

TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE CONERLY

By Jimmie G. Purvis

Charlie Conerly, who was the starting quarterback of the New York Giants during most of the 1950s, died on February 13, 1996 at the age of 74. His death re-sulted from complications growing out of heart bypass surgery performed several months earlier.

A steady signal caller, Conerly played in the NFL for fourteen years (1948-1961) and led the Giants to three divisional titles and one championship. In 1959 the graying, thirty- eight-year-old veteran was recognized as the MVP of the league and received the Jim Thorpe Trophy. Conerly had perhaps the finest season of his long and distinguished career. He completed 58 per cent of his passes for 1,706 yards and 14 touchdowns. Y.A. Tittle, acquired in a trade with the San Francisco 49ers, replaced the ex-Marine in 1961 and passed the Giants into the NFL title game against the Green Bay Packers. However, even in the twilight of his playing days Conerly still possessed the ability to come off the bench and rally the struggling New Yorkers to key victories over the Los Angeles Rams and Philadelphia Eagles. With those two valuable contributions, he brought to a close in a fitting fashion a lengthy run as a dependable performer whose greatest qualities were consistency and physical and mental toughness.

Conerly came to the Giants in 1948 from the University of Mississippi where he had established himself as one of the top passers in the Southeastern Conference. Playing tailback in the single wing, the twenty-six-year-old collegian (who due to military service in World War II was considerably older than most of his teammates and opponents) led Ole Miss to its first SEC championship in 1947 and in the process finished fourth in the Heisman Trophy voting. Setting the standard for a long line of superb quarterbacks produced by legendary Rebel coach Johnny Vaught, Conerly was inducted into the National College Football Hall of Fame in 1965.

Beginning in 1996, the Charlie Conerly Trophy will be awarded each year to the most outstanding collegiate football player in the state of Mississippi. This unique bronze sculpture is meant to be Mississippi's equivalent of the Heisman Trophy, and as such all collegian gridiron performers are eligible, regardless of school size or position.

CHARLES ALBERT CONERLY, JR.

QB 6-1 185 Mississippi

b: 9/19/23, Clarksdale, MS - d: 2/13/96, Memphis, TN (74)

YEAR	Team	LG	PASSING								RUSHING				
			G	ATT	COM	PCT	YDS	AVG	TD	INT	RATE	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
1948	NYG	N	12	299	162	54.2	2175	7.27	22	13	84.0	40	160	4.0	5
1949	NYG	N	12	305	152	49.8	2138	7.01	17	20	64.1	23	42	1.8	0
1950	NYG	N	11	132	56	42.4	1000	7.58	8	7	67.1	23	22	0.9	1
1951	NYG	N	12	189	93	49.2	1277	6.76	10	22	49.3	17	65	3.8	1
1952	NYG	N	11	169	82	48.5	1090	6.45	13	10	70.4	27	115	4.3	0
1953	NYG	N	12	303	143	47.2	1711	5.65	13	*25	44.9	24	91	3.8	0
1954	NYG	N	10	210	103	49.0	1439	6.85	17	11	76.7	24	107	4.5	1
1955	NYG	N	12	202	98	48.5	1310	6.49	13	13	64.2	12	10	0.8	0
1956	NYG	N	12	174	90	51.7	1143	6.57	10	7	75.0	11	11	1.0	0
1957	NYG	N	12	232	128	55.2	1712	7.38	11	11	74.9	15	24	1.6	1
1958	NYG	N	10	184	88	47.8	1199	6.52	10	9	66.8	12	-17	-1.4	0
1959	NYG	N	10	194	113	58.2	*1706	8.79	14	4	102.7	15	38	2.5	1
1960	NYG	N	12	134	66	49.3	954	7.12	8	7	70.9	14	1	0.1	0
1961	NYG	N	13	106	44	41.5	634	5.98	7	8	52.2	13	16	1.2	0
14 Yrs			161	2833	1418	50.1	19488	6.88	173	167	68.2	270	685	2.5	10

* - Led NFL