

HE WASN'T SHY ON TALENT

By Janis Carr

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His thick, wavy hair has thinned and whitened, and the muscular physique that once bulldozed through defensive lines has softened.

That's to be expected after 76 years.

Yet, there are some things that haven't changed about Jim Musick. Like his eyes.

Those piercing blue eyes that stare from hundreds of newspaper clippings still can be transfixing. The only difference is that today they peer from under bushy white eyebrows rather than a thin brown leather helmet.

And his modesty.

Musick's shy nature that plagued him from his football days to his days as Orange County sheriff also has endured. Apparently, some things never change in a man.

Take for instance next Thursday [May 15], when Musick and three others will be inducted into the Orange County Sports Hall of Fame at the Emerald Hotel in Anaheim. Musick doesn't see why he deserves such an honor.

"I don't believe in things like All-Americans and the Hall of Fame," said Musick at his Santa Ana home he has lived in for 50 years. "Because a player can only achieve those things with the help of his teammates. It's the others who allow him to be good."

And Musick was good.

After starring at Santa Ana High, Musick played fullback for USC from 1929-31. He was instrumental (as the press clippings point out) in the Trojans' success during that period in which they won two Rose Bowls and were voted mythical national champions in 1931.

"Football is a team game," said Musick, who played alongside other Trojan greats such as Johnny Baker, Gaius Shaver and Erny Pinckert. "I can't see how you can pick out and honor one person.

"But at least I can say I made the first team of every team I ever played on. From high school to college to the pros. I don't know if I was as good at that, but I made those teams."

Good?

Although he was never officially named an All-American (the clips say he was), Musick still ranks 17th on USC's all-time career rushing list. He carried the ball 393 times for 1,605 yards for a 3.9 average.

"He didn't want me to show you these," said Martie, Musick's wife of 54 years. "But I just had to."

Martie Musick proudly displayed five gold miniature footballs -- each representing Jim Musick's participation on USC's all-conference and national championship teams, Rose Bowl squads, and for being a three-year varsity starter.

She also will show articles that tell of the 1931 Trojans' squad that rallied from a 14-0 deficit to beat Notre Dame. After two long touchdown drives, Baker kicked a 23-yard field goal for the victory.

Musick and the rest of the Trojans returned to a ticker-tape parade before 300,000 fans in downtown Los Angeles.

After graduating from USC in 1932, Musick was signed by the Boston Redskins (now the Washington Redskins) at \$150 a game, but it wasn't a guaranteed contract. He still had to make the team.

And when he showed up on the first day of camp, there were 75 others vying for 23 positions.

"I didn't even know if I had a job," recalled Musick, who played on the Redskins for four years. "It was during the Depression and we didn't have much money."

But he did lead the NFL in rushing in 1933, carrying 173 times for 809 yards and a 4.7 average and five TDs.

Since money was scarce, Musick would return every off-season to Santa Ana to work in the sheriff's department where he would earn \$150 a month as a deputy sheriff.

In 1934, however, Musick didn't take the train back to Boston. It was an election year and Sheriff Logan Jackson asked Musick to stay through the November election.

He did. Musick, in his football prime, sat out that year reading about the Redskins in the newspapers.

In the fall of 1935, though, Musick returned to Boston. He wanted to play.

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However, the long hours spent campaigning and sitting in the office had taken their toll on Musick. He reported to camp slightly out of shape and within three weeks was out of action because of a knee injury.

"I was carrying the football, made a sharp cut in the turf and snapped my knee," Musick said. "Although it healed, it really never was the same."

Things didn't get better for Musick the following year. He decided not to report to camp in 1936, holding out for a better contract. Some things never change.

"I just tried to get better money," he said. "And I did."

Musick also reinjured his knee and when he wouldn't sign his release, the Redskins waived him. He later was picked up by Green Bay.

Musick, however, never played a down for the Packers. Two weeks before he was to report to camp in 1937, Musick threw out his knee again while playing in a badminton game.

"That was it, said Musick, still an avid USC rooter and football fan. "That's when I had to make the adjustment from leaving the spotlight."

But Musick wasn't out of the limelight for good. He served as an officer in the Marines during World War II and when Jess Elliott stepped down as Orange County sheriff, Musick was voted in.

And there he stayed for 28 years -- serving seven consecutive terms as sheriff until retirement in 1975.

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JAMES MUSICK

Fullback

Hgt: 5-11 Wgt: 205

College: U. of Southern California

High School: Santa Ana (CA)

Born May 10, 1910, in Kirksville, MO

Died December 14, 1992, in Santa Ana, CA

RUSHING

<u>Year</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Lg</u>	<u>Gm</u>	<u>ATT</u>	<u>YDS</u>	<u>AVG</u>	<u>TD</u>
1932	Boston	N	10	88	316	3.6	1
1933	Boston	N	12	*173	*809	4.7	5
1934			Did not play				
1935	Boston	N	5	60	174	2.9	2
1936	Boston	N	6	6	14	2.3	0
4 years	NFL		33	307	1313	4.0	8

*-Led league

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In 1933, when Musick led the NFL in rushing, he ran at tailback from the Warner double-wing. One wingback was Cliff Battles, the 1932 rushing leader. Battles finished second in '33 with 737 yards. Backing them was Bob Campiglio, for many years incorrectly listed as the '32 rushing leader. All three had the benefit of running behind one of the best blocking back of all time – Erny Pinckert.