, specializing in the 200 meters. She was also a dedicated practice competitor, traveling "25 miles by bus and subway to train for at least two hours in one of the city parks."¹⁴² Faggs met some resistance from her parents regarding her athletic career because of their concern that her small stature and frame would result in her being injured. Being just a tiny shade over five feet tall, she convinced her parents to allow her to continue competing and she would prove to be a surprisingly strong and durable runner. What also separated Mae Faggs from other

¹⁴¹ Mae Faggs would be dubbed the "human rabbit" as an elementary school student. It is unknown who actually gave her that nickname.

¹⁴² Adkins, p. 50

athletes of her era would be her mental strength, her personal determination. She flat-out hated to lose. She even hated the idea of explaining to anyone why she lost a race. Faggs always tried to win every single race “in order to avoid the rigmarole of explaining why”¹⁴³ if she lost. Faggs rarely lost any races in those early days.

She ran for the Bayside PAL team from 1947 until 1952. It was with the encouragement of her PAL team coaches that at sixteen years old, while still a student at Bayside High School, Faggs became the youngest competitor on the 1948 U.S. Olympic team. Faggs’ first Olympic experience was a minor disappointment. She competed in the 200 meters, but she failed to qualify for the finals in that event. Despite failing to win a medal, she vowed to return to the Olympic games before even leaving London.

I had a little green hat I put on top of my head and I stood there in this big, big doorway and looked around the stadium. I said to myself ‘I’ll be back.’ The other girls thought I was someplace crying, but I was sitting at a little stand drinking hot chocolate and eating some cookies. I wasn’t a bit concerned that I didn’t make it. I just knew I’d be back.¹⁴⁴

Faggs learned from her Olympic experience and return to the 1949 track season with a vengeance. She competed in her first AAU national meet that year, setting a new American record in the 220-yard dash. She held that record for three years without any serious challengers to her record.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 50

¹⁴⁴ Hines, p. 57

Mae Faggs continued to be a dominating performer on her PAL team during the years between 1949 through 1952, including a sharp performance at the 1952 Olympic trials. She set an American indoor record in the 100 meters and finish second in the 200 meters. Faggs was the only member of the 1948 U.S. Women's Olympic track team to qualify for the 1952 Olympic games in Helsinki, Finland. Faggs had a more memorable experience during her second Olympic games, but for the rest of the U.S. team, the Helsinki Games were a disaster. The American track squad lost event after event, "often failing to qualify for the finals."¹⁴⁵ Faggs had her own difficulties, once again failing to qualify for the finals in her specialty event, the 200 meters. She had a second chance to earn a medal in the 400-meter relay, but this opportunity proved to need every bit of Faggs' talent and personal determination.

Faggs found herself the veteran leader of the 400-meter relay team, paired with a group of inexperienced runners, who had rarely worked together before in competition. Her future TSU Tigerbelle teammate, Barbara Jones was only fifteen years old and a notoriously high-strung athlete. Jones even refused to practice for the relay and only relented after Faggs told her she did not set her hair any longer if she didn't practice.¹⁴⁶ Faggs got the team together, working on their timing with the handoffs and helping them learn to trust each other on the track. Her extra efforts with the team and their additional practices really paid off. Mae Faggs and her reluctant young teammates set a new world

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 88.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

record in the 400-meter relay, resulting in Faggs winning her one and only gold medal. Her finicky and stubborn teammate, Barbara Jones became the youngest American woman in Olympic history to win a track and field gold medal. Mae Faggs recalled the following about her 1952 Olympic medal ceremony: “When I was standing on the platform in Helsinki, waiting with the other three girls for presentation of our medals, I guess I was the happiest girl in the world.”¹⁴⁷ Faggs had every reason in the world to be pleased. She was an Olympic gold medal winner and a recent high school graduate. Her athletic exploits had garnered national attention, giving Faggs something she desperately wanted, and an opportunity for a college education.

The major roadblock for her dream of attending college was financial. Unfortunately for Faggs, athletic scholarships for women were not a reality; only three colleges were offering any kind of financial aid for women athletes, Tuskegee Institute, the University of Hawaii, and Tennessee State University. Faggs received work-aid scholarship offers from both Tuskegee and TSU. She chose TSU for the simple reason that Tennessee was closer to New York than Alabama. She quickly became homesick for her hometown of New York. Coach Temple had to work extra hard to keep his star recruit: “She had never been South...she was used to running in Madison Square Garden, and here we went to one meet a year. The poor child wanted to go home. I had some counseling to do.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Unknown, “Mae Faggs Faces Last Season of Competition.” *Tennessee A&I State University Bulletin*, September 1956, p. 8.

¹⁴⁸ Burns, p. 103

When Mae Faggs entered Tennessee State University in the fall semester of 1952, she would be mirroring the college athletics experience of her new coach Ed Temple. She was the cornerstone athlete in a fledging track program strapped for funding and overall support. Just like her coach, Faggs made the best of a difficult situation. She brought her extensive experience, her determined attitude, and her endless toughness to Temple's program. From her first day at TSU, Temple immediately began crediting Faggs as the "Mother of the Tigerbelles."¹⁴⁹

After being dubbed the first official TSU Tigerbelle, Mae Faggs set the competitive tone for the rest of the women on the team in practice as well in competitive events. For her less experienced teammates, defeating Faggs in practice was the measuring stick for personal achievement. Faggs was just as equally determined to go unbeaten in each and every single practice. As she recounted.

I was already a national outdoor champion, I was national indoor champion, I had been to the Olympics. My teammates, all they cared about in practice was running past Mae Faggs. You couldn't let your guard down at all because if one ran past you...hey. They turned around and gave you one of those looks that said, "Un-huh, I got you now."¹⁵⁰

It was not only in practice where Faggs was challenged by her Tigerbelle teammates, but in competitions as well. Faggs was instrumental and invaluable in terms of pushing her

¹⁴⁹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

¹⁵⁰ Richard Goldstein, "Mae Faggs Starr, Champion and Track Mentor, Dies at 67", *New York Times*, February 11, 2000. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/11/sports/mae-faggs-starr-champion-and-track-mentor-dies-at-67.html>

teammates to do their very best at all times. She had a particularly strong influence on the young and talented runner, Wilma Rudolph. Faggs repeatedly took Rudolph under her wing and challenge the inexperienced, yet talented runner to perform despite being overwhelmed by nervousness and lack of confidence.

At the Olympic trials in 1956, Mae Faggs had her work cut out for herself with the completely intimidated sixteen-year-old Wilma Rudolph. Rudolph was still learning Coach Temple's system and was struggling with maintaining a disciplined track form when competing. She was talented enough to challenge in most races, but Temple was trying to turn her into a winner. Overwhelmed by the high expectations of herself by Temple and the highly competitive nature of the Tigerbelle teams, Rudolph was a nervous wreck at her first major Olympic qualifying competition. As Faggs remembered.

I remember at the 56 Games that Wilma was so nervous because she was so young, so I told her to do everything I did. Wilma agreed. So you see me, this 5'2" person standing there and you see her, this 6-foot-tall girl, doing everything I did. If I bent over to touch my shoes to limber up, she bent over and did the same thing. If I raised my arm, she raised her arm. It quickly took her mind off her nerves as she tried to watch everything I did. That was the whole idea and it worked.¹⁵¹

Faggs may have succeeded in taking away Wilma Rudolph's pre-race apprehension, but she also succeeded in helping Rudolph become extremely focused for their 200-meter

¹⁵¹ Lynn Seely "Mae Faggs Starr" *Runner's World*, February 20, 1998, p. 2. <http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/running/5214>.

trial. Mae Faggs had to do some serious scrambling to overcome her young opponent once the actual race began.

In the 200, Wilma was on the inside lane, I was in the second lane, and I couldn't see her coming out of the corner of my eye. So I turned my head and said 'Come on.' And she said, 'I'm coming. I mean, she was blowing down that straightaway. I had to reach back and get some of those horses I didn't think I had to beat her.'¹⁵²

Faggs beat Rudolph and she became the first woman to represent the United States at three consecutive Olympic games. Faggs went on to win a bronze medal at the 1956 Olympic games held in Melbourne, Australia. Shortly after returning from the Olympics, she was the only woman chosen by the U.S. State Department to travel with six male athletes on a goodwill tour of Africa.¹⁵³ In Africa, she had the opportunity to race and coach African athletes in Liberia, Ghana, and Nigeria.

When Mae Faggs finally graduated in 1956 with a degree in Health and Physical Education, her coach Ed Temple gave her full credit as the "athlete that put the Tigerbelle on the map."¹⁵⁴ In her ten-year competitive career, Faggs had won numerous trophies, plaques, certificates, and medals, including two Olympic medals. She won eleven national titles and was named an AAU All-American for three consecutive years,

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Hines, p. 88.

¹⁵⁴ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

1954, 1955, and 1956. Many years after her retirement from competitive track, Faggs remembered, “looking back on it all, it was the most exciting time of my life.”¹⁵⁵

Isabelle Daniels Holston

Born in Jakin, Georgia in 1937, Isabel Daniels grew up as the youngest of nine children. Unlike many of her future TSU Tigerbelles, Daniels was significantly better off financially. Her father was a moderately successful farmer, who grew corn, tobacco, peanuts, and cotton.¹⁵⁶ Her father, who only had an elementary school education, also worked full-time as a school bus driver. Her mother had attended college and had become a well-respected schoolteacher. As an infant, Daniels picked up the nickname “Tweety” from one of her older brothers, who believed that she made sounds imitating a chirping bird.¹⁵⁷ She was known by this nickname for most of her life and was always called “Tweety” by her Tigerbelle teammates.¹⁵⁸ Isabel Daniels had a very happy childhood growing up in the small, rural town of Jakin, a predominantly black community, where Daniels was heavily shielded for most of her young life from the racism and segregation of the Jim Crow South.

It was on the fields and back roads around her father’s cotton farming operation that served as Daniel’s first training ground for track and field. Growing up with several

¹⁵⁵ Yanick Rice Lamb, “Olympic Legends: Eight African American Women Olympic Medalists from 1948.” *Essence*, January 1996, Issue No. 9, Volume 26, p.

¹⁵⁶ Telephone Interview with Isabel Daniels Holston by author, November 27, 2007.

¹⁵⁷ Edwards, p. 23.

¹⁵⁸ Telephone interview with Isabel Daniels Holston by author, November 27, 2007.

athletic brothers, she rode horses with them, wrestled with them, and nearly everyday competed in footraces with them. One activity where young Isabelle was denied the opportunity to participate was when pigs on the family farm escaped from their pens and have to be caught. Daniels' brothers usually got the job of catching the wayward animal. One particular time, Daniels father relented and allowed her to join in the pig chase and her burgeoning talent as a runner was recognized.

I discovered that I could run when I was at an early age. We grew up on a farm, and my father grew a garden every year. And this particular year, a pig got in the garden, and he sent my brothers to catch the pig and my brothers couldn't catch the pig, and I said, "Let me in the garden to catch the pig." And my daddy said, all right. And finally I convinced him to let me get in the garden to help catch the pig, and he did. And I did, and I ran, and ran, and ran, to catch the pig. And my daddy said, "Oh, this girl really can run."

The remarkable thing about Daniels' talent for running was that she, like many other children in the South, always raced barefoot.

Unfortunately, for Daniels, in her small town there were no facilities for young people to compete in organized sports. Where she attended school, all students were housed in the same building from elementary to high school. Daniels participated in her school's annual play days where she could compete in footraces held outdoors in open fields, with the 50-yard dash becoming her specialty. Yet, beyond these annual events,

basketball was the only other competitive sport available in her school. Daniels described the limitations of her school's sport program.

We didn't have any facilities or anything like that in this particular school. Our physical education program was very poor and therefore, the only sport we really had was basketball. Two others beside me were the only people to compete in track events. These events only occurred once a year in the county.¹⁵⁹

Despite these limitations, from a young age, Daniels was active in sports and other activities. She played basketball, sang in the school choir, and participated on the cheerleading squad. She also ran. Daniels also trained by jogging along side her father's school bus when he worked his route.¹⁶⁰ Her entire family got behind Daniels love of running and competing. By the time Daniels entered high school, she was already dreaming of attending college and becoming a track star in the Olympic games.

It was in 1954, when Daniels was just fourteen years old, that she came to the attention of TSU Tigerbelle Coach Edward Temple, where she won her first race at the Tuskegee Relays, once again competing barefoot. Temple was greatly impressed with her quick reflexes and her tremendously powerful and explosive running style, especially considering her highly unorthodox and untrained sprinting form. Isabel Daniels became one of the first high school athletes to be invited to Ed Temple's summer training camps. At this summer clinic, she began learning for the first time the fundamentals of sprint

¹⁵⁹ Adkins, p. 58

¹⁶⁰ Telephone interview with Isabel Daniels Holston by author, November 27, 2007.

racing form and other principals of running. She also got her first real pair of running shoes. Her new shoes revealed how hard Daniels actually ran, because when running, she hit the ground so hard that sparks jumped from the spikes of her track shoes.¹⁶¹

During the tail end of that summer, Daniels competed for the first time as a member of Tennessee State. At the AAU nationals, she placed second in the 100 and 200-meter races for high school girls.

After graduating high school, there was no question whether or not she attended college; the only question was where she would go to college. Daniels' siblings had long established the tradition of going to and finishing college, usually at Florida A&M College. Daniels entered Tennessee State on a work-aid scholarship. She majored in Health and Physical Education. She also became an immediate contributor to the TSU Tigerbelles. She was a part of the 1954 AAU national team that nearly won TSU its first national title. The following year, she was an instrumental part of the team that won the AAU outdoor national championship. Also in 1955, Daniels won a silver medal in the 60-yard dash and a gold medal in the 400-meter relay at the Pan American Games held in Mexico.

At the Pan American Games, Daniels also learned a valuable lesson about saving money during competitions abroad. Being new to traveling abroad, she had to be rescued by long-term leader of the Tigerbelles, Mae Faggs.

¹⁶¹ Ibid

One thing he [Coach Temple] told Mae, you take care of Daniels now! He knew I was young, and had not flown before, you know, and Mae had gone to the Olympics in '48 and '52. And when the Olympics was here in Atlanta in 1996, Mae and I had a long talk. And she said, 'Daniels! Don't you remember when Coach Temple said to take care of you at the Pan American Games in '55? And don't you remember when they had allowances that they gave us?' The allowance was our food money for the two weeks we was over to Mexico. Instead of me saving my money for food, I spent it on clothes and shoes, and stuff. And, so, we got down to the last day, I think two days before, I didn't have no money left.¹⁶²

Daniels knew she had a problem and quickly fessed up to Mae Faggs about her monetary shortfall. Faggs scolded the young runner.

Mae said, 'You know what? You didn't save.' She said, 'Tweety!' That's what she called me. 'Tweety! You ate up your money, you ate it all up and you spent it!' (And she said, 'Now I had to pay for your food' And she did. She paid for the rest of my food that I needed, because she was really close to me. She was cross with me, but she took care of me.¹⁶³

Daniels never forgot that Mae Faggs looked after her like that and she never again overspent her traveling per diem.

The 1956 season was a breakthrough season for Isabel Daniels. She had a strong showing at both the AAU national outdoor and indoor championship meets, breaking or tying records in her specialty event, the indoor 50-yard dash. She also won the 100-meters in the outdoor meets, defeating the always-tough competitor, her TSU teammate Mae Faggs. Daniels was one of the six Tigerbelles to make the 1956 Olympic team. She

¹⁶² Telephone interview with Isabel Daniels Holston by author, November 27, 2007.

¹⁶³ Telephone interview with Isabel Daniels Holston by author, November 27, 2007.

gained worldwide fame after winning a bronze medal at the Olympic games in the 400-meter relay. She became one of the most popular members of the 1956 U.S. Olympic team because she loved to dance and had spent a good portion of her downtime teaching the Italian and Canadian Olympic teams how to perform the popular dance, “the bop”.¹⁶⁴

For the next three years, Daniels dominated the 50-yard dash and served as the anchor leg on gold medal winning 400-meter relays teams that traveled through Moscow, Warsaw, Budapest, and Athens in 1958. Daniels ended her competitive career with a gold medal winning victory in the 400-meter relays at the 1959 Pan American games. Isabelle Daniels graduated from Tennessee State University in 1959. She had been a four-time AAU All-American during her entire competitive career at TSU.

Barbara Jones Slater

Barbara Jones was born in Chicago, Illinois on March 26, 1937. Her family was poor, but proud, residing in a Southside housing project. Jones was heavily doted upon by her mother and was often teased for being a “mama’s girl.” Her mother was her greatest supporter and her greatest fan. When she joined the Brownies and the Girl Scouts, her mother served as the den mother and troop leader for both of Jones’ troops.¹⁶⁵ When she began competing in track, her mother would be her biggest cheerleader. Jones was inspired to begin competing in track as a youngster after meeting the great Olympian, Jesse Owens. She said that his message to “always follow your dreams and

¹⁶⁴ The Bop was a popular form of rhythm and blues dancing during the mid-1950s.

¹⁶⁵ Hines, p. 102.

do your best, never settle for less”¹⁶⁶ really struck a deep chord with her. So, as an elementary school student, Jones began running and showed great promise as a member of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) teams.

In 1952, she set a new record in the women’s junior indoor championships in the long jump. She also won the 100-meter title at the AAU national championships. Later that year, at the age of fifteen, Jones earned a place on the Olympic team for the 1952 Helsinki games. Despite the fact that she had also be pushed and prodded to practice by her Olympic teammate Mae Faggs, she became the youngest athlete to win a gold medal in track and field at the Olympics and she was also the youngest member of a relay team to set a world record. After the Olympics, she returned to her hometown club team and resume competing. Jones’ Chicago-based Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) teams dominated the 400-meter relays at the AAU national championships in 1953, 1954, and 1955. She was also be the AAU national indoor champion in the 100-meters in 1954 and 1955 and held the outdoor 100-meter title in 1953 and 1954.

It was during this period that Jones became well known as an extremely sensitive and lady-like young woman, but a fierce competitor on the track. No matter how much she was favored in an event, Jones was a nervous mess before the race. Jones was always on the edge and her emotionality often cost her dearly throughout her career. As one of her teammates anonymously reflected, “She probably beat herself more times than any of

¹⁶⁶ Unknown, “Barbara Jones Slater” *1996 Atlanta Olympics Tennessee State University Tigerbelles Tribute Program*, August 1996.

her opponents by sheer worrying.”¹⁶⁷ Regardless of her questionable mental toughness, Jones was a major star in her home state of Illinois and a rising star on the international track circuit. After graduating from high school, Jones athletic career suffered a major setback. She failed to qualify for the 1956 Olympic games despite being heavily favored to make the team. Jones was beaten at the Olympic trials by a collection of TSU Tigerbelles, who sent a record six members to the 1956 games. The Tigerbelles would completely shutdown Jones in the 100 and 200-meters.

Barbara Jones was completely distraught by her performance at the 1956 Olympic trials. She became very disenchanted with the coaching and training she had received as a freshman at Marquette University. Jones got some blunt advice from her former 1952 Olympic teammate and head Tigerbelle, Mae Faggs at those same 1956 Olympic trials. Faggs told Jones; “The thing for you to do is to come on down to Tennessee State and learn what training is all about.”¹⁶⁸ After writing to TSU Head Coach Ed Temple about the availability of a work-aid scholarship, Jones transferred to Tennessee State.

When Barbara Jones entered TSU, she was mostly likely and easily considered the only Tigerbelle that Coach Temple would never needed to worry about being lady-like at all times. She was her mother’s pet, spoiled and pampered. Jones was also used to being the center of attention, but at Tennessee State nearly everyone on the team was an elite runner and an unrelenting competitor. With Barbara Jones being a very high-

¹⁶⁷ Davis, p. 77.

¹⁶⁸ Davis, p.79

strung and sensitive athlete, she was often at times reduced to tears by her Tigerbelle teammates, in particular by Margaret Matthews, who really seemed to enjoy getting a rise out of Jones. As Coach Temple would remember.

We used to call her ‘Shell Shock’ because she acted crazy all of the time. She had been the only girl and the youngest child in her family, so B.J. was a real meticulous dresser. It took her awhile to get adjusted to us, but she became a popular person. I used to say she ‘bubbled with bull’ – she was good and she knew it. She was a little hotheaded at times.¹⁶⁹

It was shortly after Jones arrived at Tennessee State that she exhibited some of the hot-headedness that Temple described. She became frustrated with the highly competitive nature of the Tigerbelles and extremely unhappy with Temple’s rules and tough practices; she wrote home to her mother complaining and begging to come home. Jones’ mother, who usually indulged her baby girl’s every whim, did not do so this time. Her mother sharply wrote back, “Shut up and stop complaining. You just have a bad case of Temple-itis, and you’re staying.”¹⁷⁰ With no sympathy from her mother, Jones stayed at TSU. Despite her difficulties in her first year at TSU, Jones finished the year as the 50 and 100-meter AAU national champion.

In the 1958 and 1959 season, she was in top form. She won consecutive national titles in the 50-yard dash. She earned a place on the U.S. women’s international team that went on tour in 1958. During that tour, Barbara Jones became the first American

¹⁶⁹ Temple, p. 67

¹⁷⁰ Temple, p. 67.

woman athlete to defeat the Soviet Union in competition, winning the 100-meters. She repeated that achievement again in 1959. In front of a hometown crowd, she set a record in the 100-meters at the 1959 Pan American Games held in Chicago, Illinois. It was in these two seasons that she was named to the AAU All-American teams. Jones always seems to perform best in front of large crowds.

B.J. was always what you would call a “money runner.” If we’d go to a small meet, she wouldn’t exert herself too much. But if you got her in front of cheering crowds, she’d make the rest of the runners blow a gasket. I mean all pistons would be sparking.¹⁷¹

Jones also shined during her TSU career in the 400-meter relay events, running on seven championship relay teams. Only Lucinda Williams ran on more winning teams. Barbara Jones was a major contributor to TSU teams of the 1950s, but she was a part of the golden age of the early 1960s.

Margaret Matthews Wilburn

Born in Griffin, Georgia, on August 5, 1935, Margaret Matthews grew up in an impoverished family in a tough Atlanta neighborhood. Her father, who was originally a farmer, became a day laborer when the family relocated to Atlanta. Her mother was a laundress. The family survived most of the time on the twenty-six dollars a week Matthews’ mother earned from working at a local laundry. Both of Matthews’ parents struggled finding employment due to their limited years of formal education. With two

¹⁷¹ Temple, p. 67

siblings adding to the family's financial burdens, Matthews began taking odd jobs as a youngster to help her family make ends meet. From a young age, Margaret Matthews had to learn to be tough and fight for her daily survival. Additionally, during her early childhood years, Matthews suffered serious health issues, combating "bouts with measles, chickenpox, mumps, and whooping cough."¹⁷² Despite her family's financial struggles and her health problems, her parents pushed for Matthews to get an education.

In elementary and junior high school, Matthews began making her mark as a student and as an athlete. In these early years, she began to exhibit versatility as an athlete and a performer. Matthews became involved in dancing, skating, paddle tennis, and running.¹⁷³ She also became a consistent honor roll student. It was in high school, at D.T., Howard High School in Atlanta, Georgia, where she truly blossomed as a student-athlete. Under the tutelage of her high school track coach and physical education teacher, Margaret Matthews became a phenomenal high school athlete. Her coach and mentor, Mrs. Marian Armstrong Perkins-Morgan, who already coached other young women that later became Olympians, starting with Mary McNabb in 1952 and Mildred McDaniel in 1956, had a tremendous influence and impact on her.

Matthews was an All-State athlete in basketball and track, holding state records in the 50, 75, and 100-meter sprints. Coach Perkins-Morgan pushed Matthews to be a well-rounded student and Matthews earned the distinction of being elected "Miss Howard

¹⁷² Adkins, p. 69

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 69

High” and named to the National Honor Society for her academic successes. In her senior year, she served as head majorette and was voted most popular and most athletic in her high school graduating class.¹⁷⁴ Matthews gave a great deal of credit for her success to Coach Perkins-Morgan, remarking that.

I was under Mrs. Morgan in elementary school, junior high school – almost my entire life. She did a little more than just teach me from a book; she taught me how to live with other people and for myself. I always wanted to do more than I saw my family was able to do. No one was an athlete in my family, but I saw athletics as a chance to be something. I saw Mary McNabb and Mildred McDaniels win medals, and I felt if they could, I could. I found out you don’t have to be pretty to be recognized, to be known, to be somebody. Some people are partial; some people like pretty people, attractive people. Others, if you have the talent, it doesn’t matter; and that’s how it was with Mrs. Morgan. She was never partial; she always gave us an equal chance and I think that’s what gave me the incentive to really want to be somebody¹⁷⁵

When she finally graduated high school, she was the first member of her family to accomplish that goal. And for many years after her high school graduation, Matthews carried a picture of her coach and mentor in her wallet.¹⁷⁶

After graduation in 1953, Matthews started her college career at Bethune-Cookman College in Florida, but after one year she transferred to Lewis College

¹⁷⁴ Adkins, p. 70

¹⁷⁵ Michael D. Davis, *Black American Women in Olympic Track and Field*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. 1992, p. 102.

¹⁷⁶ Hines, p. 109

in Chicago for the 1954-55 school year. In Chicago, she began competing in the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) league as a member of the Chicago Comets. It was in Chicago where Matthews first began battling against her future TSU Tigerbelle teammate, Barbara Jones-Slater. Her athletic achievements in Chicago and a recommendation from her former high school coach gained Matthews an invitation to Coach Ed Temple's 1955 summer clinic at Tennessee State. During that summer, Matthews competed in her first AAU Nationals competition, where she finished third in the 100-meters. Her hard work and determination exhibited during that summer program resulted in Temple offering her a work-aid scholarship to attend TSU that fall.

For Matthews this was a golden opportunity because after two aborted attempts at attending college, she had run out of the financial means to pursue that endeavor. Matthews made the most of her opportunity, entering TSU in 1956 and majoring in physical education. She still had to take on odds jobs, doing washing, ironing and baby-sitting for local families in Nashville for pocket money. Her freshman year roommate was team captain and "mother of the Tigerbelle" Mae Faggs. Matched with the extremely competitive Faggs, Matthews quickly became known for her own fierce competitiveness. She enjoyed engaging in "psychological warfare, goading her rivals into mistakes."¹⁷⁷ Matthews' tactics was always result in a positive advantage for her, but her antics assuredly ratcheted up the level of competitiveness between her Tigerbelle

¹⁷⁷ Hines, p. 109

teammates in practice as well as competitions. Matthews remarked quite simply about her well-known competitiveness: “I just like to do things better than other people.”¹⁷⁸

As a long jump specialist, Matthews had some memorable battles with fellow TSU teammate and long jump rival, Willye White. As White would say, “I didn’t want to beat but one person, and that was Margaret.”¹⁷⁹ At the end of her first year, Matthews set an American record in the long jump and qualify for the Olympic team, beating out White, who still made the team. Yet, at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, Matthews succumbed to the pressure of competing on the Olympic stage and she failed to make the finals in her specialty event, the long jump. It was her TSU teammate and rival Willye White who won the silver medal in the long jump event. Matthews did not go home from the Olympics completely empty-handed; she earned a bronze medal as a last minute replacement member of the U.S. 400-meter relay team.

After the 1956 Olympics, Matthews and White spent the next few years engaging in epic battles over the national long jump record, with both women exchanging the American record. In 1958, Margaret Matthews gained the upper hand in their personal competition by becoming the first American woman to leap a world record-setting twenty feet in the long jump.¹⁸⁰ This feat also made her the first woman athlete at TSU to hold a

¹⁷⁸ Unknown, “Margaret Matthews Wilburn”, *1996 Atlanta Olympics Tennessee State University Tigerbelles Tribute Program*, August 1996.

¹⁷⁹ Davis, p. 102

¹⁸⁰ Library staff, <http://www.tnstate.edu/library/que/matthew.htm>, p.1

world record in track and field.¹⁸¹ At that same AAU nationals meet, Matthews also beat her long-standing sprinting rival and TSU teammate, Barbara Jones in the 100 meters. She was also a part of the record-setting 400-meter relay team at nationals. At a late season competition in Hungary, Matthews set a world record in the 100-meters, becoming the first TSU Tigerbelle to set a world mark. The 1958 season was a banner year for Matthews.

Throughout the remainder of her career, Matthews struggled with inconsistent athletic performances, particularly when she competed abroad. Yet, Matthews won the U.S. National long jump title for four straight years and she was named an AAU All-American for three straight years in 1957, 1958, and 1959. And despite Margaret Matthews' ability to ruffle the feathers of her teammates, she was also highly respected by them, serving as team captain of the Tigerbelles.

When Margaret Matthews Wilburn ended her career at Tennessee State University in 1960, she was the first person in her family to earn a college degree. She married former TSU student-athlete, Jesse Wilburn and retire from track and field competition immediately. Despite being a very young woman and nowhere near her athletic prime, Matthews-Wilburn never competed again. Many years later she wondered if she had retired too soon.

¹⁸¹ Sara B. Washington, "Margaret Matthews" in David Wiggins, *African Americans in Sports – Volume M-Z*, p. 228

I regret stopping track at the early age that I did. I feel now that if I were still competing I could do a much better job. I have a more mature feeling of what the track and field program at Tennessee State University was for. I ask myself, did I reach my peak?¹⁸²

Lucinda Williams Adams

Lucinda Williams was born in Savannah, Georgia on April 10, 1937. And she actually lived most of her life in the small town of Bloomingdale, a little over 12 miles away from Savannah. Williams came from a large family of five children with working class parents. Both of her parents had completed junior high school, with her father employed as a janitor and her mother working as a household maid. Williams' family was extremely poor, but enjoyed a basically stable existence as a whole.

From a very early age, Lucinda Williams became a very active student involved in the school choir, acting, dancing, and sports. She was also a girl scout and a member of the local YWCA's teen social group, "Y" teens. The Williams family may have been limited financially, but young Lucinda Williams was strongly encouraged to pursue every opportunity. She pursued sports with a focused passion taking on all competitors, even boys.

Well, I was involved in all kinds of sports. I was from Savannah, Georgia, so back in those days of the 50's, they had girl's athletics, believe it or not, separate, but they had it, and I got involved in play days, may days, those kinds of things, running, and then once I went into junior high school, I was in physical education class, and apparently got spotted by the physical education teacher, who was a male and who turned out to be the boys track coach. He thought I had some talent

¹⁸² Adkins, p. 72.

for running, and that was the first discovery. And, so, I started track with the boys first, they didn't have any girls. And then in junior high school, I learned how to play full court basketball and I was a cheerleader up through junior high-high school. And that's how I got involved.¹⁸³

When Williams entered high school in 1949, she really began to shine as an athlete. At the combined junior high/high school named Thompkins High School, Williams became an extremely well rounded student; she was editor of the school paper and yearbook, a member of the debate team, and played basketball. Her specialty and favorite activity was competing on the track team.

With the encouragement of her mother and her track coach, Lucinda Williams began basing her future dreams on her outstanding track and field abilities. Her mother told her to “exploit her top-notch racing skills.”¹⁸⁴ Her physical education teacher and coach, Joseph Turner also told her “that her running would open doors for her in the future if she dedicated herself to the sport.”¹⁸⁵ Williams knew quite well that her family was not be able to afford a college education, so Williams had to make her own path. She dedicated herself to track completely and it was in her first year of high school competition where she came to the attention of TSU Coach Edward Temple. He was greatly impressed with running style and invited her to attend his summer clinic. She could not attend that summer, but she attended Temple's summer camps every other

¹⁸³ Interview with Lucinda Williams Adams by author, November 28, 2007

¹⁸⁴ Ibid

¹⁸⁵ Ibid

summer until she graduated from high school. On numerous occasions, Williams became frustrated at these clinics because the level of competition was extremely tough, but she stuck it out because of the encouragement and support of her teammates. As she matured, Williams began to realize “that my running would get better with hard work and good competition, then the winning would come as well.”¹⁸⁶ When Lucinda Williams graduated high school in 1955, she was a state champion in track and named the outstanding senior athlete of her senior class.

Williams achieved one of her dreams, earning a work-aid scholarship to Tennessee State. She started her academic career as a health and physical education major. Williams immersed herself into college life in the same manner that she had in high school. She was regularly the first at track practice and never missed her work-study job. She joined a sorority and played intramurals. She was a dedicated student, bringing her schoolwork with her on team trips. Where many of the TSU Tigerbelles took off academic quarters when faced with an extremely busy athletic schedule, Williams stayed in school and maintain a high grade point average. She was very focused on her academics, planning in advance to pursue graduate studies. Despite Williams taking advantage of nearly every opportunity presented to her at Tennessee State, there were times when Williams wanted to quit, but stuck it out because she knew that others were counting on her. As she recounted.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Lucinda Williams Adams by author, February 18, 2009

Well, it was kind of, tough. But here again, I knew even as a youngster that the way in which that I could get a college education and travel, which I always dreamed of travel, I knew that I had to stick it out. There were many days when I wanted to quit, and go back home, but I did not want to disappoint my family, and my community, and any of those people that had, you know, real high hopes for me, because I was the some one in my family, at that time, for many years, to have an opportunity to graduate from college.¹⁸⁷

It was Lucinda Williams' toughness and determination that quickly got her viewed as a leader with her TSU Tigerbelle teammates. She earned the nickname, "Lady Dancer"¹⁸⁸ for her graceful running style and her immaculate appearance. She became known as a cool and challenging competitor, "neat and clean when she competed like she just came off an ironing board."¹⁸⁹ Her energy and passion for academics and competitive athletics endeared her to her teammates and resulted in Williams becoming the second mother figure on the Tigerbelle after Mae Faggs graduated in 1956. She was a member of the first AAU national title team for Tennessee State and she began her long-standing history as a valuable member of TSU 400-meter relay teams, helping set a new American record in that event. She made the 1956 Olympic team and won her first Olympic medal as a member of the third place all-Tigerbelle 400-meter relay team.

Lucinda Williams' individual specialty race was 200-meters. In 1957 and 1959, she was the indoor champion and in 1958, she was the outdoor champion in that event. In 1958 and 1959, she would also be a part of the U.S. women's team that turned

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Lucinda Williams Adams by author, November 28, 2007

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

¹⁸⁹ Ibid

the tables on the Soviet Union in competition. The U.S. women's teams that had been regularly beaten by the women's team of the Soviet Union found themselves being crushed by members of the TSU Tigerbelles. Williams won the 200-meters in both competitions. In her last year of eligibility as a Tigerbelle, Williams went out on top. At the 1959 Pan American Games, she won gold medals in the 100 and 200-meters. Williams earned a third gold medal as the first leg of the 400-meter relay. It was in 1958 and 1959 that Williams was named an AAU All-American and she finished third in the voting for the Sullivan Award in 1959. During her career at TSU, Williams had participated on more winning AAU national championship teams than any other Tigerbelle, with eight victories.

She graduated from TSU shortly afterward, but she remained connected to the Tigerbelles through their spectacular 1960 Olympic games performances. Williams showed the world that once an athlete became a Tigerbelle, they were always a Tigerbelle. In fall quarter of 1960, she had started a graduate program in physical education and spent the season training with the Tigerbelles and serving as an assistant coach. For the second time in her career, Williams qualified for the Olympic games in the 200-meters. She did not medal in that event, but she played a major role in the masterful gold-medal winning performance of the all-Tigerbelle team in the 400-meter relay at the 1960 Rome Olympics. After the Olympics, Williams participated in the European tour, then return to TSU that Fall to complete her masters degree. In 1961, with the completion of her graduate studies, Williams ended her athletic career. She said about her competitive years at TSU.

When I look back, I see a lot of time spent practicing and training and getting prepared for track competitions. The long hours spent studying, working, and traveling, but there was never a moment when I regretted my choices. I sacrificed a lot, but it was worth it. The Olympics, the other events, the traveling, the races won and lost, meeting all those different people in different places, representing my country, the truth of the matter is, it was the most thrilling time of my life.¹⁹⁰

Martha Hudson Pennyman

Born in Eastman, Georgia on March 21, 1939, Martha Hudson's early years were marked by a nomadic existence of multiple moves from Georgia to South Carolina back to various cities in Georgia because of her father's employment as a construction worker. Since her mother was a homemaker with just an elementary school education, the family was completely dependent on her father's income. Hudson's father only had five years of formal education and his work in construction was sporadic, forcing his family to move where the work was available. When Martha Hudson started elementary school, her family had settled in McRae, Georgia. Despite her small size, Hudson became heavily involved in competitive sports. From wrapping the May Pole on May Day celebrations to running track, Hudson was playing. Her favorite sport was basketball throughout high school, but Hudson concentrated on track and field because her future high school coach had told her she had the potential to become a great champion in that sport.

In eighth grade, at just fourteen years old, Hudson won the district championships in the fifty, seventy-five, and 100-meter dashes. She also won the basketball throw. In the following year, Hudson entered Twin City high school, where she played basketball

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Lucinda Williams Adams by author, February 18, 2009

and compete in track and field. It was at the end of her freshman year that Hudson participated in her first Tuskegee Relays, where she finished third in the 100-meters. Later that summer, she set a new record in the 75-yard dash at the Pan American Games. It was Hudson's performance at the Tuskegee Relays that brought her to the attention of TSU track coach, Ed Temple. Hudson had regularly beaten one of Temple's incoming recruits, high school senior Lucinda Williams. Temple invited Martha Hudson to attend his summer training clinic that summer. She attended the TSU clinics every summer until she graduated. Hudson was a part of the early talented group of young high school girls that were invited to these first summer camps. She gained valuable early experience from these experiences. Hudson was a standout performer in AAU national championship competitions for girls, winning the 50 and 75-yard dashes. She even placed second in the 50 and 100-yard dashes in the women's division.

In 1957, Hudson graduated as salutatorian of her senior class. She left school with an impressive academic as well as athletic career, where she had been captain of her high school basketball team and a standout star on the track team. Hudson's hard work had resulted in a work-aid scholarship to Tennessee State University. She was only one of four students in her entire graduating class of twenty-six to attend college.¹⁹¹ Martha Hudson came to TSU in the fall quarter of 1957, where she majored in elementary education. When Hudson arrived on campus for her freshman year, she was already a very talented and experienced track and field athlete. She had participated in three

¹⁹¹ Davis, p. 75

straight summer training clinics at Tennessee State and had competed against Tigerbelles, holding her own in those events.

As a new TSU Tigerbelle, she quickly earned the nickname “Pee Wee” not just because of her small stature of four feet, ten inches, but her ability to perform mammoth tasks.¹⁹² Hudson earned her nickname from the former team captain and inaugural member of the TSU Tigerbelles, Mae Faggs. Faggs, who was not very tall herself, but a dynamic performer, relished the fact that hard-running Hudson was shorter than she was. Hudson recalled that Faggs would tell her, “why you are shorter than I am. I have a name for you – “Pee Wee.”¹⁹³ Further, at the 1956 summer clinic, as the reigning Queen of the Tigerbelles, Mae Faggs had been completely tickled by the young in-coming freshman’s goal to defeat her just once in practice or competition. As Hudson would humorously remember, “my big ambition, was to beat Mae just once, but I never did.”¹⁹⁴ She would be one of several Tigerbelles that would be disappointed in that ambitious endeavor.

Through the 1957 and 1958 seasons, Martha Hudson was a regular and consistent performer for Temple’s squads. She was an important part of the teams that continued the AAU National championship titles winning streak going for TSU. It was in 1959 when Hudson began to stand out as an individual athlete. She won the 100-meter title at the indoor national championships and she was named for the first time as an AAU All-

¹⁹² Unknown, “Martha Pennyman”, *Thomaston-Upson Sports Hall of Fame program*, <http://tusportshalloffame.com/MARTHA%PENNYMAN.htm>.

¹⁹³ Davis, p. 73

¹⁹⁴ Davis, p. 75

American. At the conclusion of the 1959 season, Hudson was poised to become one of the Tigerbelle greats of their golden era of the 1960s.

Willye B. White

Willye B. White was born on January 1, 1940¹⁹⁵, in the heart of the Deep South of racially segregated Mississippi. White's hometown of Money became historically infamous as the site of the brutal murder of fourteen-year-old Chicago native, Emmett Till in 1955.¹⁹⁶ Both of her parents had worked as sharecroppers and were deceased by the time White entered her teenage years. White was primarily raised by her maternal grandparents who were illiterate sharecroppers working the cotton fields of Greenwood, Mississippi. White eventually moved to the Southside of Chicago in 1960, but spent her entire childhood in Mississippi. During her years in Mississippi, White endured severe financial difficulties and stifling racial prejudice. Despite her rough living conditions, White was encouraged and pushed by her grandparents to pursue an education as well as athletics. She started her formal education later than most children, beginning elementary school at the age of nine in 1948.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Willye White's actual age and date of birth is questionable. She is listed in multiple sources as being born on December 31, 1938, December 31, 1939, January 1, 1939, or January 1, 1940. Most museums and halls of fame that have exhibits on White list her date of birth as January 1, 1940 and the majority of her final obituaries do the same. For the purpose of this study, Willye White is listed as being born on January 1, 1940.

¹⁹⁶ The murder of Emmett Till was noted as one of the leading events that helped motivate the modern Civil Rights Movement. African Americans and many other Americans were outraged by the brutality of Till's murder. His suspected killers were acquitted, but later admitted to committing the murder in a paid magazine interview.

¹⁹⁷ Telephone interview with Willye White by author, April 11, 2006

To make sure that she understood the importance of the opportunity to gain a formal education, her grandparents required White to begin working her summer vacations in the cotton fields at the age of eight; “chopping cotton, using a long hoe called “the ignorant stick” and earning \$2.50 for a twelve-hour day.”¹⁹⁸ White said about her experiences that “it wasn’t so much about the money, but because my family wanted me to learn how to work hard.”¹⁹⁹ White hated the backbreaking and unrewarding work of the cotton fields, particularly the snakes that often inhabited the cotton fields where she worked. She quickly learned the difference of working in the cotton fields and competing on the sports fields. White remarked in a 1975 interview; “you could chop for a whole week and never finish a row. The only way I could get any recognition was through sports.”²⁰⁰ Her grandfather reinforced White’s view when she was sixteen years old and he told her that she could either go to college and get out of Mississippi or stay home, get pregnant and pick cotton the rest of her life.”²⁰¹

Despite being encouraged to compete in sports by her grandparents, White encountered some resistance from being a girl competing in sports. A self-described tomboy with “undistinguishable racial heritage”²⁰² because of her green eyes, ruddy skin

¹⁹⁸ Hines, p. 133

¹⁹⁹ Telephone interview with Willye White by author, April 11, 2006

²⁰⁰ Litsky, p. 2

²⁰¹ Ibid

²⁰² Ibid

color and flaming red hair, White endured serious criticism for engaging in sport. “There was a real stigma attached to being a girl interested in sports. I was supposed to play with dolls, but I was more interested in beating the boys in races.”²⁰³ White had become infamous in her community for wearing dirty overalls and tennis shoes and engaging in any sport competition she could find. She picked up the long-term nickname “Red” at an early age, which was used more often as a way to negatively separate her as different from others in her neighborhood. White came to embrace the nickname more positively after escaping her difficult childhood in Mississippi. She closed her ears to the withering remarks about her being “unladylike” for participating in competitive sports, White had found something she was “really great at and I wasn’t about to turn it loose.”²⁰⁴

In spite of those criticisms, Willye White began competing in track and field at age ten. From age twelve until she graduated from Broad Street high school in 1959, she repeatedly won the state championships in the long jump, the 50-meter hurdles, and the 50-meter and 75-meter sprint races. She also competed on several highly competitive all-state 4 x100 meter relay teams.²⁰⁵ Even though White started her track career as a sprinter, she began competing in the long jump because she thought she could stand out more from the crowded field of sprinters she consistently encountered in elementary, middle, and high school. As White observed; “for every 500 sprinters, there were two

²⁰³ Ibid

²⁰⁴ Telephone interview with Willye White by author, April 11, 2006

²⁰⁵ Litsky, p. 3

long jumpers.”²⁰⁶ White was a gifted athlete, stronger and more powerful than other girls her own age. She also excelled at basketball, playing on the high school varsity basketball team while still just a fifth grader.²⁰⁷ White also participated in the high school band and choir.

In the spring of 1954, Willye White’s athletic exploits came to the attention of TSU coach Ed Temple. She was the exact type of athlete that Temple would regularly recruit throughout his career; a multifaceted athlete capable of performing in more than one event and exhibiting the toughness and determination to succeed. White was invited to one of Temple’s first summer clinics. She attended every summer for the next four years, training and competing under the colors of Tennessee State. It was at those clinics that White encountered her first real serious training and coaching. She also discovered that she was pretty good at both sprinting and jumping; “At TSU, you tried everything; if you sprinted fast, you became a sprinter, if you jumped far, you became a long jumper, I was pretty good at both, so I did both.”²⁰⁸ She did both, racing and jumping, but she made her name as a long jumper.

In 1956, Willye White competed in her first Olympic games. White’s first Olympic experience was nerve-racking and highly competitive. In the long jump event, White’s main competitor was her own TSU teammate, Margaret Matthews. And

²⁰⁶ Ibid

²⁰⁷ Hines, p. 133

²⁰⁸ Telephone interview with Willye White by author, April 11, 2006

Matthews was the current U.S. national champion, heavily favored to take the gold medal. White and Matthews ratcheted up the pressure on each other during the Olympics, nearly canceling each other out. Matthews bowed to the intense pressure of the competition and fail to qualify for the finals. White made the finals, but found herself so wound up from the qualifying rounds that she was nothing but a bundle of nervous in the finals. As would become the habit of many TSU Tigerbelles, White turned to the Bible to settle her nerves before she began competing in the long jump finals; “I was nervous, so I read the New Testament. I read the verse about have no fear, and I relaxed. Then I jumped farther than I ever jumped before in my life.”²⁰⁹ Not only did White jump farther than she had in her life, she had leaped farther than any American woman had ever jumped in an Olympic competition. Her new American record in the long jump earned her a silver medal at 1956 Melbourne Games.

White learned another important lesson from her Olympic experience.

The Olympic games introduced me to the real world. Before my first Olympics, I thought the whole world consisted of cross burnings and lynching’s. After 1956 I found there were two worlds, Mississippi and the rest of the world.²¹⁰

Never again did White feel limited by her humble beginnings. She knew that there was a larger world than Mississippi, full of opportunities for a young woman like herself.

When White returned to Mississippi for her final years of high school, she focused

²⁰⁹ Ibid

²¹⁰ Telephone interview with Willye White by author, April 11, 2006

intensely on sports, coaching herself and planning her own training program. White continued to shine in track remaining the state champion and finding success as a part-time member of the TSU Tigerbelles summer teams. In 1958, White broke her own long jump record that she set at the 1956 Olympics. White admits that in terms of her high school academic record that she “just did enough to get by”²¹¹ but it wouldn’t matter. Her athletic exploits earned her a work-aid scholarship to TSU in the fall quarter of 1959.

White entered TSU intending to major in nursing. She quickly found her place athletically with the Tigerbelles, but unfortunately for Willye White, she quickly butted heads with TSU Head Coach Ed Temple. White strongly resisted the rules and structure that Temple had in place at Tennessee State. White had been on her own for a very longtime and she found Temple’s rules personally stifling. “Coach Temple wanted to control every aspect of your life and I was too much of a free spirit for that.”²¹² She had a very independent view of life and how one should live it. “I was ahead of my time at TSU, I liked to date older boys and I ran around with older girls. I knew how to drink whiskey and I loved to dye my hair different colors. I knew that was something different that what they were used to.”²¹³ Further, after spending so much time at Tennessee State before she was actually enrolled at the institution as a college student, White did not feel she should be treated like a normal freshman. As Coach Temple remembered.

²¹¹ Ibid

²¹² Telephone interview with Willye White by author, April 11, 2006

²¹³ Ibid

She just didn't want to be a freshman. "Red" had an awful lot of early success in track unlike a lot of the girls. She won a Olympic silver medal in '56 and she had traveled the world, all while she was still in high school. She was one of the greatest track athletes in the world when she arrived on campus, but I didn't care. I had my rules and everyone was expected to follow them. "Red" was a freshman at that point and she had to follow the rules for the freshmen, no matter what she had already done.²¹⁴

White was a habitual rule-breaker at TSU and she regularly break Temple's pet rule against Tigerbelles riding around in cars. After being warned multiple times by Temple, he made the tough and surprising decision to drop one of his brightest stars on the 1959 Tigerbelle squad after less than a year on the team. As Temple related.

She just wouldn't stay out of those cars. "Red" kept on and it was starting to cause problems with the other girls, so I had to ship her out. It wasn't a easy decision to make, "Red" was great. I knew I was cutting loose a top athlete, but I just couldn't let her buck my rules like that. If I kept letting "Red" get away with it, then I had to let all the other girls get away with it. And that wasn't gonna work. I finally told her, look here "Red" somebody's got to go, either you or me, and it's not gonna be me, so you're just going to have to go.²¹⁵

White left TSU, but she was not necessarily be humbled in any way by Temple's decision to dismiss her from the team; "That experience at TSU taught me to never let any one man determine your destiny."²¹⁶ White moved from Nashville to Chicago, where she prepared for the 1960 Olympic games.

²¹⁴ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

²¹⁵ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

²¹⁶ Telephone interview with Willye White by author, April 11, 2006

Despite her one rocky year at Tennessee State, White had a rich and extremely successful career marked by a series of firsts. As she related years later.

I had no regrets about leaving TSU. I had a great career, check the record books. I was the first woman from Mississippi to compete in the Olympic games and to win an Olympic medal. I was the first American woman to win a medal in the long jump at the Olympics and I was the first American to compete in five consecutive Olympic games from 1956 to 1972. I was also the first American athlete to win the highest sportsmanship award in the world. I was truly blessed with such a great career.²¹⁷

Just like her TSU Tigerbelle teammate, Lucinda Williams, White remained connected to the Tigerbelle despite being dismissed from the team. She was also always considered a Tigerbelle throughout her entire career despite competing as an independent athlete the majority of her competitive career.

Wilma Goldean Rudolph

The legendary TSU Tigerbelle Wilma Rudolph was an important part of Coach Ed Temple's late 1950s TSU squads, but she was also a major turning point athlete in the history of Tennessee State and Olympic competition. Therefore, she will not be extensively profiled here. Her personal story and contributions to TSU and the Olympics will be recounted as a significant portion of the fourth chapter in this study

²¹⁷ Ibid

CHAPTER IV
THE GOLDEN AGE (1960-1968)

In my humble opinion, she gave more to her country than they ever gave back to her. Wilma Rudolph was the greatest athlete of her time...period. And she was ahead of her time in nearly every way possible in 1960...way ahead. If Wilma Rudolph was racing today, she would have been rich and famous beyond her wildest dreams.²¹⁸

Edward Temple (TSU Women's Track Coach 1950-1994)

The competitive years from 1960 until 1968 firmly established the Tennessee State Tigerbelles as one of the greatest collegiate sport programs in the nation. In these years the Tigerbelles, led by their Head Coach Edward Temple, virtually dominated nearly every single level of competition in women's track and field, from the AAU nationals to the Olympic games. After the spectacular performances by the current and former Tigerbelles that made up a significant portion of the 1960 U.S. Olympic track team, many declared the Tennessee State University women's track and field program the greatest collegiate women's team in sports history. *Sports Illustrated* declared that TSU was "fast becoming the Notre Dame of women's track and field"²¹⁹ and the *New York Times* reported that "the cathedral of women's track in this country is Tennessee A&I and

²¹⁸ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

²¹⁹ Oglesby, p. 277.

[Ed] Temple is it's high priest.²²⁰ Despite the over-the-top revelations from the national sports media, it is difficult to argue that the TSU Tigerbelles was not the stand out collegiate athletic program throughout the 1960s, particularly in the case of women's sport history.

During this period, Coach Edward Temple arguably had his most talented and versatile group of athletes, with many Tigerbelles consistently dominating not just one event, but in most cases two or three. For example, Wilma Rudolph, Barbara Jones, Edith McGuire and Wyomia Tyus all ran the 100 and 200 meters as well as the 4x100-meter relay at nearly every single competitive meet they participated in, with McGuire occasionally participating in the long jump. These women were arguably the best athletes in these events at both the national and international levels, with several lesser-known members of the Tigerbelles being talented enough to challenge regularly for second and third place in the 100 and 200 meters. In the 1960s, the Tigerbelles were often so stacked in the sprinting events that it would not be unusual to have the Tigerbelles place in the first four slots at the conclusion of a race in national competition with just a few tenths of a second separating the winner from the fourth place finisher.

Further, a TSU Tigerbelle was always a member of the 4x100-meter relay team at every Olympic games during this eight-year period, including composing the entire team in 1960. During this era, the Tigerbelles also had the one runner in the United States who dominated the only official long distance race, the 800-meters for nearly two years with

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 277.

Madeline Manning Mims. Temple also had a couple of the best long jumpers and one of the best high jumpers in the nation at this time. The TSU Tigerbelles may not have won every single Olympic medal they had the opportunity to win in the 1960s, but they won nearly every single competitive team meet they participated in during those years. The TSU Tigerbelles did not lose an AAU National Championship during this eight-year period.

Ed Temple hesitatingly admits that his greatest group of Tigerbelles came from this era and that he had become closest to this group of athletes, particularly Wilma Rudolph. This group of young women arguably bought into Temple's coaching and personal philosophies more than any other young women he ever coached. He was a father figure to many of the young women on these teams, especially for the future superstars, Wyomia Tyus and Edith McGuire, whose fathers had passed away before their arrival at Tennessee State and for Wilma Rudolph, whose father was elderly and sickly during her tenure as a Tigerbelle. Temple said of his athletes from the 1960s.

I don't like to single my girls out too much from each other, but I have to admit those girls that ran for me during the early 1960s to 1968 were really tough to beat. They were the most naturally talented bunch I ever had, Rudolph, Tyus, Manning, McGuire, etc... And they believed...they believed in what I was doing and what I said, I didn't get too much trouble from them...they wanted to be the best and they were willing to put in the hard work. They made the Tigerbelles, everyone else after them was just measuring up. I was a very lucky coach to have coached so many Olympic caliber athletes during that period...lucky indeed.²²¹

²²¹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

Not only was the 1960s a booming era for the TSU Tigerbelles competitively, but also it was also be a highly successful period personally for Head Coach Edward Temple.

The 1960 Olympics was truly the “golden” Olympics for the TSU Tigerbelles. Tennessee State had a record number of Tigerbelles qualify for the games with seven Tigerbelles making the 1960 U.S. Olympic team. It was a Tennessee State University dominated Olympics because Edward Temple was also named as head coach for the 1960 U.S. women’s track and field team as well. This was the first time Temple was honored with that posting. Tigerbelles Marcella Daniel and Lorraine Dunn made the Olympic team for their native homeland of Panama. And former Tigerbelle, Willye White also became a member of the same U.S. Olympic squad.

The 1960 Olympics in Rome, Italy became the famous site of Wilma Rudolph’s historic gold medal performance with her winning three gold medals with victories in the 100, 200, and 4x100 meter relay. Rudolph became the first African American woman to win three gold medals at an Olympics and she also became an overnight celebrity in women’s athletics. Other TSU Tigerbelles, Barbara Jones Slater, Lucinda Williams Adams, and Martha Hudson Pennyman garnered gold medals as participants in the 4x100 meter relay race, setting a new world record in that event with Rudolph. The four foot, ten inch tall Pennyman joked about her contribution to the gold-medal winning relay team that “never had so much depended on so little.”²²² After the 1960 Olympics, the TSU Tigerbelles were celebrated as the reigning Queens of international track and field.

²²² Davis, p. 73.

Unfortunately, the magnificent 1960 performances of the TSU Tigerbelles had little effect in terms of how Tennessee State university officials provided financial support for the team in the future. The administration continued to deny Temple any funds with which to provide true athletic scholarships like those offered to the TSU football and basketball players. Despite all the Olympic medals and the growing national media coverage the Tigerbelles were receiving, the administration and the athletic department at Tennessee State continued to prize the men's football and basketball teams over the achievements of the Tigerbelles. All TSU Tigerbelles from the 1960s era continued to receive only work-aid scholarships and they still continued to practice on the substandard cinder track that their coach dutifully prepared daily for their use. Temple understood that sexism regarding women's athletics was at play on the campus of Tennessee State, but it troubled him just the same.

I understood that football and men's basketball was king on campus, but I just knew we were going to get some scholarships and a bigger budget after Wilma Rudolph and the other girls did so good at the 1960 games...but I was wrong, we didn't get nothing but a pat on the back. We still didn't get nothing when we came back with all them medals in 1964. I was so mad about it that by 1967 I was considering leaving TSU, cause we didn't have any budget to speak of, no real scholarships, and we still had that raggedy half-track. It was funny when I threatened to leave, they finally found some money for a new track and to increase my budget, but my last crew of Olympians in 1968, still had them work aid scholarships. We would not give out real scholarships until 1969, that was just a shame.²²³

²²³ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

With his tiny budgets, dusty practice track, and limited scholarships, from 1961 until 1964, Coach Temple never had a TSU Tigerbelles squad smaller than five athletes, but no larger than eight athletes. Tennessee State continued to win AAU National championship titles despite often times fielding some of the smallest traveling squads in those competitions in order to save money. When people discovered how little money Temple actually had to run his program, “they would be in complete disbelief that I was able to produce as many world-class athletes as I did.”²²⁴

The 1964 Olympics were another triumph performance for the TSU Tigerbelles with their Coach Ed Temple once again serving as head coach of the Olympic women’s track and field team. Four Tigerbelles made the 1964 Olympic team with former Tigerbelle Willye White making her third consecutive Olympic team. Wyomia Tyus upset her heavily favored TSU teammate, Edith McGuire, to win the gold medal in an Olympic record setting final for the 100 meters, but McGuire bounced back to win the gold medal in the 200 meters, shattering the Olympic record set by Tigerbelle great, Wilma Rudolph. Both McGuire and Tyus won silver medals in the 4x100 meter relay, making Edith McGuire Duvall only the second African American woman to win three medals at the Olympic games. From 1965 until 1968, Coach Temple fielded his largest teams in his tenure as head coach. The increase in team numbers resulted from when Tennessee State raised his track and field program budget to \$1,500 dollars a year, still a

²²⁴ Ibid

considerably minor sum compared to the athletes and the performances that Temple was producing.²²⁵

The Tigerbelles again had a significant number of athletes qualify for the 1968 Olympic team. Six Tigerbelles made the U.S. squad and Una Morris made the Olympic team for her native homeland of Jamaica. Once again, former TSU Tigerbelle Willye White made yet another Olympic team. During the games, Madeline Manning Mims had her record-setting, gold medal-winning performance in the 800 meters. And Wyomia Tyus sealed her place in track and field history by becoming the first American athlete to win back-to-back Olympic titles, by winning the 100-meters. Tyus also earned a second gold medal as the anchor leg on the 4x100 meter relay team.

The 1968 Olympics was also notable for the Tigerbelles because of the failed plan to have all the African American athletes boycott the games and the open protest of fellow U.S. Olympic teammates, Juan Carlos and Tommie Smith after they won medals in their specialty event, the 200-meters. All the Tigerbelles were friends with Carlos and Smith and supported their actions and they expressed anger with the U.S. Olympic officials' hard reaction to the athletes' protest, but no Tigerbelle actively participated in the boycott planning or minor protests that occurred after Smith and Carlos were expelled from the U.S. team. Only Wyomia Tyus pledged to give her medals to Smith and Carlos when it was speculated that the U.S. Olympic committee intended to strip them of their medals. When this did not occur, Tyus still made a small effort to acknowledge them, "I

²²⁵ Ibid

wore dark shorts after winning my gold medal and I dedicated my medal to [Smith and Carlos] for what they did.”²²⁶

Coach Temple did not attempt to influence his Tigerbelles regarding the proposed boycott or the subsequent protests that occurred at the 1968 Games. All the young women already knew that Temple did not believe in politicizing athletics and further he believed that the Tigerbelles should not do anything that would jeopardize their opportunities to earn an education or to compete athletically. All of the Tigerbelles had a keen understanding of the frustrations of being an African American athlete during the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. And some Tigerbelles participated in sit-in movement protests held during the 1960s, but by and large; the majority of TSU Tigerbelles avoided major participation in civil rights protests and activism.

And this lack of civil rights movement participation should not be interpreted as the Tigerbelles being unaware or uninterested in the ongoing battle for African Americans to gain civil rights and to end segregation. Many of the Tigerbelles had experienced racism themselves in the course of their career at Tennessee State, but they agreed with their coach Ed Temple that their best opportunity to change things came from earning their college degrees and competing at the best of their abilities. Lucinda Williams Adams summarized the feelings of many Tigerbelles about the racism and racial segregation that they faced in the late 1950s and 1960s.

²²⁶ Davis, p. 144.

Look we had all experienced racism. Most of us came from the segregated South. We knew what it was like...we also knew why we had bag lunches and had to go to the bathroom in the fields when we traveled. At the end of the day we knew Mr. Temple had it right, we needed to get our degrees, compete hard, and be young ladies, we were going to get equality through our hard work, we were not going to be denied, we didn't need to protest to accomplish those things.²²⁷

Not only had the Tigerbelles experienced racism, they also had experienced sexism and on several instances from their fellow black male athletes. They continuously had to take a backseat to men's sports at TSU and more than once, U.S. men's team athletes refused to share equipment with the women athletes when competing abroad. It was the sexism of boycott organizer and some of the black male Olympic athletes that really kept the Tigerbelles and other African American female Olympians from getting involved. As Dr. Harry Edwards admitted many years later.

We didn't do the job we should have done in terms of women. Even with all of these black women athletes in the Olympics, we never really approached them. In today's language that means we were sexist, an indictment that could be extended to the whole civil rights movement.²²⁸

Whether Edwards had done a better job in including the Tigerbelles and the other black female athletes in the pre-planning for the proposed 1968 Olympic boycott, it is highly unlikely that the Tigerbelles would have participated. Boycotting events went against the

²²⁷ In-person interview with Lucinda Williams Adams by author,

228

traditions of their program and it is hard to imagine any Tigerbelle willing to go against the established philosophy of their Coach Edward Temple.

In addition to his great collective of 1960s Olympians, Temple had several Tigerbelles that were standout national stars and competed in the Olympics but did not have the good fortune to win an Olympic medal. Some of those Tigerbelles were profiled in Chapter Four because they had been forgotten historically, but there were two outstanding TSU Tigerbelles that did not earn Olympic medals in their competitive career, but should be remembered as significant contributors to the Tennessee State women's track and field program. Eleanor Montgomery (1965-1969) and Martha Watson (1965-1970) were major standouts at the national and international level in their event specialties during their tenures at Tennessee State. Despite not winning Olympic medals, both of these women contributed strongly to the Tigerbelles' outstanding string of AAU National Championship titles. Eleanor Montgomery was one of the few high jump specialists to compete on Ed Temple's teams. She was both the indoor and outdoor U.S.A. champion six times and held the American high jump record on several occasions. She made the U.S. Olympic teams in 1964 and 1968, but did not win a medal. Despite not winning an Olympic medal, Montgomery became one of the highest honored Tigerbelles, winning both the Dieges and the Saettel awards. Her teammate, Martha Watson became another of the outstanding long jumpers for Coach Temple and the TSU Tigerbelles. Watson made four U.S. Olympic teams in 1964, 1968, 1972, and 1976, but failed to earn an Olympic medal. She broke the American record in the long jump three times and she also set several records while participating on various TSU 4x100 meter

relay teams. Like Eleanor Montgomery, Watson also won the prestigious Saettel award. Both Montgomery and Watson were named AAU All-Americans in 1967, 1968, and 1969.

There were four legendary Tennessee State Tigerbelles during the period of the 1960s, Wilma Rudolph, Wyomia Tyus, Edith McGuire, and Madeline Manning. Where Wilma Rudolph's personal story is extremely well known and celebrated throughout Olympic history, the remaining three Tigerbelle legends are regularly remembered, but not at the same level as Rudolph. Each of these athletes' profiles re-positions them with track and field and Olympic history. The profile of Wilma Rudolph will be slightly different because her personal story is already very well known and has reached a plateau of mythical proportions.

Wilma Rudolph

Wilma Glodean Rudolph was on June 23, 1940, in Clarksville, Tennessee. She was the second youngest child in a family with twenty-two children in all. Rudolph's father was an older man and her mother was his second wife. When Rudolph was born, only six children remained in the household. Neither one of her parents had more than a few years of elementary education. Her father worked as a handyman for the railroad as well as accepting odd jobs around town. Her mother worked as a maid. Life was extremely difficult for Rudolph's family, there was never enough money, but as her

teammate and close friend Lucinda Williams Adams remembered, “Wilma always said her family had plenty of food and plenty of love.”²²⁹

For a large family struggling to make ends meet, a sick and unhealthy child would be a cumbersome and additional heavy burden. Wilma Rudolph was born underweight and her early young life was ravaged with a series of illness that nearly killed her. She caught every childhood disease imaginable; measles, whooping cough, mumps, chickenpox, as well as pneumonia and polio.²³⁰ In addition to the various problems these diseases afflicted, the pneumonia and polio severely affected her left leg. The doctors believed at the time that she mostly likely spent the rest of her having great difficulty walking without a leg brace or crutch, but they also recommended a daily massage for the paralyzed and twisted leg. For several years, her mother, father, and her siblings massaged her damaged leg several times a day. When Rudolph was around eleven or twelve years old, she had become fed up with the leg brace and special shoes that prevented her from playing and running with the other children. She decided on her own to remove the shoes and the brace and just start playing. Rudolph miraculously showed no ill effects and from that day forward would play sports with great abandon and passion. The only sign of her past childhood illnesses was that she was tall and thin, almost like a stick figure. For the majority of her live she would always be thin as a rail.

In junior high school, she began playing her favorite sport, basketball. She was a natural talent. As a high school freshman at Burt High School, she became an All State

²²⁹ Interview with Lucinda Williams Adams by author, November 28, 2007

²³⁰ Adkins, p. 103

athlete and led her team to the state championship. It was her high school basketball coach, Clinton Gray that gave her the nickname, “Mosquito.”²³¹ Gray thought that the tall and skinny Rudolph looked like an insect buzzing around the court so quickly. Gray’s nickname would not exactly stick, but be modified to “Skeeter”²³² and Rudolph would be affectionately known by that nickname by her family and Tigerbelle teammates. It would be in high school, when TSU Tigerbelle Coach Ed Temple caught his first glimpse of his biggest future track star. Temple watched her play basketball and he saw great potential for her as a sprinter. At the young age of sixteen, he would invite her to attend one of his summer training clinics. Rudolph would attend that 1955 summer clinic and she quickly learned that when it came to running track, she was a very raw and inexperienced recruit. And Coach Temple did not give his young budding star any breaks, he pushed her just as hard as the highly experienced, older, and stronger, college age Tigerbelle. She was greatly frustrated at first, but continued to return to the summer clinics each year.

One year would make a tremendous difference in Rudolph’s training and she would be good enough to make the 1956 Olympic team. Once in Melbourne, Australia, Rudolph’s inexperience and personal fears would effect her performance in what became her signature event, the 200 meters. She would be eliminated in the qualifying rounds. In her second event, Rudolph would earn a medal in the 400-meter relay. She was quite pleased to bring home an Olympic medal, but as her teammate Lucinda Williams Adams

²³¹ Adkins, p. 105

²³² Interview with Lucinda Williams Adams by author, November 28, 2007

pointed out; “Wilma wasn’t happy with that bronze, she said it didn’t shine like the gold.”²³³ Rudolph would continue to participate in basketball and track throughout high school and was offered a work-aid scholarship to Tennessee State University.

Yet, before Wilma Rudolph could complete high school, fate once again intervened when in mid to late 1957, when she discovered she was pregnant by her high school sweetheart. Everyone was devastated by Rudolph’s unplanned pregnancy. Despite his strict rules about not having unwed mothers on his Tigerbelle teams, Temple held Rudolph’s place on the team as long as she promised not to continue to be involved with the baby’s father any longer. In late 1958, leaving her newborn daughter with her family, Wilma Rudolph would enter into Tennessee State University as a freshman. She was an elementary education major and working in the campus post office.

Her first year in track and field was promising, but not record-breaking. Rudolph was out of shape from having a child and suffered from a pulled hamstring muscle that troubled her throughout the 1959 season. Her breakout year, her historic and career year came the following season in 1960. Wilma Rudolph began dominating and breaking records in what became her signature events at the 1960 Olympic games, the 100 and 200-meter races. At the national championships held in July 1960, Rudolph became the first American woman to hold a world record in a sprinting event with her victory in the 200 meters. By the time she and her teammates set out for the Olympics in Rome, Italy, Rudolph was poised for a big splash as a U.S. athlete and as an African American woman.

²³³ Interview with Lucinda Williams Adams by author, November 28, 2007

The Olympic games were going to be televised live for the first time and millions of people were going to see one of the greatest individual performances in Olympic history. Wilma Rudolph became the first American woman to win three gold medals in an Olympic games. She set a new Olympic record in the 100 meters and matched another in the 200 meters. In her final event, she came from behind and helped her teammates win gold medals in the 400-meter relay. It was an outstanding performance. Her coach, Ed Temple said that he was so proud of her performance that “the buttons were bursting right off his shirt.”²³⁴ Wilma Rudolph who was quiet and shy, had little to say about her own performance, offering a small smile and wave of a straw hat she had carried through the games. She became an overnight sensation at home and abroad.

Ms. Rudolph would have more to say when she returned home to segregated Clarksville. When town officials wanted to have two separated ceremonies to honor her, one for whites only and one for blacks only, Wilma Rudolph used her success and fame to make a strike for civil rights and equality. She told the officials that there would not be two separate ceremonies, but one for both black and white or there would be no ceremony at all. Since no one wanted to be embarrassed for failing to honor the wishes of an American hero, Rudolph got her way. The segregated town of Clarksville, Tennessee had its first integrated parade and dinner, all in honor of Olympic champion Wilma Rudolph.

²³⁴ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

Wilma Rudolph became one of the most honored undergraduate student athletes in sports history, she selected by the Associated Press (AP) as the Female Athlete of the Year in 1960 and 1961. Additionally in 1961, she was awarded the Sullivan Award for being the nation's most outstanding amateur athlete and the Babe Didrickson Zaharias Award as the nation's most outstanding female athlete. In the year after her Olympic triumph, Rudolph was busy dominating national and international track meets and making public appearances as American's Olympic Sweetheart. The sad part was other than national and international media attention, Rudolph received little else. Even when she was honored with the opportunity to meet President John F. Kennedy, Rudolph did not possess the appropriate attire for such a meeting. When Coach Temple as officials at Tennessee State to help "their champion buy a new dress and coat in order to look presentable in front of the President"²³⁵, the school said no. Temple and his wife were so disgusted that they bought the necessary outfits with their own money. Other than her medals, awards, and trophies, Wilma Rudolph never received any kind of sponsorship or funding from her athletic endeavors. She was an amateur athlete in every sense of the word.

After she graduated from Tennessee State and retired from competitive racing, she married her childhood sweetheart and returned to Clarksville. In the years after her Olympic glory, she was named to the Black Athletes Hall of Fame (1973), the National Track and Field Hall of Fame (1974), the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame in

²³⁵ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

1980, and the U.S. Olympic hall of Fame (1983). In 1977, Rudolph published her autobiography simply titled, *Wilma* and later that same year a feature film also entitled, *Wilma* was made about her early life and her TSU and Olympic careers. Unfortunately for Wilma Rudolph her life would not have a fairytale ending. Her life would be a series of personal ups and downs and just as it seemed that her life was beginning to move in the positive direction again, her life was cut short by brain and throat cancer.

The courageous and uplifting story of Wilma Rudolph's life and athletic career has become engrained in public memory and on the pages of track and field history, particularly in the history of the Olympic games. Her life has been the subject of an autobiography, an impressive collection of children's books and even been made into a feature film. Wilma Rudolph has been profiled in numerous sport histories and several academic dissertations. There is no question that Wilma Rudolph arguably remains the great women track and field athlete of the 20th century. She was truly a woman before her time. There is no intention to skip over or downplay the achievements of Wilma Rudolph, but rather to explore the other avenues of her life and career that remain unclear or hidden. There is little doubt that Wilma Rudolph's rags-to-riches tale of personal triumph over illness, poverty, and teenage-motherhood and racial segregation still resonates nearly fifty years after her achievement.

The main interest of this study in regards to Wilma Rudolph are the several previously unasked or unaddressed questions about Wilma Rudolph's historical legacy in sport history and Tennessee State University history. For example, why was Wilma Rudolph still allowed to join the TSU Tigerbelles after having a child out of wedlock and

going against Ed Temple's policy of no single mothers on the team? From personal interviews with Temple, he only grudgingly admits that he made a serious exception for Wilma Rudolph. Her teammates that are still living tended to gloss over the subject and quickly move on. It is apparent that because of who Wilma Rudolph was a person really effected how people felt about what she received and achieved.

How much of her personal story has become mythical lore that obscures the difficulties and hardships she endured shortly after her 1960 Olympics glory had ended? And in terms of financial rewards, was Wilma Rudolph short-changed? From secondary research documents and from personal interviews, it was quite clear that Wilma Rudolph struggled mightily to find gainful employment to support her large family. She was further hindered in her pursuit of work because of her fame prevented her from taking certain positions that the public would have deemed beneath her. As her Coach Ed Temple remembers.

Wilma wasn't proud to work, but every where she went people knew who she was. Wilma Rudolph couldn't wait tables or be a secretary, nothing like that. She had to be a businesswoman or some mess like that, but Wilma wasn't getting offers like that, it was still the 1970s. We were still a long way from broadcasting jobs and product endorsements for women especially for black women. Folks just didn't know what to do with Wilma, they just knew what she shouldn't be doing and that made it hard for her, really hard.²³⁶

²³⁶ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 4, 2007

For many years, Rudolph accepted any and all public appearances whether there was an payment included with the appearance or not. She just refused to disappoint people that believed in her. Yet, people ever seemed to wonder or questions was she surviving financially.

And what other parts of Rudolph's life have been sanitized to make her personal story fit the "Cinderella-style" format? Research for this study has uncovered that her fellow Tigerbelles did not always treat Rudolph nicely and that there were instances of jealousy over her achievements. Only one Tigerbelle admitted to being jealous of her on occasion and Coach Temple would only admit that there were some problems with jealous against Wilma Rudolph during the post-1960 Olympics European Tour. It is clear that a great deal of Rudolph's story has been slanted to favor the triumph over the tragedy, but at what cost? It is fair to argue that Rudolph's story would not be diminished in any fashion if more clarity about her personal story and her athletic career were exposed or clarified.

There is no denying that Wilma Rudolph was a talented and gifted athlete. She was a better basketball player in high school than a track star. When she came to Tennessee State under the tutelage of Coach Ed Temple, she was a pure raw talent. She remains the only Tigerbelle that was completely shaped and molded by Temple from the very beginning of her career. There is no denying that Rudolph's performance at the 1960 Olympics is one of the greatest individual performances in Olympic history and her sparkling personality and humbleness helped to briefly suspend racial disharmony in the state of Tennessee, while everyone regardless of ethnic origin wanted to celebrate the

achievements of Wilma Rudolph. There is no denying her athletic contributions to TSU during her tenure as a Tigerbelle and she remains one of the most highly honored and decorated women in sports.

Since Wilma Rudolph died prematurely of a brain tumor in the mid-1990s, it makes sense that many of her Tigerbelle teammates are reluctant to discuss anything that may have been perceived as a difficulty in her life. Even Coach Temple is reluctant to admit that team rules were altered for Rudolph because of her enormous talent potential. It is quite clear that Wilma Rudolph is still a very sensitive subject for those closest to her and that more time will need to pass in order to broaden the overall image of Wilma Rudolph. A more extensive, adult, in-depth study of Wilma Rudolph should allow her to move on past the frozen in time image of the baby-faced twenty-year-old racing around a track in Rome toward Olympic glory. Wilma Rudolph was more complex than that singular image; she would certainly be more interesting and empowering if the whole of her life could be presented instead of one summer in 1960.

Wyomia Tyus

Wyomia Tyus was born on August 29, 1945 in Griffin, Georgia. She was the youngest of four children. Her family was quite poor and her parents had only limited elementary school level educations. Her mother worked as a laundress and her father worked on a dairy farm. Wyomia Tyus' family suffered a major blow when her father died in 1960, when she was just fifteen years old. She became a standout athlete at an early age, participating in multiple sports and activities as an elementary school student. She only ended up competing in track and field in high school because when basketball

season ended, she just wanted something else to do. She became an outstanding sprinter despite the fact that her high school track team had no set training schedule and only sporadically competed. During one of these sporadic competitions Tyus came to the attention of Coach Temple. She began attending Temple's summer training clinics and he decided to offer her a work-aid scholarship.

When Tyus entered Tennessee State in 1963, she majored in physical education. Tyus competed in two Olympics, 1964 and 1968. In 1968, she became the first American athlete to win back-to-back gold medals in the same Olympic event, the 100-meter dash. This feat was not be matched until 1988 when Carl Lewis, who was credited with the same accomplishment. Unlike Tyus, Lewis only managed this feat after the original winner of the 100-meters in the 1988 Olympics, Ben Johnson was disqualified from the race for testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs and was stripped of his victory. Tyus' coach Ed Temple bristled about how U.S. Olympic officials fawned over Lewis' accomplishment and completely forgot that Tyus had done the same thing twenty years earlier.

I had to remind them. They were running around saying Lewis was first and I had to tell them...oh no he wasn't. It was a Tigerbelle that was first...it was Tyus. They didn't believe me, but I was happy to point out the record books. And what burned me was Lewis didn't actually do it...he only got the credit after that Johnson fella got caught out there cheating. They were always quick to give credit to a male athlete...not this time...this was Tyus' record first.²³⁷

²³⁷ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

For Tyus, the back-to-back titles were an extra sweet reward because when she made the 1968 Olympic team, many in the sport media and the track and field world had written her off as washed up as sprinter, even though she was just twenty-three years old at the time.

During her tenure at TSU, Wyomia Tyus become arguably the greatest Tigerbelle in the history of the program. She was an AAU-All American all four years she competed at TSU and won numerous other track and field awards. Tyus had won the most Olympic medals of any of the Tigerbelle and, as already mentioned is the only one to defend her Olympic title in back-to-back Olympics. She was also one of the few Tigerbelle to compete for a significant period after her graduation from Tennessee State and earn some prize money in the very early attempts to commercialize track and field. Even though most credited Wilma Rudolph as the greatest Tigerbelle, there is more than significant evidence that Tyus could eclipse her in that debate. Even Coach Temple admits to wavering back and forth over who was the absolute greatest TSU Tigerbelle.

For me some days I think its Rudolph and other days I think it's Tyus. She competed longer than Wilma and she won more medals. She broke, set, and held more records. She won back-to-back at the Olympics. Taking nothing from Wilma now...she was great and for lots of folks Wilma's performance in 1960 was just so dominating. Tyus was quiet cool when competing; she didn't seem as smooth and flashy as Wilma. It's all about your perspective. I am really too close to either one of them to make that decision.²³⁸

²³⁸ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

For Tyus, such debates didn't matter one bit. She ran track for herself, not to compete against the legacy of Wilma Rudolph. As she would state about her track and field career.

I enjoyed my years in track. I stayed in it as long as it was enjoyable. After college, especially when I had a family, it became increasingly difficult to arrange time to work out. When track got to be more like a chore than fun, I retired.²³⁹

In her post-TSU Tigerbelles career, Wyomia Tyus would briefly come out of retirement in 1973 to compete in the newly founded Professional International Track Association. She would once again enjoy great success, winning thirty-eight of the forty races she competed in. Yet after a couple years of professional competition, Tyus retired from competitive racing for good and settled into a long career of teaching and coaching at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Despite ending her competitive sports career, Tyus never strayed far from her sport of choice. She served as a television commentator for the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) during the 1972 Olympic games held in Munich, Germany. She was also one of the founding members of the Women's Sport Foundation (WSF) and served as a goodwill ambassador to Africa holding track and field clinics and giving lectures about the value of sport for young women. Recently, Tyus has also completed an unpublished autobiographical manuscript about her life and career, entitled, *Running The World: The Story of Wyomia Tyus and The Tennessee State Tigerbelles*.

239

Wyomia Tyus remain one of the most highly honored Tigerbelles in the program's history. She has been inducted into the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame (1976), the National Track and Field Hall of Fame (1980), the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame (1981), and the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame (1985). Despite all these tremendous honors, Ms. Tyus considered her role as Grand Marshal at the Tennessee State Homecoming in 1996 as a major highlight in her life.

Edith McGuire Duvall

Edith McGuire Duvall was born on June 3, 1944 in Atlanta, Georgia. She was the youngest of four children. Her father worked for the railroad and her mother worked as a maid. Duvall's family was poor and living in a segregated section of the city. From an early age, she was involved in organized sports, becoming a cheerleader, then a basketball and track athlete in high school. McGuire attended David T. Howard High School where the girls' track and field program had a sterling reputation for producing Olympic athletes. Her coach, Mrs. Marian Armstrong-Perkins, had at least one former student competing on every U.S. Olympic team since 1952. Under Mrs. Perkins, McGuire became a standout track athlete and Mrs. Perkins later recommend her to Temple for his summer training clinic in the summer of 1960. McGuire was thrilled with the opportunity to attend Temple's summer training camp, but she was surprised at the hard practices.

I was really excited, and I'll tell you about the training. When I was in high school, the coaches trained us, and gave us things to do, but we kind of, probably, slacked off a little bit, when we could, whenever they weren't in sight, we

probably did. And when I got to Tennessee State that first summer, and Coach Temple had us running, my legs had never felt like that before. I remember we could walk down the street, and it wasn't even a mile to the store, and I didn't even want to do that because my legs were aching so bad. We trained twice a day, because I was a sprinter and a long jumper, I had to practice twice a day, because we did the running in the morning, and then we did the long jump in the evening. So, that was a lot of training, but seeing those girls and one of the things that Coach Temple did when all of the high school girls hit the campus, he showed us the films that he had taken at track meets. And in those films it says eight girls in the finals, and six of them would be Tennessee State, the Tiger Belles. So, when I saw that as a high school student I was, like, I was going to do anything this man tells me to do, because I wanted to be just like those girls.²⁴⁰

It was McGuire's performance at that 1960 summer clinic that earned her a scholarship to Tennessee State in 1961.

McGuire entered TSU in the fall of 1961 and major in elementary education. She became another one of Temple's athletes that effectively competed in multiple events and perform strongly in many of them. She ran the 100 and 200-meter races, as well as the 4x100-meter relays. McGuire was also a gifted long jumper. During her collegiate athletic career, McGuire held AAU National Championships titles in the 100-meters, the 200-meters, and the long jump. She was the first American woman collegiate athlete to hold three AAU titles all at once on several different occasions. By the time the 1964 Olympic trials were scheduled to begin, Edith McGuire's name was being associated with the greatest TSU Tigerbelle in the program's history. At the Olympic trials, McGuire won the 100 and 200 meters and was named to the 4x100-meter relay team.

²⁴⁰ Telephone interview with Edith McGuire by author,

After the U.S. Olympic trials were completed, McGuire was being heavily touted as the next Wilma Rudolph. She was heavily favored to win three gold medals at the 1964 Olympics to be held in Tokyo, Japan. Things did not go exactly as planned at the Games because Wyomia Tyus, McGuire's less than heralded TSU teammate and close friend upset McGuire in the 100-meters. McGuire bounced back from the disappointing loss by winning the 200-meters and setting a new world record. After her outstanding performance in the 200-meters, the head coach of the Russian women's track team remarked, "We don't have any McGuires at home. Girls like her are born for running...long legs, a beautiful build."²⁴¹ She also won a silver medal as a member of the 4x100-meter relay team. Despite not duplicating Wilma Rudolph's three gold medals, McGuire became only the second African American woman to win three medals at an Olympic games. Yet, just like Rudolph, McGuire only competed in one Olympics. She decided that she had reached her pinnacle in 1964 and retired from competitive track and field after her graduation from TSU in 1966. During her career, Edith McGuire was named as an AAU All-American in 1961, 1963, 1964, 1965, and 1966.

One of the remarkable aspects of McGuire's career at Tennessee State was her relationship with her teammate and best friend, Wyomia Tyus. The two women met at Coach Temple's summer clinics and became fast friends and fierce competitors at TSU. Since Tyus and McGuire competed in the same sprinting events, they became Temple's potent one-two punch against the competition. They competed so strongly against each

241

other, that they often overwhelmed the remaining competitors. McGuire often had the upper hand in races against Tyus, leading many to conclude that Tyus was the lesser talent of the two. As the world learned during the 1964 and 1968 Olympics, underestimating Wyomia Tyus was the wrong thing to do. Further, many could never understand how McGuire and Tyus stayed such close friends, competing so fiercely against each other, but McGuire made clear that nothing could interfere with their friendship, not even the competition for medals.

With Wyomia, people can't really understand how two people--both of us ran the 100, she didn't really run the 200, but both of us ran the 100, but I am sure that folks really can't understand how can two people who competed against each other for so many years be and continue to be close friends. But, you know, we ran and when we got on the track we knew what we had to do, but that never entered into our relationship or hindered our relationship.²⁴²

In fact Edith McGuire wished that people had been more concerned with how the two Georgia native Tigerbelles had been treated by their home state when they returned home from the Olympic games in 1964.

Now, Georgia had two Olympians, and gold medals and silver medal winners to come home. And we went home, and Mrs. Perkins, well Mrs. Morgan, I call her Mrs. Morgan, she was able to arrange a parade for us, but it was terrible for us, because the city of Atlanta did not welcome their two Olympians back--not just Olympians, but the gold medalists. And we had a parade that went through just the black neighborhood, and I can't remember now, but there might have been a few white people out, but I doubt it. And if there was there was only a handful of them, if so. And right now, I just can't remember. And I remember my mother was in the car with me, and Wyomia's mother was in the car with her, and I can't

²⁴² Telephone interview with Edith McGuire by author,

remember who else might have been in the parade. But it was in the black neighborhood. It was not the city of Atlanta welcoming their Olympians back.²⁴³

Just like the Tigerbelle she was most often compared to, Wilma Rudolph, Edith McGuire retired from competitive sports immediately after her graduation from Tennessee State University. She married and settled into a near ten-year career in teaching. After ending her teaching career, McGuire became the owner of several McDonald's franchises. She became a well-known community activist and sponsor, supporting multiple recreational programs from basketball to softball and of course, in track and field. Edith McGuire retired from professional work in the mid-2000s and recently she and her husband made the largest private donation to her alma mater, Tennessee State University. More than half of McGuire's one million dollar contribution will be used to establish the Charles and Edith Duvall Endowment For Excellence in Women's Track.²⁴⁴ In a move that would definitely make her former coach Ed Temple proud, McGuire additionally requested that funds for the women's track team only be applied to their general operating budget, ensuring that the women's track team will always have some kind of regular funding.

Like her close friend Wyomia Tyus, she received multiple honors after she stopped competing in track and field. McGuire was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame (1975), the U.S. National Track and Field Hall of Fame (1979), the Georgia

²⁴³ Telephone interview with Edith McGuire by author,

²⁴⁴ http://www.tsutigers.com/viewarticle.dbml?DB_OEM_ID=19600&ATCLID=1613713

Sports Hall of Fame (1980) and the Atlanta Sports Hall of Fame (2009). She was awarded the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Silver Anniversary Award in 1991. This award recognized her as an outstanding former student-athlete who had gone on to distinguished careers in teaching and business. In 2007, Edith McGuire was honored by her alma mater, Tennessee State University when she was selected to serve as the Grand Marshall for that year's homecoming festivities. Just like her teammate, Wyomia Tyus, McGuire was greatly pleased to be celebrated at the institution that gave her biggest opportunities in life.

Madeline Manning Mims

Madeline Manning Mims was born in 1948 in Cleveland, Ohio. She was one of five children born into a very poor family. Her mother was a domestic worker and her father was an alcoholic, who rarely saw or supported his family. At three years old, Mims contracted spinal meningitis and the doctors would inform her family that she was not expected to survive her illness. Yet, she survived, even though she was frail and sickly throughout her childhood. As a child, Mims rarely participate din any kind of physical activities, isolating her from children her own age and turning her into a very shy and reserved child.²⁴⁵ She was the absolute last person that anyone expected to become a world-class athlete.

Manning Mims fell into competitive athletics by completely unexpected circumstances. As a tenth-grader, she participated in the Presidential Fitness Program being offered in her gym class and performed at the top of her class. Her high school

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

track coach admired Mims' determination and saw potential in her as a runner. He invited her to join the track team and a new athlete was discovered. Mims would go on to participate in three sports in high school, basketball, volleyball, and track. Despite her quiet nature, Mims became well known as a fierce competitor. She related her powerful determination to overcoming her brush with a near fatal illness as a small child.

If I hadn't been sick I never would have fought so hard just to keep up. I developed a fight and drive inside of me and the never-give-up type of spirit that was needed for a champion.²⁴⁶

In high school, Manning Mims became a formidable runner in the 400 meters and the relays. She also switched over to the 800-meter race as well. In addition, she also became an accomplished and talented singer. Well known for being a shy and quiet girl, she seemed to be a different person when singing in front of an audience.²⁴⁷

As a teenager Mims competed on her high school track team and on the Cleveland Division of Recreation (CDR) Track Club as well. She became a dominant champion at the Girls AAU National Championships, winning her first title at seventeen. She came to the national attention of several college coaches due to her outstanding contributions to her club's relay teams. Mims was a regular standout in her leg of any relay race. Mims' growing reputation as a distance runner and relay race specialist earned her a full scholarship to Tennessee State. Ed Temple was well known as a coach that favored the

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p.3.

relay races when building his teams and Manning Mims not only fit that bill perfectly, she also became one of the first middle distance runners at Tennessee State.²⁴⁸ She jumped at the chance to attend TSU because she knew that a scholarship was her best opportunity to attend college since her family could not possibly have afforded it. She majored in sociology and specialized in running the 400-meters, 800-meters and the relays as a Tigerbelle.

At the 1968 Olympics, Manning Mims became the first American woman to win a gold medal in the 800-meters. At that time the 800-meters was the longest distance women ran in the Olympic games. Not only did Manning Mims win the gold medal, she set new American, Olympic, and world records, easily defeating the field by more than 10 meters. Shortly after the 1968 Olympics, Manning Mims briefly retired from racing. She got married to her college sweetheart and give birth to her first child. When she left TSU to get married she had not yet completed her undergraduate degree. When her marriage surprisingly ended after less than a year, Mims returned to her studies at TSU and to track and field competition. She did not seem affected by her brief layoff, making the U.S. Olympic teams in 1972, 1976, and 1980. She won a second Olympic medal in 1972 and was a heavy favorite for the gold medal in the 800-meters if the United States had not boycotted the 1980 Olympic games. During her athletic career at TSU, she was named as an AAU All-American in 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, and 1972.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p.3.

The 1960s was truly the glory days for the Tennessee State Tigerbelles at every level from nationals to the Olympics. The worldwide success of the Tigerbelles began opening doors for female athletes across the country and sparked other colleges to begin fielding women's collegiate track teams. Unfortunately, it the grand success of the TSU Tigerbelles that also sparked the downward spiral of their track and field program in the remaining twenty-five years of Ed Temple's tenure as head coach. Colleges began investing heavily in their women's athletic programs, particularly in track and field. Tennessee State would quickly have serious competition on the track ovals and their coach soon faced serious competition in terms of recruitment. In the following two decades, Tennessee State struggled mightily to keep up with the changes in women's track and field and they also had a very difficult time maintaining their same stature within women's track and field.

Additionally, during the years of 1950 through 1969, a large portion of the subsequent growth and successful expansion of the TSU Tigerbelles track and field program must be credited to the young women who competed on numerous Tigerbelle squads without earning the distinction of winning an Olympic medal. These young women worked and trained along side their fellow Tigerbelles, contributing to the intensely competitive atmosphere of practices, intramural, and national competitions. Many of these TSU Tigerbelles were more than capable of winning a national title or an Olympic medal, but circumstances such as untimely injuries or split second losses in qualifying events, often to fellow Tigerbelles, resulted in missed opportunities to stand out on the national or international stage.

These women became invaluable to the multiple AAU national team titles Tennessee State won consecutively from 1955 until 1959. They competed and scored points that pushed the Tigerbelles over the top again and again. Through the years, Tigerbelles that did not get the opportunity to compete at the Olympics or did not earn an Olympic medal when they had the possibility became overshadowed or forgotten in both TSU Tigerbelle and track and field history. This is a highly unfortunate circumstance. A significant portion of the success of the Tennessee State University women's track and field program must be credited to the numerous unsung Tigerbelles like JoAnn Terry Grissom, Cynthia Thompson, Annie Smith, Shirley Crowder, and Patricia Monsanto. The next chapter will be devoted to re-positioning these forgotten TSU Tigerbelles back into their rightful place in the track program's history as well as in the history of track and field.

CHAPTER V
THE FORGOTTEN TIGERBELLES (1950-1994)

Everybody can't be a superstar. I realize that. But I also realize that everybody can put forth a tremendous effort. And there is no use being here if you can't make a contribution.

Edward Temple (TSU Women's Track Coach 1950-1994)

Throughout Edward Temple's fifty-four year career as head track coach at Tennessee State University, the Tigerbelles enjoyed such a high level of success that any athlete achieving less than an Olympic medal was all too often considered an underachiever. Despite the long string of AAU national championships, the racing records, and numerous other sporting awards the Tigerbelles won over the years, public memory of these TSU teams has been primarily focused on a handful of Olympians, particularly the gold medalists. As Olympian and gold medalist Madeline Manning Mims remembered.

There was a funny thing about Tennessee State...Everyone was so used to the Tigerbelles winning that when we'd come home with a new world record or something, the other students would say, 'is that all you did?' They took winning for granted. They hardly noticed us.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ Lewis and Thomas, p. 156.

Coach Temple further reflected; “they got spoiled, they expected gold medals or nothing.”²⁵⁰ This singular standard of Olympic achievement for public recognition has relegated numerous TSU Tigerbelles to the shadows of track and field history.

After having to spend so many years battling to develop and maintain his track and field program, it is a truly disappointing development that the tremendous overall success of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles has been boiled down historically to one standard of achievement in order to be remembered as an exceptional athlete. There is a serious lack of fairness to have the achievement for all the Tigerbelles measured by whether or not one became an Olympian. Further, not only was making the Olympic team not enough; Tigerbelles were expected to become Olympic medal winners. And adding to the pressure was that TSU Tigerbelles were always expected to bring home the gold medal. The gold medals that the Tigerbelles won made the track program at Tennessee State exceptional, but the multiple national championships, the world and American records, and the outstanding record of team member graduations is at the core of shaping Tigerbelle history. And those achievements involved all of the TSU Tigerbelles, not just a selected few.

Many Tigerbelles toiled long and hard at Coach Temple’s tough practices year after year without the same level of recognition of their teammates who became Olympic medalists. These women competed and sometimes won events at AAU national championship events over their TSU teammates that were heavily favored to win, never

²⁵⁰ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

conceding for one moment that they did not have a chance. Regardless of their personal experiences, the majority of the TSU Tigerbelles trained and performed to the full extent of Coach Ed Temple's motto that "only the pure in heart survive."²⁵¹ The TSU Tigerbelles that never achieved an Olympic medal victory are strongly represented in the record books in U.S. track and field history and Olympic history as well. They deserve to be recognized and remembered just as strongly as the Tigerbelle Olympians.

Further, it is not the case that only a small number of Tigerbelles competed in the Olympic games; a significant number would manage to make Olympic teams. The following Tigerbelle athletes competed in the Olympics without earning a medal, but strongly represented the Tennessee State women's track and field program in terms of U.S. Olympic team qualifiers; Shirley Ann Crowder (1960), Annie Smith (1960), JoAnne Terry Grissom (1960, 1964), Vivian Brown (1964), Estelle Baskerville (1964, 1968), Eleanor Montgomery (1964, 1968), Iris Davis (1968, 1972), Matiline Render (1972), Mamie Rallins (1972), and Brenda Morehead (1976, 1980). These athletes failed to earn an Olympic medal for numerous reasons, from failing to perform up to their best abilities to missing their best opportunity because the United States boycotted the Games. Yet, no matter whether they won a medal or not, these Tigerbelles strongly represented their university and their country.

Not only did the TSU Tigerbelles make up significant portions of U.S. Olympic teams, numerous Tigerbelles would make the Olympic teams of other nations. The

²⁵¹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

following Tigerbelle athletes competed in the Olympics without earning a medal, but strongly represented the Tennessee State University women's track and field program in terms of international Olympic team qualifiers; Marcella Daniel for Panama (1960), Lorraine Dunn for Panama (1960, 1964), Una Morris of Jamaica (1968), Helen Blake for Jamaica (1976, 1980), Deborah Jones for Bermuda (1980), and Angela Williams for Trinidad and Tobago (1984, 1988). This is another factor about the success of the TSU track and field program the Tigerbelles for many years represented a significantly large portion of women's track and field participants, and not just its best athletes.

Two of the keys to the success of the TSU Tigerbelles were the amount of natural talent on the team and the intense competitiveness within the team. Temple's teams were often loaded with the best black female high school athletes in the nation, who had often been competing against one another for many years through Temple's summer training clinics. When they arrived at Tennessee State, the intense design of Temple's practices only ratcheted up the level of competition amongst the Tigerbelles. In the early years of his program when financial limitations only afforded his athletes the opportunity to compete once a year, Temple split his athletes into separate teams, blue and white for intramural competitions.²⁵² The Tigerbelles competed fiercely in these events as if they were AAU National or Olympic competitions. The Tigerbelles made each other better because the level of talent was extremely high and the differences between them were often separated by immeasurable circumstances; differences in competitive desire,

²⁵² Ibid

differences in competitive opportunities and quite simply, differences in lucky breaks to avoid injuries, etc....

It is truly unfair that so many TSU Tigerbelles have been relegated to the back pages of track and field history. In some cases, these women missed Olympic opportunities by being defeated in a qualifying race by a hundredth of a second or because they were suffering from an injury or they simply did not perform at their best when it really mattered. These women were extremely important parts of numerous Tigerbelle squads, contributing mightily to the success of the program, athletically as well as academically. These women participated in team practices, attended classes, worked on-campus jobs, and abided by Coach Temple's team policies just like all the Tigerbelles that were fortunate to earn Olympic medals. Further, these same women also shared many of the same experiences in regards to enduring racism and sexism, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s. All the Tigerbelles experienced segregated travel to meets and segregated eating establishments for meals, there was no reprieve from the politics of segregation because an individual possessed an Olympic medal. All the Tigerbelles suffered because men's sports at TSU were prized over women's sports, the budget shortfalls of their program limiting their opportunities and forcing them to settle for less than ideal training facilities. The Tigerbelle Olympians deserve to be celebrated, but not at the expense of the Tigerbelles that did not.

The following profiles will focus upon a few of the Tigerbelles that made significant impact the TSU women's track and field program, but have been regulated to the sidelines of sport history because they were not Olympians or Olympic medal

winners. Unfortunately, there has been a long historical failure to maintain detailed records and expansive documentation on the majority of the TSU Tigerbelles that never made the Olympic games or never earned an Olympic medal, beyond confirming their attendance at Tennessee State and their participation on the TSU track team. Due to the limitations of this study, only a handful of the non-Olympian Tigerbelles could be focused upon for personal interviews, therefore several women who deserved to be profiled will remain overlooked at this time.

Annie L. Smith

Annie L. Smith was born in Atlanta, Georgia and was one of three siblings. She spent the majority of her early life in Atlanta, even though her family moved around a lot because of financial difficulties.²⁵³ Smith was one of Coach Ed Temple's standard prototype athletic recruits for Tennessee State. His main recruiting arena outside of the state of Tennessee was the state of Georgia. Temple repeatedly stocked his teams with young women from small towns in Georgia and he had a particular recruiting advantage at D.T. Howard High School in Atlanta. This school was the teaching and coaching home of Mrs. Marian Armstrong Perkins-Morgan, who had taught and trained several future Tuskegee Tigerettes and TSU Tigerbelles including Mildred McDaniels and Margaret Matthews.

Annie Smith was another one of her dual sport athletes. She participated in both basketball and track during her high school years. Smith was not particularly enthusiastic

²⁵³ Adkins, p. 86.

about competing in track and field; especially with having to ride the bus eight miles across town to get to practice.²⁵⁴ Smith always maintained an ambivalent feeling toward competitive track and this feeling plagued her throughout her career at Tennessee State. She came to the attention of Coach Temple at one of his summer clinics where she had strongly challenged a young Wilma Rudolph repeatedly through the entire camp. She participated in Temple's summer clinics for the next two years. Smith became a long jump specialist in high school, but was also a sprinter. Despite her success in track and field, she felt her greatest achievement was serving as captain of her school's basketball team during her senior year.²⁵⁵

After graduation from high school and under the intense urging of her teacher, Mrs. Perkins, Smith accepted a work-aid scholarship to Tennessee State in 1957. She decided to become an elementary education major and became an extremely tough competitor for TSU at the national level. Smith was a consistent and challenging competitor for the Tigerbelles, but she could never seem to break through to the elite levels as an individual athlete. She usually performed well enough to contribute valuable points to the Tigerbelles winning AAU national championships and to earn the opportunity to occasionally compete for the U.S. women's teams at international competitions, but she struggled to become a U.S. Olympian. She only made the U.S. Olympic team once, in 1960, for the long jump competition.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 87.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 88.

She related her limited international and elite competitive experiences to the fact that she was not a “dedicated track and field performer”²⁵⁶ when she was at TSU. Unlike many of her teammates, she did not particularly enjoy the rigorous workouts and the intense schedule that all the Tigerbelles had to maintain. Coach Temple said of Smith;

That she was a really nice person, a good student and a hard worker, but she just didn't have that fire for track all the time...that was sometimes the difference between some of my girls. Some were crazy to compete and others just were not. Don't get me wrong though...she was dedicated enough...she just didn't always want it the same way the other girls did.²⁵⁷

Smith credited her mother and her coach, Mrs. Perkins, for keeping her inspired to compete in athletics and to complete her education.²⁵⁸

There must be the question raised about the kind of training Smith received in her specialty event, the long jump, during her tenure at Tennessee State. Coach Temple's program strongly focused on sprinting events and winning relay races. And Temple's general practice sessions were the same for every athletic with intense focus on mechanics. TSU never had a significant number of specialty field event athletes for multiple reasons; one being that Temple just didn't have the assistant coaches to spend

²⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 89.

²⁵⁷ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

²⁵⁸ Adkins, p. 89.

the time with these kinds of athletes.²⁵⁹ From the stories gathered from the TSU Tigerbelles that competed in field events, they were often left on their own to practice these events and often relied on challenging one another as a group in practice and in competition. For example, in Annie Smith's case, she was on the team with two other long jump specialists, Margaret Matthews and Willye White. On a daily basis she was practicing against arguably the two best long jumpers in the nation and she often found herself on the losing end in the biggest competitions. It is an interesting question to wonder if because Smith lacked the same competitive and killer instinct that Matthews and White both strongly possessed, was that the difference between her being an Olympic medalist.

It is unfortunate that more isn't known about Annie Smith's personal life and athletic career at Tennessee State. There is the assumption that all the Tigerbelles enjoyed their competitive and academic experiences at TSU and Smith's limited relation of her experiences definitely challenges that belief. It is also assumed that all the Tigerbelles felt the same way about competition and relished the opportunity to compete in track and field. For Annie Smith, it was clear that she was grateful for the opportunity to get a college education and to compete at an elite level athletically, but there is a serious questions whether or not she truly enjoyed her experiences. Smith ended her athletic career as soon as she graduated from Tennessee State and she became one of the few Tigerbelles that rarely discussed her athletic experiences.

²⁵⁹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

Vivian Brown Reed

Just like her future Tennessee State University teammate Wilma Rudolph, Vivian Brown came from a very large family. She was the fourth of fourteen children. Born on December 17, 1941 in Detroit, Michigan, she spent her childhood in Cleveland, Ohio. Her family was forced to move on multiple occasions because her father only worked sporadically because he suffered from tuberculosis.²⁶⁰ Her mother was a homemaker, looking after her large family. Things became tougher for her family when her father died in 1965, when Brown was twenty-four. Since the large size of her family limited many of her extra-curricular opportunities, Brown became involved in sports at an early age because her siblings often spent many hours playing basketball and racing against each other. They would make everything a competition from swimming to playing baseball. Her family became well known for their competitive spirit and their athletic talent.²⁶¹

As an elementary school student, Brown joined the Junior Olympics program and it was with this program that she gained her first formal training as a runner. She participated and excelled in this program until she completed middle school. Brown also played basketball at the Portland Outhwaite Recreation Center. Vivian Brown's high school, East Technical High School, did not have competitive track and field as a sport,

²⁶⁰ Adkins, p. 120.

²⁶¹ Adkins, p. 121.

so she became a member of the City of Cleveland's Recreation Department track team.²⁶² She trained three times a week, all year round throughout her high school years. Her training sometimes caused conflict within her family because Brown often had to help her family out at home. Yet, her parents recognized her talent and made every effort to let her training and competing continue on a regular basis.²⁶³ Vivian Brown enjoyed some success when in high school even though she only had the one opportunity to compete in the AAU Junior National competitions each year. When she graduated high school, there was no chance of attending college because her family just could not afford it. She began working, but still continued to train with the Cleveland Recreation Department team all year round.

After making an impressive showing at the AAU Junior Nationals in April 1960, Brown was invited to attend Coach Temple's summer training clinic that summer.²⁶⁴ She was very surprised at the hard training at the program. Early in the summer, she was ready to leave the clinic.

I felt on some occasions this coach was unmerciful, that we were training just a little too hard for young ladies. If I went through three weeks and it was this tough, how can I stand it for a year or two or as long as four years. And so during

²⁶² In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

²⁶³ Adkins, p. 121.

²⁶⁴ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

this three weeks I felt that I didn't want to run anymore track or even enter TSU as a student or member of the track team.²⁶⁵

Despite her initial reaction to Temple's tough training regimen, Brown stayed for the remainder of the clinic. It was her performance at the AAU Nationals later that summer that convinced her to keep competing in track. Brown ran her personal best times of her early career at that competition including her future specialty event, the 200 meters. Her AAU Nationals performance also earned her a work-aid scholarship to Tennessee State for that coming fall semester.

She enrolled at TSU and major in physical education. In her first year on the team, Vivian Brown found herself running in the shadow of Tigerbelle great, Wilma Rudolph. Brown, the freshman, competed in the same 200-meter events in which the senior, Rudolph, was the reigning Olympic champion. By the spring semester of 1961, Brown was beginning to show her talents as a sprinter. She began to dominate her opponents in the 200-meters, setting a new American record at the AAU Nationals in 1962. That performance earned her a place on the U.S. Women's Track and Field team that competed in international competitions in Russia and Germany. She established another record in the 200-meters at the Pan American games in 1963, winning the gold medal. Further, Brown gained a spot on the 1964 Olympic team for the 200-meters, but she was eliminated in the semi-finals.

²⁶⁵ Adkins, p. 123.

Vivian Brown returned to collegiate competition at Tennessee State after the Olympics and enjoyed continued success during her final year of eligibility. When she graduated from TSU in 1965, she retired from competitive track and field. She only reached the Olympic games once in her career, but her overall achievements were much more important than winning an Olympic medal. During her eight-year career in track, Brown was a valuable member of multiple national championship TSU squads, scoring valuable points for her team. She set several AAU national records and was named as an AAU All-American in 1961 and 1962. She also earned a college degree that would not have ever been possible without her athletic talent.

After graduation, she returned to Cleveland, where she got married and had one child. Brown also returned to Portland Outhwaite Recreation Center, where she coached the girls' track team for many years. Over the next twenty-eight years, she taught physical education, coached both girls' basketball and track and field, and worked as a drug prevention counselor at several different public schools in the Cleveland area. As head coach of the girls' track team at John Adams High School, Brown won state championships in 1978 and 1979. She was inducted into the Greater Cleveland Sports Hall of Fame in 1976 and the East Technical High School Hall of Fame in 1983. In 1998, Vivian Brown died of complications from a major heart attack at the early age of 56.

Despite never winning an Olympic medal, Vivian Brown successfully used her college education and her athletic experiences to return to her home state and make a major contribution to the community. She became a highly respected and honored

teacher and coach for the city of Cleveland. Brown is an excellent example of the importance of earning an education for young African American women in the 1960s. Her opportunity to earn a college education served as a springboard for multiple opportunities that paid diverse dividends for Brown throughout the remainder of her life, opportunities she most likely would not have had without her education. As Vivian Brown herself recognized, her running ability gave her a special opportunity.

I still had a goal to reach. It goes back to the “Brown spirit.” All of us had some goal...as the fourth child and the first girl, my brothers were “A” students. As a “B” student I could not achieve academically, but I had to prove my worth...first to finish college and second, to make the Olympics.²⁶⁶

Brown achieved many things as a TSU Tigerbelle that deserve to be acknowledged beyond whether she won an Olympic medal or not. Vivian Brown is a perfect example of the traditional TSU Tigerbelle, an exceptional athlete that always competed and managed to earn her college degree.

Shirley Ann Crowder Meadows

Shirley Ann Crowder was born in Temple, Georgia, and she came from a very large family of eleven children. Born on March 22, 1939, she was the youngest child in a family that survived solely on the income of her father who was employed by the railroad. Her mother was also a homemaker looking after the family and earning money when she could as a domestic worker. Her family struggled economically, but Crowder

²⁶⁶ Adkins, p. 125.

enjoyed a happy childhood in her family's small rural farmhouse.²⁶⁷ She was involved in athletics at an early age, playing basketball and competing in races and jumping competitions in annual May Day festivals at her elementary school.²⁶⁸ After she graduated middle school, Crowder moved with her family to Atlanta because her father needed special medical attention that he could only receive in a major city.

At Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta, Crowder played basketball and was captain of the team as a freshman. She was encouraged to join the track team by her physical education teacher, former 1948 Olympian and TSU Tigerbelle Emma Reed. A natural athlete, Crowder became a standout star on her track team. She was a specialist in one of the most difficult racing events, the hurdles. After competing in the Tuskegee Relays in 1954, she was invited to attend the summer training clinics at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. She attended their summer clinics for the next three years, competing under the school's colors as a junior athlete in the AAU Women's and Girl's Track and Field Championship competitions. At the 1956 AAU Nationals, she set a new record in the 50-meter hurdles for girls, even while suffering from a severe ankle injury.

The after effects of her ankle injury had a significant effect on her racing performance at the 1956 Olympic trials. While Crowder was strongly confident about her chances to make the Olympic team, her fears about falling during the race played an important role.

²⁶⁷ Davis, p. 46.

²⁶⁸ Adkins, p. 90.

I considered myself the better girl in the race and all I had to do was clear the hurdles and get to the tape. Just before the starter called ‘come to your mark’ the man on the loudspeaker told the ambulance to come to the finish of the hurdles. That’s when I cracked up. After I cleared all hurdles...on the seventh I tripped with my tail leg...the knee. It seems I forgot what I was doing. I almost walked to the tape. In walking I did get fourth. However, if I had tried a little harder or not been affected by what the man said, I think, perhaps, I would have made the trip.²⁶⁹

Her difficulties at the Olympic trials were a reflection of the reoccurring issues that hampered her athletic career. In big competitions Crowder was often the unluckiest athlete on the track. Her performances were adversely affected by either her tripping over the hurdles or her getting injuries. Also, psychological issues plagued her from her previous falls in races that led to false start disqualifications in future races.

After graduating high school where she had capped a stellar athletic career by serving as the captain of her basketball and track teams, Crowder was offered a scholarship to Tuskegee Institute. Yet, instead she was encouraged by her physical education teacher, Miss Reed to accept a scholarship to Tennessee State University instead. Being an extremely competitive athlete, Crowder picked TSU because they were emerging as the dominant new team in track and field. As she remembered, “I decided if I can’t beat the best of them, I’ll join them.”²⁷⁰ Shirley Ann Crowder entered TSU as a freshman in the fall semester of 1957.

²⁶⁹ Adkins, p. 92.

²⁷⁰ Adkins, p. 93

Unfortunately, Shirley Ann Crowder was not the best student at Tennessee State. She struggled academically, changing her undergraduate major three times from home economics to physical education to elementary education.²⁷¹ She had not entered TSU with the strongest of educational foundations and she quickly encountered great difficulties with the college level courses. After Crowder had finally settled on being an elementary education major, she had to work very hard to maintain the grade point average to stay eligible for her work-aid scholarship.²⁷²

The classroom was not the only difficulty for Crowder. When she entered TSU in 1957, she was one of the first athletes that specialized in hurdling events for the Tigerbelles. Coach Temple had primarily recruited sprinters and a few dual athlete runners who also competed in the long jump and high jump, so his coaching experiences with hurdlers was very limited. Fortunately for Temple and Crowder, TSU had an assistant basketball coach named Richard Mack, who had been a hurdler in college and he was willing to work with Crowder.²⁷³ Like her TSU teammate, Annie Smith, this lack of a specialty coach for her particular event has to be viewed as a disadvantage to Crowder's athletic development.

As an athlete at Tennessee State, Shirley Ann Crowder displayed a frustrating level of inconsistency on the track. Her freshman year was an up and down experience.

²⁷¹ Ibid, p. 94

²⁷² In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

²⁷³ Ibid

She became the champion in the 50-meter hurdles at the 1958 AAU Nationals, but she was disqualified in her first international dual meet. The following year she qualified for the U.S. Women's team again, but she finished a disappointing fourth in the hurdles. In the Pan American Games, she finished an even more disappointing sixth. Crowder returned to form in her junior year, winning the national title in the hurdles and placing fourth in the hurdlers in the third dual meet between the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1960, she lost her national championship crown in the hurdles to her TSU teammate, JoAnn Terry, but she earned her one and only trip to the Olympic games the following week in the Olympic trials. Both she and JoAnn Terry made that 1960 Olympic squad. They were defeated in the qualifying races. For Shirley Ann Crowder this was end of her competitive career.

After the Olympics, Crowder did not return to Tennessee State. She sat out the full year and returned to graduate in 1962. She had a good career at TSU, being named an AAU All-American in 1956, 1957, and 1958. Further, she had set several American and national championship records. After graduating from Tennessee State, Crowder spent the next thirty-five years working as a teacher, coach, and mentor at several public schools in Atlanta. As the head track and field coach of the girls' team at D.M. Therrell High School, she won state championships in 1988 and 1989. Additionally, in both of those championship years, the Georgia High School Coaches Association named Shirley Ann Crowder as the track and field head coach of the year.

It could be argued that Crowder enjoyed more accolades during her years as a high school track and field coach than as an Olympic-level athlete, but despite not

winning an Olympic medal, Crowder truly relished her one Olympic opportunity, “for the first time I knew what it meant to be an American, and I was proud.”²⁷⁴ Further, despite her pride in representing her country in the Olympics, she was also gravely disappointed that the racial politics of her home state of Georgia prevented her and her fellow black female Olympians from being recognized at the time they were actually competing.

I was honored and recognized by everyone but Georgia, my home state. Previously Georgia had produced about half of the girls who have made Olympic track teams. When they return...nobody knows it. I mean, not that nobody knows it, period. It just isn't played up enough. But there were girls before me and perhaps there will be girls after me.²⁷⁵

Shirley Ann Crowder's assessment would be correct in more ways than one. Many more young African American women from Crowder's home state found success in collegiate and Olympic track and field, notably, Edith McGuire and Wyomia Tyus in the mid-to-late 1960s. And Crowder is correct that it is a shame that the numerous black female athletes from the state of Georgia who had represented the United States in the Olympic games would go unrecognized for so many years. Yet in recent years, the Georgia Tigerbelles, Olympians and non-Olympians, have been formally recognized and honored by their home state including Shirley Ann Crowder herself. And Shirley Ann Crowder truly deserves to be remembered as an important part of the long tradition of great athletes from Georgia and Tennessee State University.

²⁷⁴ Davis, p. 47.

²⁷⁵ Adkins, p. 95.

JoAnn Terry Grissom

JoAnn Terry Grissom is arguably one of the greatest TSU Tigerbelles to never win an Olympic medal. She was a versatile and fierce competitor. She was a survivor from a very early age. Born on August 4, 1938 in Indianapolis, Indiana, Grissom came from a fairly large family, the fifth of six children. Her family endured substantial economic hardships, as her father was a day worker who struggled to earn enough income to feed his family. Her mother was prevented from working due to illness, so Grissom had to learn to look out for herself very early in life.²⁷⁶ As an elementary school athlete, Jo Ann Terry Grissom was involved in numerous athletic activities from dancing and tumbling to track. She was always active in some kind of sport and this was the foundation to her versatility when she became an adult athlete. The only time her athletic endeavors were curtailed was in her middle school years when she began working on weekends to help out her family.²⁷⁷

When Grissom started high school at Crispus Attucks High, she had to continue her track and field training at the local recreation and parks community center because her school did not have a track team. She trained on her own because there was no coach.²⁷⁸ She became well known as a top-level competitor at local city track events. Grissom's clear devotion to competing in track and field did not go unnoticed by other

²⁷⁶ Telephone interview with JoAnn Terry Grissom by author, April 30, 2008

²⁷⁷ Ibid

²⁷⁸ Ibid

coaches at her high school. It was through these relationships that Grissom was introduced and invited to TSU Tigerbelle Head Coach Ed Temple's summer clinic in 1955. Her experience at that first clinic was an eye-opener.

I learned quickly that I didn't know anything about running. I was taught things I never knew...like running in spikes...how to move my arms when running...my breathing...I had no idea I was doing something wrong because I had no one to point it out to me....but at the camp I learned and I learned quick.²⁷⁹

After being exposed to her first real serious training and coaching, Grissom was greatly discouraged to have to return to her high school for her senior year. She wanted and strongly considered quitting the sport she loved because she was now fully aware that she did not improve as a track and field athlete if she had no one to train and coach her.²⁸⁰ Her spirits were lifted when Coach Temple, who had been greatly impressed with her resilience as high school athlete training and competing so strongly on her own, that he had offered her a chance to attend Tennessee State without a scholarship.

Grissom took advantage of the opportunity. She worked multiple jobs in order to pay for her college education. It was an extremely tough situation for Grissom and would limit her opportunities to compete in track. She practiced with the team, but her work and study schedule stopped her from competing. She also began focusing on one specialty event, the hurdles. Grissom spent the next two years training hard in the

²⁷⁹ Telephone interview with JoAnn Terry Grissom by author, April 30, 2008

²⁸⁰ Telephone interview with JoAnn Terry Grissom by author, April 30, 2008

hurdles, working and studying. Despite being on the TSU track team, she did not feel that she was an actual member, a Tigerbelle.

I wasn't on a work-aid scholarship. Too many of the girls were better than me. Only a few girls could be taken to the competitive meets and I was never chosen. I was practicing just as hard as the other girls, but I was not allowed the chance to compete. I just didn't consider myself a real member of the team at that time.²⁸¹

Grissom got her chance to change her status in the early 1959 track season.

At AAU competition, JoAnn Terry Grissom had a dominating performance. She placed first in the hurdles and the long jump and second in the high jump. She finally earned a place on the traveling squad. She also earned a scholarship. For Grissom, "I finally felt like a real Tigerbelle."²⁸² She had another strong performance at the 1960 AAU Nationals, winning the hurdles and placing second in high jump and the long jump. She graduated from TSU at the conclusion of the 1960 spring quarter. Grissom would have a limited athletic career at TSU, but she earned an unexpected college degree. Her experiences at TSU as an athlete and as a student prepared Grissom to become one of the most active and successful Tigerbelles after graduating from the institution.

After leaving TSU, Grissom came into her prime as an athlete. She earned a place on the U.S. Olympic team in 1960 and in 1964. She did not earn a medal, but during this period she was named AAU All-American and set several American

²⁸¹ Ibid

²⁸² Ibid

and National Championship records in hurdling and in the Pentathlon.²⁸³ Grissom was probably one of the most versatile Tigerbelles in terms of athletic ability and in a later era of Tigerbelle history, she would have certainly been pushed and trained to be a primarily Pentathlon competitor. She was another victim of Coach Temple's program limitations that did not favor an athlete with Grissom's select skills. As Grissom reflected, "I was a Jackie Joyner-Kersey²⁸⁴ type athlete, way ahead of my time...nobody was thinking about me doing that."²⁸⁵

In her post-graduation years, JoAnn Terry Grissom married and then spent several years teaching physical education and coaching high school track and field back in her hometown of Indianapolis. Grissom also continued competing in track and field, enjoying a long and successful athletic career as a participant in the American Masters and Senior Olympic Games. Grissom competed in Masters track and field competitions until her late-fifties. She has held multiple Masters and Senior Olympic records in the discus, shot put, javelin, long and high jumps. Grissom was named Masters Track and Field Athlete of the Year in 1980 and was honored as the outstanding Masters athlete in her age group in 1983, 1984, 1993, and 1994. In addition to continuing her athletic

²⁸³ The pentathlon was a women's event in the Olympics from 1964 until 1980, it was replaced with the heptathlon in 1984. The pentathlon was a shorter multi-event competition and the heptathlon is considered more difficult.

²⁸⁴ Jackie Joyner-Kersey is considered the greatest Olympic athlete in the multi-event Olympic competition, the heptathlon. She would win two gold medals and one silver medal in this event.

²⁸⁵ Telephone interview with JoAnn Terry Grissom by author, April 30, 2008

endeavors, Grissom was a long-term official with the USA Track and Field (USATF) and served on several U.S. National team staffs.

JoAnn Terry Grissom has enjoyed tremendous success in her post-TSU Tigerbelle career and has received numerous honors for her work in track and field, particularly in youth sports. Her careers in education and athletics has spanned over forty years, which is a remarkable achievement for an individual that never believed they would have had the opportunity to earn a college education or compete for Olympic medals in the first place.

I have had a remarkable life. I went from nothing to something based on a lot of very hard work. I do get angry and frustrated sometimes about how I was treated in the past, but I'm over it now. I know what I accomplished and no one can take that away from me. I got an education. I competed in the Olympics and much, much, more. And I have also been able to give back a great deal to my home, Indianapolis, particularly to the children. I am very proud.²⁸⁶

Mamie Rallins

Mamie Rallins was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 8, 1941. She was one of seven children and the only girl. Rallins' childhood was very tough, living in poverty in the housing projects of inner city Chicago. Her mother died when she was thirteen and her father was a heavy alcoholic, incapable of consistently providing for his family. She and her brothers survived on the kindness of extended family members and friends. As a child, Rallins suffered from malnutrition and neglect. At a very young age, Mamie

²⁸⁶ Telephone interview with JoAnn Terry Grissom by author, April 30, 2008.

Rallins became responsible for taking care of herself. She turned to sports as a coping mechanism to survive.

I was a gym rat and a tomboy....you know....we was tomboys back in those days. We wasn't athletes. And I went out for track but my daddy didn't want me to be a tomboy per se, because that's all he could see, but we figured out a way for me to practice track and field, and I just started doing it to survive, and basically to just stay off the streets and everything else. And because we used to practice at University of Chicago, I would go from practice to dance to volleyball or whatever, so I stayed away from home as much as I could.²⁸⁷

Without formally organized sports teams where she went to school, Rallins' made the most of her opportunity to compete with the Chicago Youth Organization (CYO).

For the next few years, Mamie Rallins trained and competed with CYO, which was later renamed the Chicago Commons Track Club, then later became known as the Mayor Daley's Youth Foundation Track Club. She competed in numerous different kinds of sprinting events, but her heart was set on becoming a hurdler.

I started practicing harder and started growing, and I didn't grow until I was 19. I was 4 feet 11 up until age 19, and I was just running the 100, 200, 50, 75 and the long jump....but I wasn't doing good in that. Then lo and behold at age 19 I started growing, and I wanted to start hurdles, because I loved the hurdles, and they told me when I was younger I was too short, and, so, when I got to a certain height I said, "Well, I can do the hurdles now." So, I practiced over the cracks in

²⁸⁷ Telephone interview with Mamie Rallins by author, November 13, 2007

the ground and everything else on the ground, jumping over the fire plugs, and all that other stuff too, to become a hurdler.²⁸⁸

Her patience and hard work paid off when she placed second in the 80-meter hurdles at the 1967 Pan American Games and when she made the 1968 Olympic team as an independent athlete with the Daley Foundation Track Team. Even though Mamie Rallins failed to earn a medal at the 1968 Olympic games, at the age of twenty-seven, she had gained the national recognition that athletes many years younger than her were fighting to achieve.

Rallins came to Ed Temple's attention in 1969, when she was named the number one 100-meter hurdler in the world. He was greatly impressed with her work ethic and her mental toughness.²⁸⁹ He offered Rallins what she had previously thought was unimaginable, a college education. She struggled to accept her golden opportunity.

Mr. Temple said to me, 'Old bones'he called me old bones because I was so much older than the other athletes and I would just crack up. He said 'Old Bones...you wanna go to college? And I said, 'Mr. Temple, I have been out of school for twelve years, and I don't even know how to hold a pencil, you know? And he said, 'Oh! It don't matter! Whatever.' So I came back home to Chicago and said, I was offered a scholarship to go to Tennessee State. And everyone said, 'Go!' And I said, How am I going to go to school? And they said, 'Well, what is he going to give you?' And I said, Well, he is going to give me a full

²⁸⁸ Telephone interview with Mamie Rallins by author, November 13, 2007

²⁸⁹ Interview with Edward Temple, October 9, 2007

scholarship, room and board, and books, tuition, you know, and all that other stuff. So, folks said, 'Well go and tell him that you'll go.'²⁹⁰

Rallins decided to wait a year to enter Tennessee State, taking refresher courses at the local junior college and working to build a savings for her college expenses that was not covered by her scholarship.

When Mamie Rallins entered TSU in the fall of 1971, she quickly discovered that her coach Ed Temple was not going to treat her any differently than any other freshmen, despite her advanced age of thirty. She had to live in the dorms, follow the curfew and she was not allowed to drive her car for two years, just like all the other incoming freshman. Despite being treated as if she was teenager, Rallins made the most of her college opportunity; she majored in business and maintained good grades. She even joined a sorority, pledging Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. She mostly kept to herself when dealing with on-campus social activities.

I didn't go to any of the parties because I was just too old, and I didn't feel like I could fit in with the 17 and 18 year olds when they dancing and whatever. And the only other time I dealt with them was when I pledged for AKA, but other than that, that's about it, I didn't do too much with them. And half the time, I wanted to make sure that I stayed in shape, because I was running against 17, 18 year olds on the track.²⁹¹

And for Mamie Rallins, it truly was a very different situation on the practice track.

²⁹⁰ Interview with Mamie Rallins, November 13, 2007

²⁹¹ Interview with Mamie Rallins, November 13, 2007

Rallins had the upper hand over her freshman counterparts because she was a veteran athlete. While her young teammates struggled with Temple's tough practices, she relished the intensive training.

I was molded before Mr. Temple got me, so when I first went to practice, his workouts didn't scare me like it did the 17, 18 year olds....Mr. Temple and me, I knew where he was coming from because I had had coaches beforehand, and I wanted to make the Olympic team in '72 and set the world record, and all that. I had a dream, and I knew what I wanted to do.²⁹²

Rallins met that goal of making the 1972 U.S. Olympic team, but she did not earn a medal. She was heavily shaken by the murders of the eleven Israeli Olympic team members by Arab terrorists inside the Olympic village. She just could not regain her composure to successfully race and compete at her best.

After those killings....I was just plain scared. I wanted to go home. I just couldn't believe that such a great event like the Olympic games had been turned into something so ugly. It was no longer an enjoyable situation. I was grateful for the opportunity but that event changed everything for me.²⁹³

Rallins did not have another Olympic opportunity, but she enjoyed every moment she got to compete during her tenure at TSU.

²⁹² Interview with Mamie Rallins, November 13, 2007

²⁹³ Ibid

After her graduation from Tennessee State, Mamie Rallins went on to become a successful track and field coach at the collegiate level, spending eighteen years at the Ohio State University, coaching 60 Big Ten indoor and outdoor champions, 24 All-Americans, nine Olympic trials qualifiers and one Olympian, hurdler Stephanie Hightower. In 1994, Rallins moved from OSU to coach at the historically Black college, Hampton University for nine years and then later she moved to another coaching position at the HBCU Chicago State University in 2003.

She was always grateful to Coach Temple and the other TSU Tigerbelles for her opportunity.

They paved the way for me. I didn't do anything but tie my shoes; I didn't have to work at all. When we came along, we didn't have to work at all, we didn't have a work-study or whatever, it was a full scholarship. And I told Mr. Temple I didn't know if I could give him four years of school, but he said, you know, we'll do it, and take it year by year, and I ran all four years. And I got my college degree.²⁹⁴

Mamie Rallins overcame tremendous obstacles to earn a college degree and to compete in track and field at Tennessee State University. Her personal story is extraordinary, but Rallins' personal experiences were not completely unusual in terms of the experiences of numerous other TSU Tigerbelles. Yet, Rallins is an exceptional reminder that even as late of the 1970s, many African American women were still without the means to gain a college education or to participate in collegiate athletes without opportunities such as the chance offered by Coach Edward Temple and Tennessee State University.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

Other Important Members of The TSU Tigerbelles

It is also important to mention the other unsung heroes of the TSU Tigerbelles, the team managers and Coach Ed Temple's wife, Charlie B. The track and field program at Tennessee State functioned on tiny budgets and limited personnel for the majority of Coach Temple's tenure as head coach. He always had to develop and implement innovative methods and schemes to help his teams' function at their very best. Temple never let the limitations at Tennessee State become an excuse for not achieving excellence. The team managers and his wife were invaluable to him achieving many of the Tigerbelles goals over the years.

Coach Temple would always acknowledge the important and significant role these individuals played on his teams over the years, remarking that.

I can't talk about the Tigerbelles without mentioning my managers. I didn't recruit my student team managers...they were runners on the team that were not going to be able to reach international level competition. Don't get me wrong...they were good runners...great attitudes...they got full work-aid scholarships like the other girls. I trusted them...I depended on them. I didn't have tons of assistant coaches like teams have now, I needed them to make arrangements, keep track of equipment, keep records, etc....because of them I was able to concentrate on coaching. They were invaluable to me throughout the years.²⁹⁵

Even Coach Temple's daughter, Edwina served as a team manager and he would often quip that the "Tigerbelles was a family business."²⁹⁶ His wife, Charlie B. would wash

²⁹⁵ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

and mend the team uniforms for many years. And she also prepared the food for when the team traveled on the road because they were not allowed to stop and eat at the segregated diners and restaurants they passed on the road. Temple and his wife provided clothing to the Tigerbelles that did not have winter coats and formal dresses for appearances. They became the family for these young women who were away from home for the very first time in their lives. It is highly doubtful that the Tigerbelles would have achieved their high level of success without the personal involvement of Temple and his family. The parents of the Tigerbelles and the Tigerbelles trusted The Temples to do what was best for them and nearly all of the time, The Temples delivered.

The overall history and legacy of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles is built on more than just the gold-medal winning Olympians. The history and the tradition of the TSU was built on the hard work and determination of different athletes, the Olympians, the AAU National Champions, the non-Olympians, the team managers, and the Temple family. It was a group effort requiring sacrifices and contributions from everyone involved in the program. It is a disservice and an inaccuracy to believe that the greatness of the TSU Tigerbelles is only measured by their Olympic medal count. This program functioned with one primary goal in mind for its athletes, young ladies first, students second, and athletes last. Nearly every Tigerbelle involved in Ed Temple's program achieved those goals.

CHAPTER VI
THE END OF AN ERA (1969-1994)

I tell the new girls that they are not here to build a program. The program has already been built by people like Rudolph, Tyus, and Faggs. I tell them the only thing they are doing is building layers onto that program and that it's growing higher and higher.²⁹⁷

Edward Temple (TSU Women's Track Coach 1950-1994)

The 1968 Olympics marked the last time that the Tennessee State Tigerbelles participated in an Olympic competition in substantial numbers. It also signaled the end of TSU Tigerbelles dominating Olympic events and winning a lion's share of the Olympic medals. For the next two Olympic games held in 1972 and 1976, the TSU Tigerbelles were represented in significantly smaller numbers and they only managed to earn two Olympic medals. This was a drastic change in terms of final results for the Tigerbelles considering that TSU had earned at minimum, three medals at every Olympics since 1956. In 1980, Coach Temple amassed his last great team of TSU Olympians, but this team of Tigerbelles never got the opportunity to compete due to the U.S. Olympic boycott. The 1984 Olympics marked the last time any TSU Tigerbelle

²⁹⁷ Lewis and Thomas, p. 175.

participated in the Olympics and it would also be the last time that a Tigerbelle won an Olympic medal.

As the Tigerbelles were beginning to slowly fade from their past dominance of Olympic competitions, Tennessee State still had a major impact at other international competitions such as the Pan American Games and at dual meets with Russia and China. However, they still strongly competed for AAU national championship titles, even though the Tigerbelles quickly began to face much stiffer competition. In fact, TSU lost the 1969 AAU national championship title by one point, the first time in thirteen years that Tennessee State had lost an AAU national title. For thirteen years, Tennessee State had been the team to beat in women's track and field, both nationally and internationally. Further, the stature of Tennessee State as national champions was diminished when the focus of the national track and field championships for women switched from the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) governed championships to the national collegiate competitions governed by first, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) and then, the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA). By the early 1970s, the AIAW and the later NCAA national championships began to be recognized as the more prestigious national collegiate competitions by the majority of college athletic programs across the nation. Tennessee State never won a national title sanctioned by the AIAW or the NCAA.

The 1970s marked a period of significant changes in athletic opportunities for women and girls, particularly at the college level. Collegiate women's sports had been grossly overlooked and under-organized for many years as the on-going controversy

about women and girls participating in competitive organized sports had raged on between various parties. The Division of Girls and Women's Sports (DGWS), a division of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER), became the first nationally recognized collegiate organization for women's athletics and the forerunner of the next official women's athletic governing agency, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW).²⁹⁸ The Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) had operated under the auspices of the DGWS. The CIAW had governed girls and women's sports from 1966-1972 and conducted championships in seven sports.²⁹⁹

The AIAW was founded in 1971 and served as the governing body for collegiate women's athletics and administration of women's national championships for the next eleven years. The AIAW was later dissolved in 1981 and the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) took over governance of women's collegiate athletics and national championships. The NCAA's assumption of oversight of collegiate women's athletics was not without controversy because the NCAA refused to acknowledge the records and contributions of athletes and teams that had competed during the AIAW's history.³⁰⁰ Despite the controversies, both of these organizations raised the public profile

²⁹⁸ Unknown, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIAW_Champions#Indoor_Track_and_Field, p.1

²⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 1

³⁰⁰ Ibid, p.1

of collegiate women's sports and broaden the number of athletic opportunities for female athletes.

In terms of track and field, both of these organizations implemented changes and expansions that proved to be disadvantageous to a small track and field program like the one at Tennessee State. Both organizations supported the increase of the number of track and field events offered at the women's national track and field championships, which caused major problems for Tennessee State; a program that regularly maintained small team sizes that prevented them from competing for the AIAW or NCAA team title effectively. TSU could not afford financially to support a large team that incorporated the multiple and diverse athletes needed to participate in all the scheduled events and earn the required points to win the team title. The TSU program could not provide the scholarships, travel support, or recruiting funds to consistently support a team larger than ten athletes. TSU Head Coach Ed Temple consistently fielded teams composed of sprinters and long jumpers with the occasional high jumper or short distance runner (800-meters) included on the squad. Further, Temple's athletes also participated in multiple events, where larger programs had more athletes that specialized and participated in one event. In short, as the number of events increased at the national track and field championships, these national title events would favor large programs that could afford to maintain large teams.

Another major change in the 1970s that led to increased opportunities for women and girls in competitive sport would be the passing of the Title IX legislation in 1972. Title IX was not originally developed to influence women's athletics, but this new

legislation ushered in significant opportunities for women and girls interested in competitive sport, particularly collegiate athletics. Athletic programs for women and girls across the United States would get significant boosts in terms of hiring, recruitment, and funding from the passing of Title IX. This new legislation was

an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, applicable to institutions receiving federal funds: “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”³⁰¹

Title IX had a tremendous impact on the implementation of athletic scholarships for college women athletes and the improvement of training facilities for those same female athletes. With public interest growing in collegiate women’s sports and colleges beginning to see the possibilities of athletic and financial success with women’s athletics, by the mid-1970s collegiate women’s sports programs were soon developing all over the United States. TSU Coach Ed Temple, who had long been an advocate for equality in women’s athletics, acknowledged the importance of the Title IX legislation, “Title IX opened the doors for young ladies to get scholarships and achieve under the same circumstances as men. That was a huge factor... Title IX opened doors, equalized lots of things.”³⁰² Where Title IX helped build new athletic programs for women and girls and

³⁰¹ Swanson, Richard A. and B. Spears, *History of Sport and Physical Education in the United States – 4th Edition*, (Boston: WCB McGraw-Hill, 1995) p. 324.

³⁰² In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

also help improve existing collegiate women's athletic programs like the one at Tennessee State, this development also became a debilitating blow to the TSU track and field program as well. Tennessee State was able to offer full athletic scholarships to their female athletes, but so could many other institutions with more advantages to offer than TSU ever could.

The 1970s also marked the beginning of significant racial integration at U.S. colleges across the nation and their athletic programs quickly embraced recruiting athletes of color for their competitive sport teams. Improved public interest in women's athletics and the development of strongly focused oversight for women's collegiate athletics by organizations such as the AIAW and the NCAA had broadened opportunities for all women, but many female athletes of color would benefit as well. With the implementation of Title IX legislation, colleges now had to provide the funding to support women's athletics. Where these improvements and developments certainly benefited Tennessee State and the Tigerbelles, these same changes eliminated many of the past advantages that Coach Temple had used to build his track and field program at TSU.

For many years, Temple had very little competition in terms of recruiting African American female athletes. Tennessee State was one of three schools in the nation offering any kind of scholarship assistance to young women that wanted to compete in collegiate athletics. Temple's only limitation was his own miniscule recruiting and competitive travel budget. He had spent many years maximizing his bare bones program budget with the most talented, multi-event athletes he could find. Yet, by the early

1970s, African American women athletes were being actively recruited for track and field programs at predominantly white institutions that had the ability not only to offer full athletic scholarships, but state-of-the-art training facilities, individualized and specialized coaching, and in many cases, a more expansive educational opportunity in a large city. Tennessee State only had a limited number of athletic scholarships to offer and Temple's program never had the travel budget to support a large traveling squad whether those athletes were on scholarship or not. Further, TSU continued to struggle to provide practice facilities for their female athletes and the coaching staff always remained small in size as well, removing the opportunity to hire specialty event coaches. Lastly, Tennessee State was not a large institution and it had made significant strides as a historically black college, but overall in terms of educational opportunities, TSU offered a great deal less than a research one level institution. And the small, southern town atmosphere of Nashville, Tennessee also became a negative factor to an elite high school athlete that was presented with the opportunity to attend college and compete athletically in a large market like California, Texas or Florida.

Coach Temple began to lose top-notch recruits to other programs and the quality of his Tigerbelle teams began to be effected. For example, Temple had hoped to land future Olympian and Hall of Famer, Evelyn Ashford as a prize recruit for Tennessee State, but he would lose out to UCLA. Over the next few years as collegiate women's track and field began to progress in terms of talent and expand in terms of opportunities, Coach Temple began to regularly lose top athletes to larger schools, star female athletes that he should have had a more than even chance of landing a few years before. Despite

the new difficulties Temple faced in recruiting, he still managed to field several great Tigerbelle teams through the 1970s and the early 1980s. It was not until after 1982, that the significant changes in women's collegiate sports would begin to have serious lasting effects on the TSU track and field program.

Tennessee State may not have been able to compete against larger collegiate institutions in terms of facilities and budgets, but Coach Temple did still have one significant advantage, the successful long history of the TSU Tigerbelles. Temple discovered that despite the limitations of his program, several high school athletes still wanted to attend TSU because of its successful competitive history and Olympic tradition. For example, in the mid-1970s, Temple was still operating on a tiny annual recruiting budget of just \$260 a year, yet he managed to land a prize group of top-notch track recruits including Chandra Cheeseborough, Brenda Morehead, and Kathy McMillan. All three of these young women decided very early in their high school careers to attend Tennessee State because they wanted to become a part of the elite TSU Tigerbelle history.

The early 1970s had marked a slight downward turn in the strength of the TSU women's track and field program. The last of the Tigerbelles from the 1960s golden age of the program had finally graduated by 1970, making the years of 1971 through 1975 essentially re-building years for Coach Ed Temple. Three Tigerbelles made the 1972 U.S. Olympic team, TSU seniors Iris Davis and Mamie Rallins and 1970 TSU graduate Madeline Manning Mims. Mims won a silver medal as a member of the 400-meter relay

team, but the violence that had marred the 1972 Olympics had dampened much of the excitement about Mims' second Olympic medal.

By the mid-1970s, not only was Coach Temple facing serious athletic recruitment issues, he was also dealing with his track program crumbling from the lack of proper funding and poor training facilities. Despite gaining three new recruits to use as the foundation to rebuild his team back to their Olympic level status, at the conclusion of the spring semester in 1976, the world-class women's track and field program at Tennessee State University was at the crossroads again and this time there were serious questions about the program's overall survival. In 1967, the TSU program had nearly lost their Head Coach Edward Temple to the Peace Corps, but the intervention from the Governor of Tennessee had resulted in the first true athletic scholarships³⁰³ and a new rubberized track for the Tigerbelle program. Yet, a little over nine years later, the program was once again facing multiple issues and serious problems with very few positive solutions on the horizon.

The refurbished outdoor track where the TSU Tigerbelles had trained hard daily over the past nine years was literally falling to pieces. The track had been a quick fix replacement when it was originally put down in late 1967. In Coach Temple's opinion, there should have been future plans made at that time to build a top-notch track for the Tigerbelles because a rubberized outdoor track was not going to last long at Tennessee

³⁰³ These were not athletic scholarships sanctioned by a collegiate athletic governing body, but athletic scholarships issued directly from Tennessee State's athletic program fund. Previously, this athletic scholarship funding had been principally used only for the TSU men's football and basketball teams.

State, not as hard as he trained his athletes.³⁰⁴ Over the years, the drainage system for the track had begun to fail and the heavy rainy spring seasons of Tennessee had soaked and softened the rubberized materials that made-up the track oval. Additionally, the blazing hot summers in Nashville had contributed further to the track's demise by drying out the still water-damaged track, causing it to buckle and crack. By 1976, the track was so dilapidated and outdated, that Temple had to adjust his practices because the track had become too dangerous for his sprinters to use safely.³⁰⁵ Coach Temple began referring to the track as "the pit."³⁰⁶ Over the past couple years, he had retreated back to spending hours of his own time maintaining and repairing the track, just to make it usable for practice, much less competitive events.

The poor training facilities on-campus contributed to some of the Tigerbelles' difficulties at the 1976 Olympics. Temple had to become extremely innovative in his training techniques to properly prepare his athletes for the Olympic trials and he was not always successful. The Tigerbelles had to work extremely hard to make the Olympic trials in 1976. Three Tigerbelles made the 1976 U.S. Olympic team and a fourth; Helen Blake made the Jamaican Olympic team. Former Tigerbelle Madeline Manning Mims also made the 1976 Olympic team, her third. Chandra Cheeseborough, Kathy McMillan, Brenda Morehead, and Madeline Manning Mims were all heavily favored to win medals

³⁰⁴ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

at the Games, but it seemed that all the Tigerbelles were struck by bad luck. Brenda Morehead suffered a serious hamstring injury that prevented her from competing to her best ability, Chandra Cheeseborough was heavily affected by the news that her close friend and mentor, Wilma Rudolph had been seriously injured in a car accident in the states and she would fail to win any one of her events. Manning Mims finished dead last in her 800-meter final and McMillan, favored to win gold in the long jump, finished a disappointing second. Coach Temple related the disappointing performances to the failure of the U.S. Olympic team coaches to follow the training instructions he sent along for his athletes and the 1976 Olympics marked the first time that Olympic coaches would make open criticisms about a TSU Tigerbelle.³⁰⁷

Coach Temple was angered by what he deemed as unfair criticism of his athletes and no one was more disappointed by their performance at the 1976 Olympics than the Tigerbelles themselves. Both Coach Temple and the returning Tigerbelles vowed to return to the Olympic games in 1980 and redeem the TSU Tigerbelles' good name. Brenda Morehead summed up the importance of her and her fellow Tigerbelle teammates bouncing back from a disappointing showing at the 1976 Olympics.

We worked very hard because we were looking toward the 1980 Olympics... We wanted to be the very best. You know, there is a tradition of winning among the Tigerbelles and there's a certain amount of pressure trying to live up to that standard. The winning tradition has been going on so long that other teams and some fans in different places wanted other team to beat us because of whom we were. But we didn't have any kind of resentment toward any of the Tigerbelles

³⁰⁷ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

before us who had gotten that winning tradition going. We were proud of them, and we wanted them to be proud of us.”³⁰⁸

In Coach Temple’s mind the only way to get his athletes back on track for Olympic glory was to publically embarrass the university into building a new training facility for the Tigerbelles and into giving the Tigerbelles a funding budget that truly reflected the high stature of the women’s track and field program.

After being frustrated in his numerous efforts to get the TSU Athletic Director and the University President, Frederick Humphries, to do something to either renew or replace the old track, Temple turned to his friend and supporter, sports journalist, F.M. Williams of the *Nashville Tennessean*. Williams sent *Tennessean* photographer Jimmy Ellis down to the Tennessee State campus to take pictures of the Tigerbelles’ track. It was his pictures, particularly the one photograph that ran with Williams’ article that caused a major furor in Nashville. The photograph showed a gigantic pothole right in the middle of the track and became infamously known as “the pothole picture.”³⁰⁹ This picture matched with Williams’ headline, “*TSU’S TRACK IS CRUMBLING – AND SO MIGHT THE TIGERBELLES*”, only added the public outcry. Williams took the administration of TSU to task, heavily criticizing them for failing to strongly support the women’s track program that had produced so many Olympians. It was Coach Temple’s blunt words that produced the most concern.

³⁰⁸ Lewis and Thomas, p. 180

³⁰⁹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

This is it. It's all over. We can't continue the women's track program without getting some quick help in building a new track. . . . There must be a new track. That's all. Nothing more, nothing less. And from past experiences, the possibility of that in the immediate future is not encouraging.³¹⁰

After the publication of the article, the TSU president's office was bombarded with phone calls. Many from the Nashville community could not believe that a program that produced, as many world-class athletes as Tennessee State had would actually have such sub-standard facilities for training and competition. The on-going furor resulted in the Nashville community spontaneously deciding to raise money for a new track for their beloved Tigerbelles. In less than three months, more than \$100,000 was raised for the new track.

Despite having the university embarrassed publicly on the pages of the *Nashville Tennessean* and the Nashville community working extremely hard to raise the money for the Tigerbelle's new track independently from university funding, TSU President Frederick Humphries still remained strongly resistant to building the new track for the Tigerbelles. TSU had received building to begin funding a new 10-million dollar multi-sports complex on campus, Humphries insisted on building the complex first before addressing the training facilities necessary for the Tigerbelles to remain competitive. And even then, President Humphries was going to do nothing more for the Tigerbelles than build a small cinder track, a track of lesser quality than the rubberized track that desperately needed to be replaced in 1976. The TSU Board of Trustees and the

³¹⁰ Lewis and Thomas, p. 170.

Chancellor Ron Nicks overruled the President and insisted that the new track be built first and that the track would be a facility worthy of the reputation of the TSU Tigerbelles.

Coach Temple reflected on the battle to get a major track facility for his Tigerbelles.

I mean after everything we had accomplished, they still wanted to stiff us. We had never had nothing, all those years. And then, there it was on the blueprints, there was supposed to be a senior track, a little old senior track someplace, and if it wouldn't of been for the chancellor of the board, he said we were going to build a first class track out there. I was so angry, I was beside myself. A cinder track, a cinder track. I mean there wasn't going to be nothing out there now. It was all in the plans of the President at the time. It was all in the plans to be nothing but a little tiny outdoor track. They was going to built this big arena by the Lincoln Center and give us the scraps...but the chancellor told them, "Look, the track is going to be build first and its gonna be a first-class track." And their jaws got so tight they didn't know what to do. And the track was built before the Lincoln Center got built.³¹¹

Over the years, Temple looked back on the politics and battles to get a new track for the Tigerbelles with good humor, but it is disturbing to think that world-class athletes like the Tigerbelles had to fight so hard to get quality facilities and funding. Even though the tough fight for the new track had angered Coach Temple, he took a realistic view of the perceptions of women's athletics in the late 1970s at TSU.

They just didn't get it. They didn't respect us. They loved the championships and the medals we won, but at the end of the day, it was just women's track to

³¹¹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

them. It wasn't football or basketball; they just valued those sports over ours...it's just the way it was.³¹²

Even after winning the battle to get his track built, Temple found himself in the middle of another dispute over the naming of the new track facilities. The Chancellor wanted the track named after Coach Temple himself, but once again the university President objected. Humphries was against the suggestion that the new track be named after the man that had built the worldwide reputation of the TSU Tigerbelle program, Edward Temple, simply because Temple was still living. As Coach Temple remembered.

Well, with the President here at the time, he didn't want to name it after me. He said he didn't think you could name it after people who were still alive. And I'm sitting in there, you know, sitting in that meeting room, and Dr. Roy Nicks who was the chancellor of the board, jumped up in his seat and he said: 'What? What? You can't name something after a person that's alive? That's crazy! This man and his girls are the reason you're getting the new track, the new athletic facility and you don't want to name it after him, because he's alive?' Dr. Nicks was pretty upset; he just didn't understand that they just didn't want it.³¹³

Despite the objections, the new track at Tennessee State was named after its head track coach after all. On April 9, 1978, a special dedication ceremony was held at the new track, celebrating Coach Edward Temple and his career achievements. All but one of Temple's thirty-two Olympian Tigerbelles returned for the new track dedication and playfully raced their coach down the track after he cut the official ribbon to open the

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

track. Temple said that “it was a great day, I was so happy, the new track and so many of my former athletes came out for the ceremony...it was a great day.”³¹⁴

Despite the new track facility, the historical tradition of short-changing Coach Temple and the Tigerbelles financially continued at Tennessee State throughout his entire tenure as head coach. Even after the school updated its overall athletic facilities in 1980 with the brand new Gentry Center, university planners didn’t even bother to create an office space for the man who was now world famous for coaching the greatest women track athletes in the world. According to Temple, the college said they didn’t know if he wanted an office or not, but they never bothered to ask him until after all the other TSU athletic coaches and administrative officials had been assigned or selected offices. Further, even though the university agreed to substantially increase the funding budget for the women’s track and field program, Temple discovered that his budget was diminished by the time track season rolled around. The university’s practice of transferring funds from the women’s track and field budget to other men’s sports programs on campus continued until Coach Temple retired in 1993.³¹⁵

Another devastating blow to the state of the Tennessee State women’s track and field program was when Coach Edward Temple decided to stop inviting high school athletes to his long-term summer track clinic program in 1980. This decision coincided with the pending takeover of the NCAA as the governing body of women’s collegiate

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

sports. Despite the fact that Temple's summer clinics had served as one of his greatest recruiting tools during his tenure at TSU, he was frustrated by the new rules and regulations implemented by the AIAW and the NCAA. In order to avoid recruitment violations and the endless paperwork required to hold such camps, Temple decided to end the clinics.

Once the alphabet soup groups got involved, the AIAW and the NCAA and whoever else wanted to have a say, things just got to complex for an old school coach like me. It was just easier too let the summer clinics go.³¹⁶

Despite the changes and setbacks to the TSU program throughout the 1970s, Temple gained a new track, a new indoor training facility, and an increased budget. He also successfully guided his Tigerbelles back to the Olympics. The same four Tigerbelles that made the 1976 Olympic team would also make the 1980 team. A fifth Tigerbelle, Deborah Jones made Bermuda's Olympic team. Further, for the third time, Coach Temple was named as the coach of the U.S. women's Olympic team.

The hard work and dedication of the TSU Tigerbelles was completely thwarted in 1980, shortly after the Olympic trials. The Olympic games, which were always supposed to be devoid of politics and disagreements, was once again be used as a public platform for an international political dispute. After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, U.S. President Jimmy Carter issued an ultimatum that the United States would boycott the 1980 Olympic games that were scheduled to be held in Moscow as

³¹⁶ Ibid.

part of a package of sanctions if the Soviet Union did not withdraw from Afghanistan. The Soviet Union refused to withdraw and the U.S. decided to officially boycott the 1980 Olympic games. It marked the first time the United States boycotted the Olympics. The boycott was a tremendous blow to the athletes on the U.S. team because the 1980 team was arguably one of the strongest teams ever produced by the United States. The 1980 U.S. Olympic team featured hall of fame runners, Edwin Moses, Mary Decker, and Steve Scott and hall of fame field athlete, Al Oertor. Former TSU Tigerbelle, Madeline Manning Mims had also made the 1980 team, exactly a decade after she had graduated from Tennessee State. Coach Temple said of the 1980 Olympic boycott.

The boycott was a mess. First, it didn't prove nothing and it didn't change nothing. The Russians just turned around and boycotted in 1984 and that didn't change nothing either. It just punished a group of hard-working athletes...my girls in particular. For Cheese, Morehead, and McMillan, they most certainly had a very solid, very sure-fire Olympic medal opportunity taken from them.³¹⁷

Temple and his athletes were devastated by the decision. As Chandra Cheeseborough related.

We had prepared ourselves for so long, and then we couldn't go, It seemed like we lost the desire to keep on running. We had dreamed about it for so long, and then the dream was gone.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Lewis and Thomas, p. 182

The Olympic dream at TSU was gone in more ways than one in 1980. Only two Tigerbelles ever made it back to the Olympic games under Coach Ed Temple's remaining years at TSU.

In the second half of Coach Temple's tenure at Tennessee State, he had only a handful of Olympic level athletes under his charge. Those athletes were members of the TSU Tigerbelles during the period of 1969 through 1982. While Temple maintained a series of national champion level athletes through his last years at TSU, but his last Olympians would come during this period. Angela Williams was the last TSU Tigerbelle to compete on a U.S. Olympic team while still enrolled at the college. And Chandra Cheeseborough in 1984 was the last Tigerbelle to win an Olympic medal, after she graduated. Temple's final Olympic class Tigerbelles will be profiled on the following pages.

Iris Davis

Iris Davis was born in Pompano Beach, Florida and began running track in high school. In 1964, she was recommended to Coach Temple through a TSU alumnus. Even though she was only fourteen at the time, she would join Temple's summer program for the first time. She returned each summer after that, earning a spot as an alternate on the 1968 Olympic team as a high school senior. Davis was not called upon to compete in those Olympics, but she did earn a scholarship to Tennessee State in 1968. Davis was a strong and consistent performer for Ed Temple during her tenure at TSU, being named AAU All-American as well as being named the International Athlete of the Year for North America in 1970.

In the following year, she received the Norman E. Seattel Award for being recognized as the most outstanding athlete in women's track and field in America. Davis became the fourth of five Tigerbelles to win this prestigious award. Davis qualified for the 1972 Olympics and was heavily favored to win the 100-meters, but her performance at the Games would be hampered by a back injury she had suffered a few weeks earlier. She failed to win a medal at those games. Iris Davis like her fellow Tigerbelle, Brenda Morehead, has been overlooked in Tigerbelle history primarily because she did not win an Olympic medal, but Davis just like Morehead was a key athlete in terms of the TSU Tigerbelles remaining highly competitive on the national and international stage.

Kathy McMillan

Kathy McMillan was born on November 7, 1957 in Raeford, North Carolina. She was one of eight children. McMillan grew up on a rural farm where her father farmed when he was not working as a bricklayer. Her mother was a long-term assistant teacher for several Kindergarten classes. McMillan became involved in track and field in the ninth grade at Hoke County High School. She chose the long jump as her specialty event in high school just because she always loved jumping over things; "Our coach (William Colston) let us choose what event we wanted to do...I used to like to jump over a little brook in the woods, and I was the only one who could get across. I guess I was a tomboy."³¹⁹ McMillan's high school coach was greatly impressed with her skills; "He told me if I keep jumping well, I could make the Olympic team. I didn't know what that

³¹⁹ Unknown, High School Olympians, American Track And Field, <http://www.american-trackandfield.com/features/highschoololympians04summer.html>, p. 5.

was, but I believed him. I guess he knew talent.”³²⁰ As a high school athlete, McMillan became a top-notch long jumper. She set a still standing record at her high school in the long jump and during her senior year, she improved upon the American record in the long jump four times.³²¹

Shortly after graduating high school, McMillan set a new U.S. record in the long jump at the AAU Nationals. That same summer she qualified for the 1976 Olympic games in Montreal. Kathy McMillan was heavily favored to win the gold medal, but on the day of the long jump competition, she found herself competing in the middle of a heavy rainstorm. She had never competed in such conditions before and she would remark that the rain “had me sailing sideways.”³²² She jumped far enough to just miss achieving a gold medal victory, but after marginally fouling on her best jump, McMillan settled for the silver medal. She became only the second African American woman to win an Olympic medal in the long jump.

After her outstanding Olympic performance, she enrolled at Tennessee State on a full scholarship in the fall of 1976. She majored in physical education and as a Tigerbelle; she competed in the long jump and the relays. She was named an AAU All-American multiple times during her career at TSU. In 1979, she won a gold medal in the long jump at the Pan American Games in San Juan and became the AAU national

³²⁰ Ibid, p. 5.

³²¹ Ibid, p. 5.

³²² Lewis and Thomas, p. 174

champion in the long jump. McMillan followed up that performance with a second place finish at the Olympic trials held in Eugene, Oregon. Unfortunately for Kathy McMillan, her second chance at earning an Olympic medal was thwarted by international politics. She missed competing due the United States' decision to boycott the 1980 Olympic games.

Deborah Jones

As a high school student, Deborah “Debbie” Jones made the 1976 Olympic team for her home country of Bermuda. She qualified for three events, but eventually had to withdraw during the qualifying rounds of the games due to an injury. She became one the few foreign athletes ever recruited by Coach Temple. He did not like to train athletes that would end up ultimately competing against the United States and in some cases against his Tigerbelles in the Olympics.³²³ Temple made an exception in Jones' case because of her talent, leadership abilities, and her strong desire to attend TSU. Jones became one of Temple's stars during her tenure at TSU. Jones had told Temple that she had wanted to attend Tennessee State since she was eleven years old and for Temple that made Jones his kind of athlete.

She had heard and read so much about the program that she wanted to be a part of it. This is the type we are looking for...one who is dedicated and wants to come

³²³ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

here and make a contribution. If I'm down to just one, then so be it...she's going to be pure in heart.³²⁴

When Jones arrived at TSU, she was a very consistent performer and she was named as an AAU All-American. She would major in accounting and specialize in 100, 200, and 400-meter races, as well as the relays as a member of the Tigerbelles. In 1980, Debbie Jones again qualified for the Bermuda Olympic team, but her home nation also joined the Olympic boycott, therefore costing Jones an opportunity to compete.

Brenda Morehead

Brenda Morehead was born on October 5, 1957 in Monroe, Louisiana, but actually grew up in Toledo, Ohio. She ran track at Toledo Scott High School, where she became an outstanding high school track all-star, setting eight Ohio high school state records. Morehead received a lot of attention from college recruiters, but her mind was made up to attend Tennessee State a long time ago.

I think it was the tradition of the Tigerbelles that made me want to go to Tennessee State. I had seen some of the Tigerbelles run in 1972 at an AAU meet in Canton, Ohio, and I liked what I saw. I had also heard a lot of good things people had to say about them. I also thought it would be good to be able to work with Coach Temple. I respected him for what he had done and for the kind of person he is. He's a concerned person, but he's firm.³²⁵

³²⁴ Temple, p. 43

³²⁵ Lewis and Thomas, p. 172

After enrolling at TSU, Morehead majored in sociology and focused on the 100-meter, 200-meter races and the relays as a Tigerbelle. She was named as an AAU All-American in 1975 and 1976. Despite being a consistent performer for the Tigerbelles, Morehead's collegiate athletic career was hampered by injuries and bad luck that prevented her from becoming the breakout international track star she was expected to become. She qualified for the 1976 Olympic games, by winning the 100 and 200 meters at the Olympic trials, but at the actual games she failed to earn a medal due to her performance being hindered by a severe hamstring injury. Brenda Morehead earned a second chance at an Olympic medal in 1980, but that opportunity was lost with the unexpected U.S. boycott of the games. Brenda Morehead is served as a strong anchor athlete at numerous events for TSU and deserves a great deal of credit despite never earning an Olympic medal.

The 1984 Olympic games represented the last time that Coach Edward Temple and the TSU Tigerbelles had representatives at the Games. Those two athletes, Chandra Cheeseborough and Angela Williams had differing levels of success at both TSU and the Olympic games, but their performances would mark an end of era in terms of Olympic competition for the Tennessee State Tigerbelles.

Angela Williams-Weaver

Angela Williams-Weaver was born on May 15, 1965 in Laventille, San Juan-Laventille, Trinidad and Tobago. She began competing in track and field at the young age of ten. She became a standout, nationally renowned high school track athlete. Considered one of the best high school sprinters in the nation, Williams-Weaver

represented her home nation of Trinidad and Tobago at the 1984 Olympics in three events. She did not earn a medal. Shortly after returning from the 1984 Olympics, Williams-Weaver decided to transfer to Seton Hall University to complete her academic and athletic career. She would go on to become the first female athlete in Seton Hall's athletic program history to be named as an All-American. At the 1988 Olympic games, Williams-Weaver represented the Trinidad-Tobago Olympic squad again in the 100 and 200 meters. She again failed to earn an Olympic medal. She would go on to have a long outstanding amateur career, retiring from competitive track in 1996. Angela Williams-Weaver is the current head women's track and cross-country coach at Prairie View A&M University.

Chandra Cheeseborough

Chandra Cheeseborough was born on January 10, 1959 in Jacksonville, Florida. She began competing in track in the sixth grade. She was strongly influenced by her family who were all heavily involved in all kinds of sports. Her father had played baseball and ran track and her sister had been a strong competitor in the high jump, setting a state record. At Ribault High School, she was a standout, multi-sport athlete, excelling in basketball, track, and volleyball. As a high school student, she was equally strong in competing both basketball and track and field. Cheeseborough could have easily gone on and played collegiate basketball, but TSU Coach Ed Temple had convinced her very early in her high school years that she would benefit more by pursuing track. She was one of the last groups of high school students to spend her summers at Temple's training clinics. Cheeseborough was already becoming a major

track star to watch out for in her final two years of high school. It would also be during this time that Chandra Cheeseborough met Tigerbelle great Wilma Rudolph and she developed an extremely close relationship with TSU's greatest Olympian. Rudolph became a mentor and second coach to Cheeseborough who commented, "Wilma made me a part of her family, she treated me just like a daughter."³²⁶ Cheeseborough and Rudolph enjoyed an extremely close relationship for many years until Rudolph's untimely death at the age of fifty-four.

At just sixteen years old, Cheeseborough won her first gold medal in the Pan American Games in 1975 and at just seventeen; she made her first Olympic games in 1976. She failed to earn a medal in her first Olympic appearance. Cheeseborough said that her inexperience worked against her and that in reality, she "was just happy to be there and not focused enough on winning."³²⁷ After graduating high school in 1977, Chandra Cheeseborough, who was now well known as the "Florida Flash"³²⁸ received fourteen athletic scholarships offers, but all for basketball. She did not receive one scholarship offer for track except from Tennessee State. It was because of her early relationships with Coach Temple, Wilma Rudolph, and the overall TSU Tigerbelle program that caused numerous collegiate teams not to pursue her for their track and field programs.

³²⁶ In-person interview with Chandra Cheeseborough by author, October 9, 2007

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid.

Most colleges assumed that I was going to become a Tigerbelle because I had been under Coach Temple as a summer recruit, so I didn't get any track scholarship offers, but I did get fourteen basketball scholarship offers. I was really good in basketball, but the reason why I chose track was because I knew I could go further in track at that time. There was not a WNBA or other opportunities for women basketball players then. I believed that my running would take me all over the world. I also knew that I could make a little bit of money with track.³²⁹

In 1978, Chandra Cheeseborough enrolled at TSU and she was the first Tigerbelle to be granted a full NCAA-governed scholarship to attend Tennessee State.³³⁰

Cheeseborough became another one of Temple's most versatile and talented athletes. She could strongly run both the short sprint races, the 100 and 200 meters, as well as longer 400 meters. Cheeseborough was also gifted and strong enough to compete in those individual sprinting races and participate in both the 4x100 meter and 4x400 meter relays during the course of a meet. During her tenure at TSU, she dominated at both national and international competitions; she became known as a fierce competitor who hated to lose. She was also named as an AAU All-American every year she competed at Tennessee State. Cheeseborough earned her second chance to compete on an Olympic team in 1980, but she also did not get to earn a medal because of the U.S. Olympic boycott. Chandra Cheeseborough graduated from TSU in 1982 with a degree in health and physical education.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Chandra Cheeseborough would be the first TSU Tigerbelle to receive an officially NCAA sanctioned athletic scholarship.

After maintaining a strictly disciplined training schedule over the next two years, Cheeseborough did get one final opportunity to prove that she truly belonged in the same category as the elite Tigerbelles, like Wilma Rudolph and Wyomia Tyus. At the 1984 Olympic games held in Los Angeles, Chandra Cheeseborough got a third opportunity to earn a gold medal and she would make the most of her opportunity. Cheeseborough became the first female athlete to win gold medals as a member of both relay teams, 4x100 meters and 4x400 meters, at the same Olympic games. She also earned a silver medal in the 400 meters. After her triumph at the games, Cheeseborough remained one of the top 200 and 400-meter runners in the nation. She became one of the first female track athletes to be handsomely rewarded financially as a track athlete with shoe contracts, personal appearance fees, and other sponsors. Chandra “The Black Goddess” Cheeseborough was rightfully considered the last of the great TSU Tigerbelles.³³¹

After Chandra Cheeseborough graduated from Tennessee State in 1982, the fortunes of the TSU Tigerbelle program would dip dramatically. Coach Temple had a difficult time attracting athletes to TSU that could continue the Olympic tradition that had been a large part of the program for so many years. With the absence of the world-class Olympic level competitors, Temple was truly losing one of his most powerful and long-standing recruiting tactics. For many years, one of the true strengths of his Tigerbelle program was that he could get his athletes to the pinnacle of international competition,

³³¹ Chandra Cheeseborough would pick up the nickname “The Black Goddess” because her gracefully running style mimicked her friend and mentor’s Wilma Rudolph’s running style. Rudolph had also been well known for being a runner who was considered beautiful to watch while competing.

the Olympic games. And not only had Temple shown the ability to get his athletes to the Olympic Games, but once at the games, his athletes had regularly won medals. It is tough to find fault with athletes that desired to win Olympic medals choosing to attend athletic programs that were producing Olympians and in the mid-1980s, Tennessee State was no longer producing those kinds of athletes. Further, by the late 1980s, TSU was running far behind other women's track and field programs financially and it showed. Temple could not promise or deliver what other schools could; dedicated facilities, trainers, equipment, etc. Therefore, it was not really surprising that he and TSU were no longer landing the top track recruits.

Throughout the late-1980s and his final years of the early 1990s, Temple maintained his same high standards for his athletes whether they were international or Olympic class athletes or not. He still expected his athletes to train hard, study hard and to always conduct themselves as young ladies. Temple who had always maintained that he would continue to coach,

As long as I didn't like to lose, I'll stay. I still had that drive to win, so I was satisfied with my athletes whether they went to the Olympics or not. We were always working hard. And I was never going to do anything to hurt the Tigerbelles. The most important thing was that the program survived so other young ladies could get the chance to compete and get a degree. I had a great run with the Olympians I had at TSU, everything comes and goes in cycles. We had been riding high for a very long time; it was not so unusual that we came back down to earth.³³²

³³² In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

In the early 1990s, Temple's weariness with battling TSU's administration over funding and other issues related to the women's track and field program finally influenced him to retire. Nearing sixty five years of age and after having served over forty plus years at Tennessee State, Temple was ready to hand over the reins to someone else.

I always intended to retire at 65. It was time. I had no regrets as far as track and field was concerned; I achieved a great deal more than I ever believed I would when I started at TSU. Shoot, I had achieved more than ANYONE thought I ever would at TSU. It was more than past time for me to go in some ways. I was ready³³³

Coach Edward S. Temple officially retired as head coach of the TSU Tigerbelles on December 17, 1993. On the same date, he ended his long-term teaching career at the university as well. He retired as one of the most accomplished and decorated coaches in track and field history. And despite all the honors and accomplishments, Temple would say that of all his achievements in track and field as the head coach of the TSU Tigerbelles, he was most proud of his academic record with his athletes. During the course of his forty-four years coaching at Tennessee State, Temple had a graduation rate of over ninety percent, including that amazing accomplishment of thirty-nine of his forty Olympians all receiving their undergraduate degrees. Temple remarked,

I was proud when those girls got their degrees. An education is something that no one can take from you. I never promised my girls medals, but I did promise them an education if they were willing to work hard for it. That was my promise to

³³³ Ibid

them and the majority of the time I delivered and most athletic programs can't say that about their athletes or their programs.³³⁴

When Ed Temple decided to retire, many people began lining up to replace him. Even with retirement pending, Temple had a significant role in determining who would fill that role. There was over forty applicants for his position, including former TSU Tigerbelle great, Wilma Rudolph. Yet, Temple was strongly against Rudolph applying for the position.

Wilma really wanted the job, but I really didn't want her to have it. It's not that I didn't think she could do the job, but she was still a major star even though she had so many struggles. She would have had to answer to so many different people, more than I ever had to. She still had speaking engagements and public appearances and those duties would have only increased if she was coach. There was just too much to do at TSU to keep the program running and outside distractions are just that...distractions. Wilma was pretty mad at me for a while, but as usual she trusted my opinion and came to realize that the job would have not worked out for her. She was the one that came up with the idea of having "Cheese" [Chandra Cheeseborough] apply for the job.³³⁵

Chandra Cheeseborough applied for the position after receiving strong encouragement from both Temple and Rudolph. Another former Tigerbelle, Mamie Rallins also applied. Rallins had enjoyed a long and successful coaching career at The Ohio State University. Both Rallins and Cheeseborough became two of the four finalists for the position.

³³⁴ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

³³⁵ Ibid.

Chandra Cheeseborough was ultimately chosen as the person to follow in the footsteps of Coach Edward Temple. Her former coach was pleased with the selection.

She was the best choice. She was one of the best Tigerbelles and the last Olympian. Folks will listen to her and respect her. She's tough and she will be more than prepared to put up with some of the administration's shenanigans. I knew that Cheese had a good eye for talent and that she would be a disciplined coach, but a fair one. I feel confident in retirement that I had someone that was going to continue what I started and help rebuild the program. She may never get back to the Olympic heyday TSU enjoyed in the past, but she has the ability to develop international level athletes and most certainly great athletes at the national level. I was extremely happy and excited for her and the school. I am greatly impressed with Chandra's coaching. She's very determined to bring the Tigerbelles back to where they belong, at the top. She is stressing discipline with training and with the books, just like I did with her when she was in school.³³⁶

Coach Temple was not far off in his predictions for Chandra Cheeseborough's early tenure as the new head coach at TSU. In fifteen years, she has restored the program back to the point that TSU regularly wins its conference title and she has attracted several national level stars, including a couple that have nearly missed competing for the Olympic trials. One of these new rising national stars is her own daughter, Martinique Guice, who is a standout in the long jump.

When Chandra Cheeseborough took over as head coach in 1994, one of her first decisions were to make sure that the historical legacy of Coach Temple and the TSU Tigerbelles was forgotten. In order to make sure that her new generations of TSU Tigerbelles understand and respect the prestigious academic and athletic history they are

³³⁶ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

representing, Coach Cheeseborough requires all of her athletics to interview one former Tigerbelle individually and then present a report about that Tigerbelle to the entire team. Cheeseborough believes that it is vital for the program and her athletes.

I think, in order to know where you are going and what you are getting into, you need to know what's been before you. So, that's why we make them interview former Tiger Belles, and they have to get up and read the report in front of the track team. And, you know, this is not just a team, you know, this is history, and you should be honored to be a part of this track program. Some buy into it and some don't, but you can't worry that, they just have to do it.³³⁷

And just like her former coach, Cheeseborough maintains the same values and standards that she trained and competed under at TSU.

We knew through Coach Temple, you are a young lady first, and you are an athlete second, and you must go to class. And those three things was just drilled in us, it was just a part of us. And we knew, if you didn't get your work, you wasn't going to be here. And he didn't play. So, if he said you wasn't going to be here, you wasn't going to be here. And, you know, this day and time, it takes an act of Congress to get rid of a student athlete that's not doing anything, but back in the day, when they say you wasn't coming back, you wasn't coming back, and that was it. That was the gospel right there. I may not have the same abilities to get rid of an athlete that is not meeting my standards as easily as Coach Temple, but I do my very best to come close. I try to do what Coach Temple did, I try to pick the 'pure in heart' as my athletes, so I rarely end up with athletes that can't follow the TSU Tigerbelle way, the Ed Temple way and now the Chandra Cheeseborough way.³³⁸

³³⁷ In-person interview with Chandra Cheeseborough by author, October 9, 2007

³³⁸ Ibid.

Despite the severe downturn in terms of Olympic quality athletes on the TSU Tigerbelles track and field program in the 1980s and the 1990s, Coach Temple managed to maintain the core principles of his program. He still continued to recruit athletes that trained and competed hard while maintaining good grades. While Temple enjoyed training athletes that would achieve the highest level of competition, he never lost sight of the fact that he was providing both an educational and athletic opportunity to young African American women that might have been denied that chance otherwise. Further, with the TSU Tigerbelles, Coach Temple established a rich sporting tradition and a nearly unprecedented winning history that remains strong to the present day under the direction of his former athlete and now head coach, Chandra Cheeseborough.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

You know, I look at this way, it's not the most appealing, but I guess, as I have this girlfriend that would say, '*Airn is better than Nairn.*' I mean something is better than not having anything at all. So, you know, at the end of the day, the statute is really nice. After the unveiling ceremony, my husband and I went back on campus that day and I really took a good look. And as I said it's not the most appealing, but you have to accept it, at least the President, at that time, was thinking that there should be something on campus to recognize the Olympians.

Edith McGuire, TSU Tigerbelle/1964 Gold & Silver Medalist

On Saturday, May 28, 2005, a dedication ceremony was held at the new Olympic Plaza located on the campus of Tennessee State University. Coach Edward Temple and several generations of TSU Tigerbelles had gathered with their friends, families, and supporters for the unveiling of the 45-foot-tall Olympic Statue that was being added to the TSU Olympic plaza as a specific tribute to the track and field Olympians of Tennessee State. The statue carries the name of every TSU track and field athlete that won an Olympic medal including the year, the location, and what kind of medals they won. Despite the excitement and pride over the dedication ceremony, this tribute to Coach Temple and the Tigerbelles was not without some controversy. Many people were upset over the cost of the sculpture, estimated at over \$250,000 and others were upset over the monstrous size of the statue, coupled with the fact that the completed project had

ran over two years behind schedule. Coach Temple and several of the Tigerbelles didn't particularly care for the design of the statue, but they were just grateful that the university was finally recognizing their Olympic achievements on campus. As Coach Temple said about the ceremony, "this has been 50 years in the making."³³⁹

There is really no surprise that the largest monument to the legacy of the TSU Tigerbelles was a source of controversy and criticisms. The erecting of this huge Olympic Statute that dwarfed everything surrounding it on campus seems to reflect perfectly the historical achievements and long term treatment of the Tigerbelles. Despite their decades long dominance of the Olympic games and collegiate championships, for many years the achievements of the TSU Tigerbelles were nearly completely overlooked by the media, their male counterparts and even by their own campus administration. Their program survived on the lowest budgets with the poorest facilities and minimal staffing. They endured long hours of studying on the road, denied access to bathrooms and eating facilities due to racial segregation and then they faced sexism on the track when male teammates would not share equipment. These young women worked everyday to earn money for tuition and trained hard on a substandard track. Yet, with what their long-term coach called "pure determination" these young women, many from the rural South, poor, often the first in their family to attend college, managed to achieve greatness for many years.

The Olympic Statue dedicated to the TSU Olympians serves as one of few

³³⁹ In-person interview with Edward Temple by author, October 9, 2007

landmarks on Tennessee State's campus that acknowledges the contributions of the Tigerbelles and their long-term Head Coach Edward Temple. The Olympic Statue became the third tribute related to TSU Tigerbelle history, along with the Edward S. Temple track oval and the student dormitory named after Tigerbelle great, Wilma Rudolph. The Olympic Statue is the only monument dedicated to all the Tigerbelles that won Olympic medals. Unfortunately, the numerous young women that dutifully trained and competed as Tigerbelles but failed to win an Olympic medal or earn a berth on an Olympic team remain uncelebrated on the campus of Tennessee State other than in the records and memorabilia collected inside the Edward S. Temple Collection located in the special collections office of the TSU main library.

One of the main purposes of this study was to re-examine the historical legacy of the Tennessee State Tigerbelles under their long-term Coach Edward Temple and attempt to re-connect and re-position the Tigerbelles more accurately and more selectively within U.S. collegiate and Olympic track and field history. This research project has achieved some of that goal, but not all. During the course of this project it has been discovered that the long-term failure to address and analyze the historical contributions of the TSU Tigerbelles has left numerous stories about many of the Tigerbelles untold and has also left a substantial amount of material to be compiled and analyzed regarding the historical legacy and influence of Coach Edward Temple and the Tigerbelles in track and field history. The original scope and size of this research project has prevented the final results of this study to be considered completely inclusive of the entire TSU Tigerbelles' history, but serves as a solid foundation toward future expansive study. This project has

achieved a great deal in terms of reexamining the early history of the TSU Tigerbelles and relating the later history of the Tigerbelles during Coach Temple's last years during the 1970s until his retirement in 1994.

The original objectives of this study focused on several questions encompassing four major issues or subjects; issues related to the TSU Tigerbelles regarding sexism and racism, issues related to the TSU Tigerbelles in terms of education and upward social mobility due to increased educational opportunities, issues related to TSU Tigerbelles that had been overlooked or forgotten because they had not won Olympic medals or made an Olympic team, and lastly, issues related to the overall legacy of the TSU Tigerbelle track and field program.

Racism and Sexism

Over the years, much has been said about how the TSU Tigerbelles overcame the racism of the 1950s and the 1960s and where subjected to sexism by the mainstream sports media and their Head Coach Edward Temple. Modern era sport historians and sport sociologists have labeled the experiences of the TSU Tigerbelles as sexist, racist and governed by patriarchy, particularly for the TSU Tigerbelles of the 1950s and 1960s. There is no question that the Tigerbelles had endured racism and sexism particularly during the first half of Coach Ed Temple's tenure from 1955 until the mid-1970s. It is an undisputable fact that racial segregation was difficult and particularly harsh in the South, where the TSU Tigerbelles went to school and competed in track. Yet, during this study, few of my subjects dwelled on racism or racial incidents during their careers at TSU. The majority stated that by the time they came to TSU they understood the negatives of

segregation and that when on campus it rarely touched them. For most Tigerbelles, racism was off-campus issue when they traveled and competed. And this was more often than not in America, not aboard, where most Tigerbelles related being treated quite well.

Some have argued that Coach Ed Temple's policies and practices itself exhibited sexism and patriarchal attitudes toward the young women on those early teams, but this study has uncovered that these views of the TSU Tigerbelle program might be limited and misleading. It depends on the era one is from to get an solid answer to that question. There is no question that Coach Temple was a man of his time, the 1940s and 1950s, but I'm not sure if that makes his actions as head coach sexist. There was very little evidence that a significant majority of the Tigerbelles felt oppressed or restricted by Coach Ed Temple's rules and regulations. Temple's coaching style was viewed more as a positive fatherly experience for some Tigerbelles and as a disciplined and fair coach for many others. With a few exceptions, most Tigerbelles responded positively to Temple's leadership and did not feel that he was doing anything to them that singled them out as women. Further, there was very little evidence uncovered that Coach Temple would have modified his rules, his philosophy, or his coaching style even if he had been coaching male athletes. It is hard to believe that Temple, if he was coaching young African American males, that he would not have expected them to be responsible students first, young men second, and athletes last.

In further regards to racism, there is very little evidence that many of the Tigerbelles from the era of the Civil Rights Movement considered themselves civil rights activists or that their role was to become immersed in civil rights activism. This does not

mean they did not feel concern over racism they experienced or witnessed or that they were not supportive of civil rights activists. With so many of the Tigerbelles coming from the rural South of Georgia and Tennessee or the urban cities of Cleveland or New York, racial prejudice and racial segregation were not surprising circumstances and many of these young women had developed the necessary skills to function and operate around the limitations of racial segregation. There are a few instances of TSU Tigerbelles being involved in civil rights activism, but these incidents were few and in some cases difficult to document.

Education

The young women who competed as Tigerbelles during Edward Temple's era were not only exceptional as women athletes, they were also exceptional as female students. These young women overcame tremendous odds to earn college degrees. During the majority of his tenure from his early days in the 1940s until the early 1980s, only an extremely small percentage of African American women even attended college, much less earned a college degree. In fact, it was a significant achievement for many African American girls to have gained the opportunity to attend and graduate from high school. Additional opportunities in higher education were extremely limited for all African Americans particularly, black women, for numerous reasons.

The harsh realities of racial segregation had severely limited the educational opportunities of all African Americans to a less than ideal standard of elementary and secondary education. Many African Americans had only a few years of elementary education, just enough to learn basic reading and writing skills include rudimentary math.

Shortly, many African Americans were forced to quit their schooling in order to begin working. Additionally, in many cases, the education that many African Americans had received was sporadic and uneven in terms of quality. Therefore, a significant number of African Americans were unprepared for entry into an institution of higher learning.

Further, the quality of higher education for most African Americans from the 1900s until the early 1960s was limited to a preparation for diverse kinds of vocational work or limited to preparation for working class professional work as a teacher. In reality, the curriculum for many historically black institutions was directed toward completing a high school equivalency degree, not an undergraduate degree. Further, the majority of these kinds of educational opportunities were developed primarily with African American men in mind and the opportunities for black women were limited to preparation as homemakers and teachers. Tennessee State would be no different in terms of an educational institution.

Despite the fact that gaining a high school or college education was highly valued in the African American community, for many families the expense of a college education was cost prohibitive. For many of the Tigerbelles, financial problems were a regular issue, but many managed to overcome it. I did not uncover one case of a Tigerbelle refusing to complete their education due to the lack of funding. They may have delayed their studies to earn more tuition money, but amongst Tigerbelles this was not a sufficient reason to quit college. This is another standout exception with the TSU Tigerbelles, despite the great athletic success, education always came first.

Throughout his tenure, Temple never wavered from his primary directive that his athletes were always students first and the research evidence compiled for this study proved that his unrelenting commitment to education had paid enormous dividends for a significant number of the TSU Tigerbelles. University records credit Coach Temple with having an athletic graduation rate of over eighty-five percent³⁴⁰ but Temple argues that his athletic graduation rate was closer to over ninety percent.³⁴¹ The TSU Tigerbelles did earn undergraduate degrees in substantial numbers and far exceeded the graduation statistics of the majority of athletic programs in the nation. The benefit of earning a college education to the individual Tigerbelles themselves is somewhat immeasurable by any particular standard. The majority of the young women that attended Tennessee State on work-aid scholarships and much later on athletic scholarships in the first twenty-seven years of Temple's tenure as coach, would not have been able to attend college at all if it had not been for the track and field program at TSU. And for many of these young women, a college education was key to escape poverty and other limitations in terms of employment and life opportunities.

The majority of the TSU Tigerbelles profiled for this research project spent many years teaching at the elementary and secondary level as well as coaching multiple team sports. From the Mother of The Tigerbelles, Mae Faggs Starr to Margaret Matthew

³⁴⁰ This is the official graduation rate recorded by the Tennessee State University athletics department.

³⁴¹ There is a clear difference between Coach Temple and the University about how the graduation numbers of Tigerbelles should be counted. It is believed that Temple includes team managers with his count regardless of whether these individuals competed or not. Further, Temple also seems to include Tigerbelles that may have only competed on the team for one year, he does not seem to require four years of team participation to be included as a Tigerbelles, specifically when concerning graduation rates.

Wilburn enjoyed twenty to thirty yearlong teaching careers. A significant majority of Tigerbelles would go on to long-term teaching and coaching careers, but many others would go into business, law, and medicine. Many Tigerbelles have also earned advanced degrees and been awarded honorary degrees. Particularly for the TSU Tigerbelles of the 1950s and 1960s, their college educations made a significant difference in their lives.

The Forgotten Tigerbelles

A key point that was uncovered during this research project was that a tremendous historical disservice has been done to the TSU Tigerbelles that had not either won an Olympic medal or had never made an Olympic team. The women's track and field program at Tennessee State was more than a farm system for producing some of the greatest female Olympians, but it was an exceptional collegiate team program that produced a significant number of great athletes, whether they were ultimately Olympians or not. The Tigerbelles dominated collegiate track and field for nearly two decades because they produced teams that performed well together to win meets, not just because they had a series of exceptional individual athletes that dominated meets by themselves. Coach Temple needed to use every single athlete on his squads to win championships and to create the competitive atmosphere that pushed his elite athletes to the Olympic caliber level.

Every athlete that donned a Tigerbelle uniform had earned their spot on the team; they had trained and competed like every other Tigerbelle, with the difference of becoming an Olympian or Olympic medalist being something that the young women did not always control; natural talent, the right opportunity, and luck. Every athlete that

donned a Tigerbelle uniform has followed the program rules, meet the academic standards for team, and worked many long hours at a work-study job to cover their college expenses. The standards to become a TSU Tigerbelle in the first place were already quite high and it seems grossly unfair that some many hardworking athletes have had their achievements downplayed or forgotten because they did not achieve the highest honor in their sport, an Olympic medal. The overwhelming historical memory and legacy of the TSU Tigerbelle Olympians has unintentionally made the achievements of the other Tigerbelles seem either of less importance to the history of the TSU track and field program or significantly overlooked as if only the TSU Olympians carried the whole program.

In hindsight, this entire research project could have been easily devoted to the TSU Tigerbelles who in many ways remain unsung and under-appreciated in track and field history. This project was enormously successful in bring several unsung Tigerbelles stories to the forefront, but ultimately; there are still too many other Tigerbelles voices that remain silenced. It is a testimony to the women who competed on all those Tigerbelle squads that despite how history and the media remembers their program, they always view themselves as one big team, a family. As Edith McGuire stated in her interview, “at the end of the day, we are all the same, a Tigerbelle is a Tigerbelle.”³⁴²

The research interviews gathered for this project did not uncover any anger or disagreement about why some Tigerbelles received more attention than others, even though there was an underlying tone to the research interviews that there were clear

342

understood and understated differences between Tigerbelle Olympians and Tigerbelle non-Olympians. Yet, there was no animosity, no intention given that the Olympian Tigerbelles did not deserve the lion's share of attention. In fact most of the unsung Tigerbelles expressed great pride in their Olympic medal winning teammates and were content with their own memories of their achievements. As Mamie Rallins stated, "they know and they tell us, Coach Temple knows, and he tells us...and that's good enough for me."³⁴³

The TSU Tigerbelle Legacy

In his sixteenth year of retirement, former TSU Head Coach Edward Temple still lives just minutes from the campus of Tennessee State. He remains active with Tennessee State and the Tigerbelles, participating in the annual seminars and track meets held in his name each year. He maintains two offices inside the TSU main library that holds many of his personal documents, records, and memorabilia. He has also recently had one of the main roads surrounding the campus re-named Ed Temple Boulevard in his honor. Unfortunately, Coach Temple lost his wife of forty-plus years, Charlie B. Temple, in March 2008.

He has also had the misfortune of enduring the early deaths of several of his former Tigerbelles including his favorite and most famous Tigerbelle, Wilma Rudolph. Wilma Rudolph died of brain and throat cancer in 1994 at the age of fifty-four. Several other Tigerbelles have died at an age that must be considered premature with Mae Faggs Starr, the "mother of the Tigerbelles" dying in 2000 of complications from breast cancer

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at the age of sixty-seven and Willye White, the short-term Tigerbelle and five-time U.S. Olympian dying of pancreatic cancer in 2007, also at the age of sixty-seven. And two-time Olympian Lorraine Dunn Davis would die of a heart attack at the age of sixty-one after a long career as a public accountant.

Numerous TSU Tigerbelles have gone on to enjoy prosperous and successful lives after their tenure at Tennessee State. For example, 1956 Olympic medalists, Isabelle Daniels Holston and Margaret Matthews Wilburn recently retired from long-term careers in education. Wilburn ended her teaching career as an elementary school principal. Holston retired from teaching and coaching, but continues to work with her husband at his church in Georgia. Olympic (1960) gold medalists, Barbara Jones Slater and Martha Hudson Pennyman have also all recently retired from long-term teaching careers. Their fellow 1960 Olympic gold medalist, Lucinda Williams Adams has also recently retired from teaching, but still works and travels extensively promoting health and physical education for young women and girls.

Three-time 1964 Olympic medalist Edith McGuire Duvall has recently retired from a highly successful career as an owner of several McDonalds franchises. She and her husband just recently pledged a one million dollar donation to Tennessee State, one of the largest financial gifts ever given to the university. Olympian (1968) Una Morris Chong is still a practicing medical doctor in California. Olympian (1972) Mamie Rallins has recently retired from her long-term career as a collegiate level track and field coach, spending many years at The Ohio State University and at Chicago State University.

Four-time Olympian and two-time Olympic medalist, Madeline Manning Mims is a full-time evangelist, working with female prisoners and at-risk youth.

Current TSU track and field Head Coach Chandra Cheeseborough has recently competed her sixteenth season and has re-doubled her commitment to the institution after turning down a lucrative offer to become the head track coach at Tulane University. In the last few years, she has followed further into her former coach's footsteps by moving into coaching at the U.S. National and Olympic team levels, recently serving as an Assistant Track and Field Coach for the 2008 U.S. Olympic team at the Beijing Games. Cheeseborough has worked hard to reconnect the past TSU Tigerbelles with the TSU Tigerbelles of the present. It is her hope that this appreciation of the Tigerbelles' historical past will assist with inspiration and guidance for the future.

For the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles, the conflicts and struggles they endured as they sought to realize their interests in sports and education were formidable. Yet, through hard work and determination team after team of Tigerbelles found success both on the field and in the classroom. The TSU Tigerbelles deserve to be celebrated and remembered as one of the greatest collegiate sports team in history.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE SUBJECT

Dear

My name is Tracey Salisbury. I am Assistant Professor of History at Wabash College and a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. I am currently engaged in completing my dissertation research project focusing on the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles. I am formally requesting the opportunity to interview you for my dissertation research project by telephone or in-person.

My dissertation is examining the history and influence of the women's track and field team at Tennessee State University. My primary research focus is the TSU teams under the tenure of long-term coach, Mr. Edward Temple. My research focus is divided into major sections. The first half examines the development and growth of the team during the late period of racial segregation and the early period of the civil rights movement. The second half of my study examines the social changes and transformations of the team during the period of the heart of the civil rights and women's movements.

I recently had the great pleasure of interviewing Coach Temple and Coach Cheeseborough at Tennessee State University. They shared with me many great stories and achievements from the team's history. Their interviews will be of great assistance to my final draft of my dissertation. As university alumni and as a former team member of the world-class TSU Tigerbelles, I believe that your personal perspective and experience as a student/athlete during this historic period would be invaluable to my study.

I sincerely hope that you will want to take part in this dissertation research project and grant me an interview. I strongly believe that the history and contributions of Tennessee State University Tigerbelles athletic program is important to preserve. I have included my contact information, please feel free to reach me at anytime.

I thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Tracey M. Salisbury
Assistant Professor of History
Wabash College

She also joined Temple's summer program at Tennessee State and trained regularly and raced with his Tigerbelles for two years. and Wilma vowed to follow in her footsteps. She was required to wear an orthopaedic shoe for support of her foot for another two years. Being discovered by Temple was a major break for a young athlete. Tennessee between the Interstate 24 exit 4 in Clarksville to the Red River (Lynnwood-Tarpley) bridge near the Kraft Street intersection was renamed to honor Wilma Rudolph. 80. her homecoming parade and banquet were the first fully integrated municipal events in the city's history. Lucinda Williams and Barbara Jones to win the 400-meter relay in 44. 1994. Jason Bernard and Denzel Washington in one of his first roles. In 1944, when she was four years old, her health took another blow when she contracted polio, a viral illness that had been ravaging the health of young children in a series of epidemics for years. Though Rudolph survived, she became paralyzed in her left leg. Though the Tigerbelles were often not allowed to use the restrooms at the tracks at which they competed and were even stranded when drivers refused to transport black passengers, they had become a formidable team. When Rudolph qualified for the 1960 Olympics, in Rome, she was one of eight Tigerbelles to compete and Temple was named the women's track and field coach. Her homecoming parade and banquet were the first nonsegregated events in the town's history. The first part examined the founding, early development and growth of the TSU women's track and field program beginning in 1944. The second section examined the social changes and transformations of the TSU track and field program and its athletes during the heart of the civil rights and women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Additionally, this third part reflected on the historical legacy and influence of the Tigerbelles and the renewed efforts to return the TSU track and field program to its past glory under the last Temple-era Olympian, Chandra Cheeseborough. First to the finish line: the Tennessee State Tigerbelles 1944-1994 PDF (Portable Document Format) 730 KB Created on 12/1/2009 Views: 5126.