

THE

COFFIN CORNER

The Official Newsletter-Magazine of the PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL RESEARCHERS ASSOCIATION

**VOL. 31, No. 3
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Tobin Rote



Joe Schmidt



Bobby Layne



Lou Creekmur



Jack Chritiansen



Tom Tracy



Tim David



Healey Sewell



Tim Dwyer

The 1957 Lions

PFRA-ternizing

Here's a must for those who want to know the origins and early history of our favorite game:

EVOLVEMENTS OF EARLY AMERICAN FOOTBALL: THROUGH THE 1890 / 91 SEASON by Melvin I. Smith.

This book is a 724 page revision/extension to the author's first book and includes many more games found under the name of foot ball played up through the 1890/91 season. The games are separated by three major styles in their time. The kicking game/association football/soccer is the original style of foot ball. The second form of foot ball is the carrying game/Boston rules game/American rugby game/English rugby union game/rugby. The third form of foot ball is the American collegiate game/American rugby football/football. By the 1905 period these games are known as soccer, rugby and football. All games are divided into three groups: colleges, independent clubs and high schools; plus divided into two and three divisions by seasons. There also is a section with early leagues/conferences. Three appendices list short histories and the types of foot ball played by most of the teams found in the book. It will be available in other bookstores after January 2009.

AUTHORHOUSE, 1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403
Book Order Dept. Tele. 888-280-7715; Fax. 812-961-3134.
Shipping by UPS

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Are you interested in college football history?

If so, then the **Intercollegiate Football Researchers Association (IFRA)** is for you.

Since January 2008, college football fans, researchers and historians have been contributing and reading original college football stories and compilations in the monthly newsletter, *The College Football Historian*; sent as an attachment on a word document.

The best part, there is no charge to join **IFRA** or to receive the newsletter. Also, an index of all previous issues is available.

For additional information or a sample issue, please contact Executive Director/Editor, Tex Noel at statwhiz@hotmail.com

Please visit the IFRA website at <http://www.secsportsfan.com/college-football-association.html>.

* * * * *

HAY & ROSS WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Ralph Hickok and **Sean Lehmann** are the winners of PFRA's annual achievement awards

Ralph Hickok's website www.hickoksports.com and blog Hickok's "SportsThoughts" have been a source of accurate information over the years. For those and other outstanding research for nearly four decades, Ralph has been named the 2007 winner of PFRA's **Ralph Hay Award**, given for lifetime achievement in pro football research and historiography.

Past Hay Award Winners

2007	Vince Popo
2006	Emil Klosinski
2005	John Gunn
2004	Jeff Miller
2003	John Hogrogian
2002	Ken Pullis
2001	Tod Maher
2000	Mel "Buck" Bashore
1999	Dr. Stan Grosshandler
1998	Seymour Siwoff
1997	Total Sports
1996	Don Smith
1995	John Hogrogian
1994	Jim Campbell
1993	Robert Van Atta
1992	Richard Cohen
1991	Joe Horrigan
1990	Bob Gill
1989	Joe Plack
1988	David Neft

For his *The Pro Football Historical Abstract: A Hardcore Fan's Guide to All-Time Player Rankings*, **Sean Lahman** is the recipient of the 2007 **Nelson Ross Award** given to a PFRA member for recent achievement in pro football research and historiography. Lahman is also the author of the annual "Pro Football Prospectus" and "Pro Football Forcast" and was a contributor to the *ESPN Pro Football Encyclopedia* and has a website: www.seanlahman.com.

Past Ross Award Winners

2007	Andy Piascik
2006	Matthew Algeo
2005	Chris Willis
2004	Michael MacCambridge
2003	Mark Ford
2002	Bob Gill, Steve Brainerd, Tod Maher
2001	Bill Ryczek
2000	Paul Reeths
1999	Joe Ziemba
1998	Keith McClellan
1997	Tod Maher & Bob Gill
1996	John Hogrogian
1995	Phil Dietrich
1994	Rick Korch
1993	Jack Smith
1992	John M. Carroll
1991	Tod Maher
1990	Pearce Johnson
1989	Bob Gill
1988	Bob Braunwart

BOB HAYES

Hayes, Robert Lee (Bullet Bob)
 Wide Receiver 5-11, 185
 Florida A&M
 HS: Matthew W. Gilbert [Jacksonville, FL]
 Born: 12 / 20 / 1942, Jacksonville, FL
 Died: 9 / 18 / 2002, Jacksonville, FL (59)

1965-1974 Dallas Cowboys
 1975 San Francisco 49ers

Elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame: Jan. 31, 2009

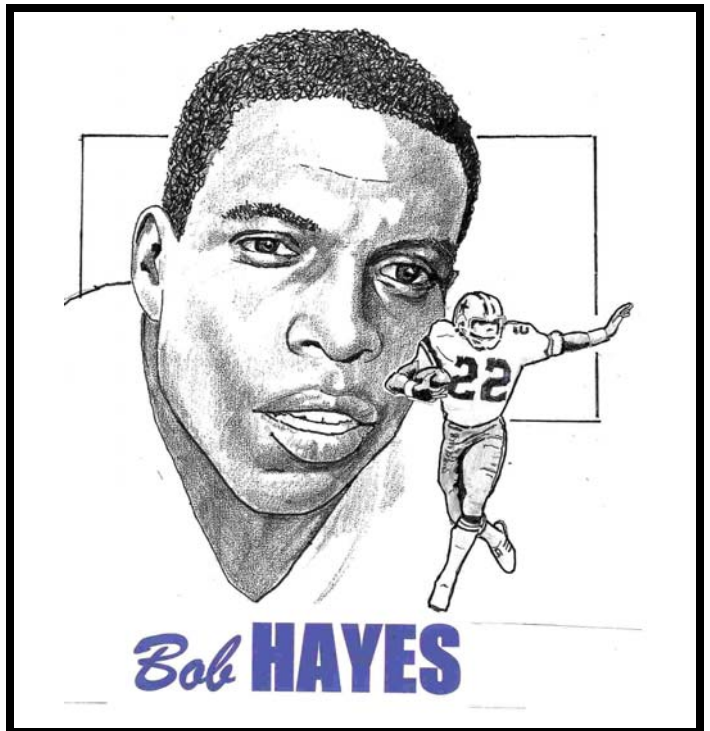
Selected as a future pick by Cowboys, seventh round, 1964 NFL Draft. . . Also drafted as future choice by Denver (AFL). . . Won a pair of gold medals in the 1964 Olympic Games earning him the title "World's Fastest Human". . . Four times was named first- or second-team All-NFL. . . Three times led the Cowboys in receptions. . . Career stats include 7,414 receiving yards and 71 TDs.

When Bob Hayes arrived on the pro football scene in 1965, he had already earned athletic stardom having won a pair of gold medals in the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. His medal-winning performance in the 100 meters competition earned him the title "World's Fastest Human." But for the Dallas Cowboys, the team that drafted him in the seventh round of the 1964 NFL Draft, the question lingered, "could a track man succeed in a contact sport like pro football?" The answer came quickly as the rookie's 46 receptions for 1,003 yards led all Cowboys receivers.

Hayes demonstrated time and again that he possessed tremendous football skills and instincts that helped him to develop into a terrific NFL wide receiver. Still, his world class speed was a major factor in his and the Cowboys offensive successes. "Bullet Bob" terrorized defensive backs and demanded the kind of deep double coverage rarely seen in the NFL at that time. It is often said that the bump and run defense was developed in an attempt to slow down the former Florida A&M running back.

"I know one thing, and I played with him," commented Hall of Fame tight end Mike Ditka, "he changed the game. He made defenses and defensive coordinators work hard to figure out what you had to do to stop him."

Hall of Fame quarterback Roger Staubach knew firsthand the value of the speedy receiver. "He can explode and make things happen," he offered. "As long as Bobby is in the lineup the other team has to make adjustments it doesn't normally make."



St. Louis Cardinals Hall of Fame safety Larry Wilson played against Hayes on a number of occasions. He observed that the difference between Hayes and other track men turned football players was that he had the ability to use his speed "in a football sense," rather than just trying to run fast as he could. "He had several speeds, all of them fast," explained Wilson. "But defensive backs had to figure out which one he was using and which one he was going to use."

Four times Hayes was named first- or second-team All-NFL. Three times he led the Cowboys in receptions, including back-to-back titles in 1965-66 when he caught a total of 110 passes for more than 2,200 yards and 25 touchdowns. For his 11-year career, Hayes accumulated 7,414 yards and 71 touchdowns. His 71 career touchdown receptions remain a Cowboys' club record.

Hayes' Receiving Record

Year	Team	G	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
1965	Dal	13	46	1003	21.8	12
1966	Dal	14	64	1232	19.3	13
1967	Dal	13	49	998	20.4	10
1968	Dal	14	53	909	17.2	10
1969	Dal	10	40	746	18.7	4
1970	Dal	13	34	889	26.2	10
1971	Dal	14	35	840	24.0	8
1972	Dal	12	15	200	13.3	0
1973	Dal	13	22	360	16.4	3
1974	Dal	12	7	118	16.9	1
1975	SF	5	6	119	19.8	0
11 Years		133	371	7414	20.0	71

RANDALL McDANIEL

McDaniel, Randall Cornell
 Offensive Guard 6-3, 276
 Arizona State
 HS: Agua Fria Union [Avondale, AZ]
 B: 12 / 19 / 1964, Phoenix, AZ

1988-1999 Minnesota Vikings
 2000-2001 Tampa Bay Bucs

Elected Pro Football Hall of Fame: Jan. 31, 2009

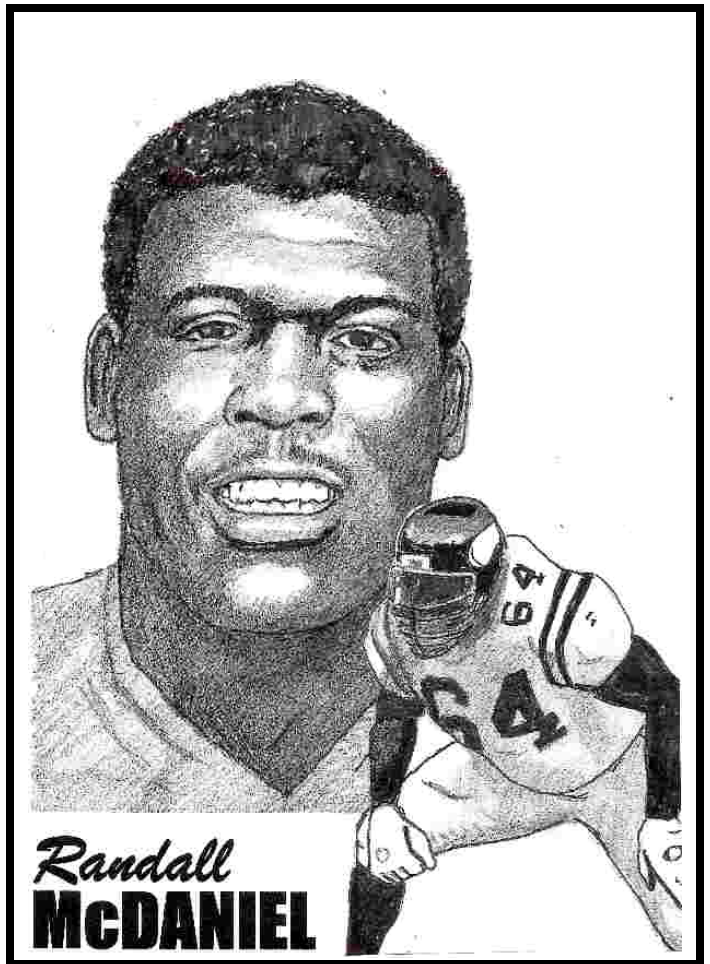
Selected in first round, 19th overall, 1988. . .Earned all-rookie honors. . .Started 202 consecutive games. . .Started 13 straight playoff games for Vikings. . .Blocked for six 1,000-yard rushers and five 3,000-yard passers during career. . .Anchored offensive line of explosive Vikings team that scored then-record 556 points, 1998. . .Named All-Pro nine consecutive times (1990-98). . . Selected to play in a record 12 consecutive AFC-NFC Pro Bowls (1990-2001).

The Minnesota Vikings used their first round selection (19th overall) in the 1988 NFL Draft on guard Randall McDaniel, an All-America and four-year starter from Arizona State. McDaniel, who immediately earned a starting role with the Vikings, played in all 16 games in his rookie season, 15 as a starter. His efforts were recognized that year as he was selected to several all-rookie teams and named a second-team All-NFC pick.

McDaniel continued to excel the following season as he embarked on a streak of 202 consecutive starts that continued through the end of his career. He also earned the first of 12 straight Pro Bowl berths.

In 1994, McDaniel was the leader of a rock solid offensive line that held opponents to just one sack every 22.7 pass attempts, the second-best ratio in team history. In 1996, coaches felt he was so talented that he could be used in ways other than just blocking. In a late season game against the Arizona Cardinals, McDaniel had two goal line carries. Then, in the Pro Bowl a couple months later, he caught a touchdown pass, becoming the first guard in AFC-NFC Pro Bowl history to accomplish such a feat.

The 1998 season was highlighted by the high-scoring attack of the Vikings offense that scored a then-record 556 points. Showing his skill at both pass and run blocking, McDaniel allowed only 1.5 sacks all season while clearing run lanes for Minnesota running backs to average 5.4 yards per carry on his side of the line.



After earning nine straight first-team all-pro selections (1990-98) and starting 13 consecutive playoff games for the Vikings, McDaniel joined the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for two final seasons (2000-01) before retiring from the NFL. Adding to an already talented offense, McDaniel in his first season with the Bucs, helped pave the way for a team that rushed for 2,066 yards. That included a team single-game record 250 yards rushing against the Dallas Cowboys. For his efforts, McDaniel was named to his final Pro Bowl.

In all, McDaniel blocked for six different 1,000-yard rushers and five 3,000-yard passers during his 14-season career. Regarded as one of the finest offensive linemen in NFL history, McDaniel was named to the NFL's All-Decade Team of the 1990s.

<u>Year Tm Gm</u>			<u>Year Tm Gm</u>			<u>Year Tm Gm</u>		
1988	Min	16	1993	Min	16	1998	Min	16
1989	Min	14	1994	Min	16	1999	Min	16
1990	Min	16	1995	Min	16	2000	TB	16
1991	Min	16	1996	Min	16	2001	TB	16
1992	Min	16	1997	Min	16	14 Yr		222

BRUCE SMITH

Smith, Bruce Bernard
 Defensive End 6-4, 280
 Virginia Tech
 HS: Booker T. Washington [Norfolk, VA]
 B: 6 / 18 / 1963, Norfolk, VA

1985-1999 Buffalo Bills,
 2000-2003 Washington Redskins

Elected to Pro Football Hall of Fame: Jan. 31, 2009

Bills' first-round draft pick (1st player overall), 1985 NFL Draft. . . Considered one of the most dominant defensive players in NFL history. . . His 200 career sacks is NFL all-time record. . . Recorded 10 or more sacks in an NFL record 13 seasons. . . NFL Defensive Player of the Year, 1990 and 1996. . . Named to NFL's All-Decade Teams of the 1980s and 1990s . . . First- or second-team All-Pro 11 times. . . Selected to 11 Pro Bowls.

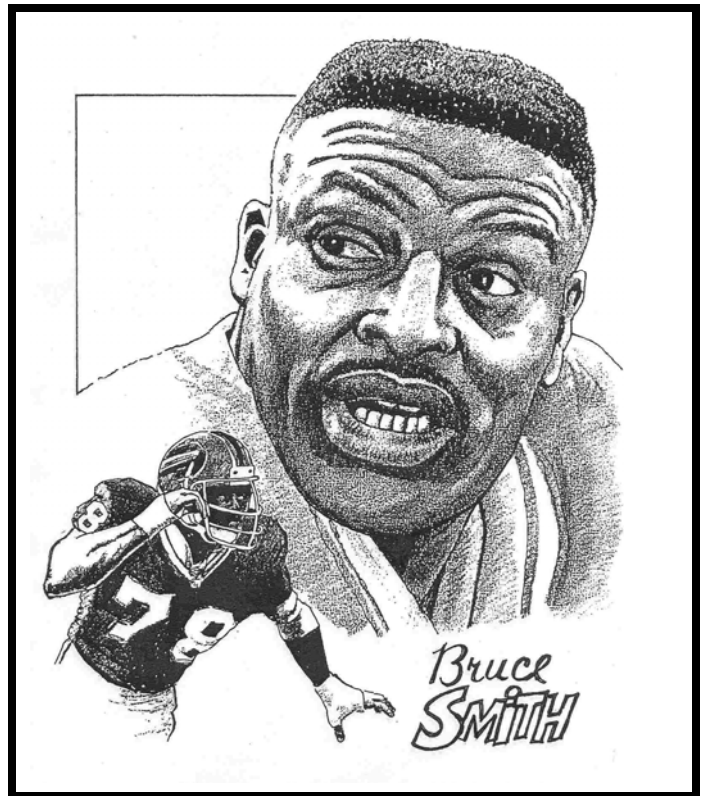
Bruce Smith was a dominant player during his 19 playing seasons with the Buffalo Bills (1985-1999) and the Washington Redskins (2000-03). His speed and strength made him one of the most feared defensive ends in the modern game. Teams routinely double, if not triple-teamed the former Outland Trophy winner and Virginia Tech All-America.

The first player selected in the 1985 NFL Draft, Smith quickly established himself as a starter on the Bills defensive line. Named the AFC Defensive Rookie of the Year by the NFL Players Association, he went on to be named the NFL Defensive Player of the Year in 1990 and 1996 and the AFC Defensive Player of the Year in 1987, 1988, 1990, and 1996. He also earned first-team All-Pro honors nine times and was selected to play in 11 Pro Bowls.

Although Smith's lightning quickness made him a devastating outside pass rusher, he was also devastatingly strong. "He is so strong," proclaimed Hall of Fame quarterback Warren Moon, "that he can bulldoze over you."

A key member of the Bills teams that won six AFC Eastern Division championships and four AFC titles, many observers feel that 1990 was Smith's finest season. That year he recorded 19 quarterback sacks and his dominant play frequently changed the complexion of the game. Against the New York Jets in Week 3 he recorded six tackles, two sacks, defended a pass, and forced two fumbles. In Week 14 against the Indianapolis Colts, he sacked quarterback Jeff George four times in the first 20 minutes of the game. And in Super Bowl XXV he came up with one of the biggest plays of the game when he sacked New York Giants quarterback Jeff Hostetler in the end zone for a safety, giving the Bills a 12-3 lead.

The NFL's all-time career sack leader (200), Smith's 13 seasons with 10 or more sacks is also an NFL record. Dedicated to staying in top physical condition, Smith was named to both the NFL's All-Decade Teams of the 1980s and 1990s.



Year	Team	Gm	Sk
1985	Buffalo Bills	16	6.5
1986	Buffalo Bills	16	15
1987	Buffalo Bills	12	12
1988	Buffalo Bills	12	11
1989	Buffalo Bills	16	13
1990	Buffalo Bills	16	19
1991	Buffalo Bills	5	1.5
1992	Buffalo Bills	15	14
1993	Buffalo Bills	16	14
1994	Buffalo Bills	15	10
1995	Buffalo Bills	15	10.5
1996	Buffalo Bills	16	13.5
1997	Buffalo Bills	16	14
1998	Buffalo Bills	15	10
1999	Buffalo Bills	16	7
2000	Washington Redskins	16	10
2001	Washington Redskins	14	5
2002	Washington Redskins	16	9
2003	Washington Redskins	16	5
19 Seasons		279	200

Additional Career Statistics: Interceptions: 2-0; Rushing: 1-0; Safeties: 2

DERRICK THOMAS

Thomas, Derrick Vincent
 LB-DE 6-3, 243
 Alabama

HS: South Miami [Miami, FL]

B: 1 / 1 / 1967, Miami, FL

D: 2 / 8 / 2000, Kansas City, MO (33)

1989-1999 Kansas City Chiefs

Elected to Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2009

Fourth player overall, 1989 draft. . . Defensive Rookie of the Year. . . Led NFL with team record 20 sacks; including NFL record seven sacks in one game, 1990 . . . Named to nine Pro Bowls. . . Accumulated most sacks in NFL during 1990s. . . Recorded 126.5 career sacks. . . All-NFL three times. . . All-AFC seven times.

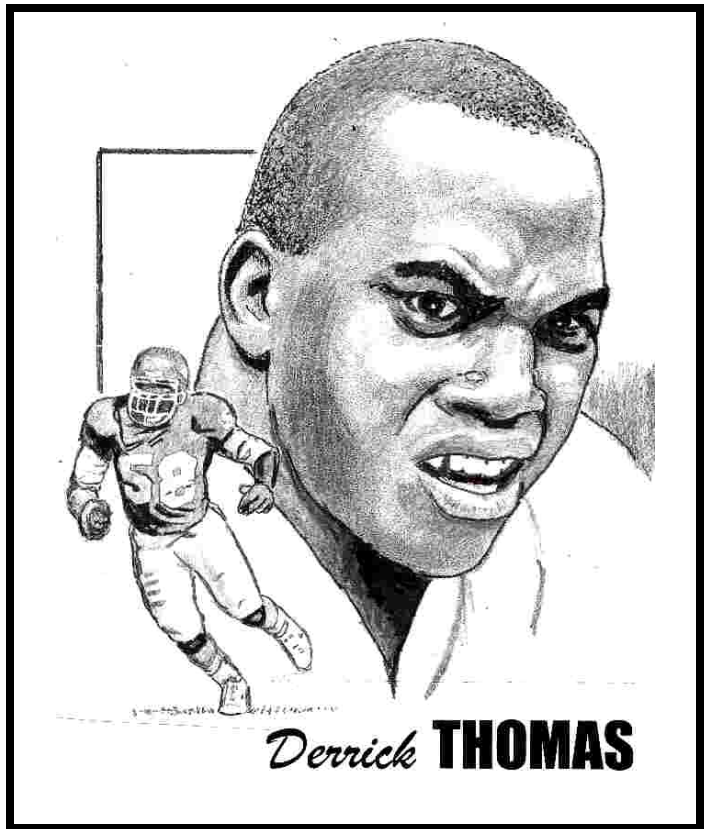
The Kansas City Chiefs selected linebacker Derrick Thomas as the fourth player overall in the 1989 National Football League Draft. A consensus All-America and Dick Butkus Award winner at Alabama, Thomas excelled as a pass rusher who set the school record for sacks.

His pass rushing specialty continued on the professional level as he amassed 10 sacks as a rookie for the Chiefs in 1989. He also added 75 tackles that season to earn Defensive Rookie of the Year honors. Following the season, Thomas was named to the first of nine straight Pro Bowls.

The 6'3", 243-pound linebacker showcased his talent in a big way during his second NFL season. He recorded a league-leading and team record 20 sacks that included an NFL record seven sacks in a game versus the Seattle Seahawks on November 11, 1990. He also recorded a team high six forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries, 63 tackles, five pass deflections and 35 quarterback pressures. His season-long performance earned him All-Pro recognition for the first time, an honor he would receive two other times during his career.

His extraordinary pass rushing skills continued throughout his 11-season career that was tragically cut short by his death following an automobile accident shortly after the 1999 NFL regular season.

No player amassed more sacks during the decade of 1990s than the 116.5 sacks by Thomas. He finished his career with 126.5 sacks which was the fourth highest total by a linebacker in NFL history. Thomas had 10 or more sacks in a season seven times and recorded multi-sack games 27 times during his 169-game career.



In addition to his career sack total, Thomas also forced 45 fumbles, had 19 fumble recoveries, scored four touchdowns on fumble returns and added three safeties. His lone interception, which he returned for 20 yards, came during his final season in 1999.

Thomas, a member of the NFL's All-Decade Team of the 1990s, was named first-team All-AFC seven times during an eight-year stretch from 1989 through 1996.

His contribution to the Chiefs franchise was nearly immeasurable. Prior to his arrival in Kansas City, the team had made just one playoff appearance since 1971. In the 11 years that Thomas anchored the defense, the Chiefs finished first or second in the AFC West ten times, made seven playoff appearances, and won three division titles.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Gm</u>	<u>Sks</u>
1989	Kansas City	16	10.0
1990	Kansas City	15	20.0
1991	Kansas City	16	13.5
1992	Kansas City	16	14.5
1993	Kansas City	16	8.0
1994	Kansas City	16	11.0
1995	Kansas City	15	8.0
1996	Kansas City	16	13.0
1997	Kansas City	12	9.5
1998	Kansas City	15	12.0
1999	Kansas City	16	7.0
11 Seasons		172	125.5

RALPH WILSON, JR.

Wilson, Ralph C., Jr.

Administrator

Virginia, Michigan

Born: 10 / 17 / 1918, Columbus, OH

Buffalo Bills 1960-Present

Elected to Pro Football Hall of Fame: January 31, 2009

One of original founders of American Football League. . . During tenure as Bills owner, team won two AFL Championships and unprecedented four straight AFC championships. . . Bills 103 regular season wins, second most in NFL during 1990s. . . Helped lead AFL through early years making tough decisions that were necessary for league's survival. . . Began talks with Carroll Rosenbloom, then owner of NFL's Colts in January 1965, that eventually resulted in AFL-NFL merger.

Ralph Wilson was the man responsible for reintroducing pro football to Western New York when, as one of the original owners in the American Football League, he formed the Buffalo Bills in 1959. As the undeniable leader of the Bills, Wilson continues to play a major role among National Football League franchise owners as "the voice of reason," for his ability to tackle some of the NFL's toughest issues.

During his tenure as owner of the Bills, Wilson has watched two of his teams capture the AFL Championship (1964-1965) and AFC titles in 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993 on the way to an unprecedented four consecutive appearances in Super Bowls XXV, XXVI, XXVII, and XXVIII. The team also won AFL/AFC Eastern Division titles in 1966, 1980, 1988, 1989, and 1995. The Bills' 103 regular season wins in the 1990s were second best, behind only the San Francisco 49ers.

Always a football fan, Wilson first entered the pro football world when he purchased a minority share of the Detroit Lions. He later joined Lamar Hunt and the six other AFL originals who collectively became known as "The Foolish Club."

In the beginning, members of the NFL and the sports media regarded the AFL with considerable skepticism.

Even though the early years of the AFL were at best a struggle and Wilson was losing money, he "never once thought of throwing in the towel or selling the team." Determined to see the league succeed, Wilson even

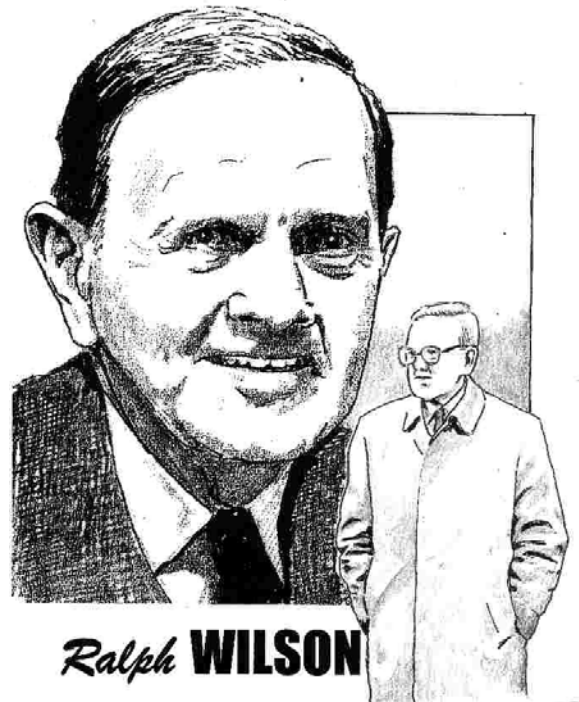
invested in another AFL team to prevent it from financial collapse. "The Foolish Club" did succeed and following initial talks in January 1965 between Wilson and the late Carroll Rosenbloom, then owner of the NFL's Baltimore Colts, a full merger plan between the two leagues was developed and implemented.

A former President of the AFL, Wilson served on the Expansion Committee of that league and the AFL-NFL Negotiations Committee. He was also prominent in the negotiations, which resulted in a 1977 agreement between the NFL Management Council and the NFL Players Association.

Once described as the "conscience" of the NFL, Wilson has also served as the Chairman of NFL Pension Committee and Labor Committee and currently serves on the Board of NFL Charities, the Super Bowl Site Selection Committee, and the NFL's Expansion Committee.

Championship Teams

1964 Buffalo Bills (AFL Eastern Division, AFL champions)
 1965 Buffalo Bills (AFL Eastern Division, AFL champions)
 1966 Buffalo Bills (AFL Eastern Division champions)
 1980 Buffalo Bills (AFC Eastern Division champions)
 1988 Buffalo Bills (AFC Eastern Division champions)
 1989 Buffalo Bills (AFC Eastern Division champions)
 1990 Buffalo Bills (AFC Eastern Division, AFC champions)
 1991 Buffalo Bills (AFC Eastern Division, AFC champions)
 1992 Buffalo Bills (AFC champions)
 1993 Buffalo Bills (AFC Eastern Division, AFC champions)
 1995 Buffalo Bills (AFC Eastern Division champions)



ROD WOODSON

Woodson, Roderick Kevin
 DB 6-0, 200
 Purdue
 HS: R. Nelson Snider [Ft. Wayne, IN]
 B: 3 / 10 / 1965, Ft. Wayne, IN

1987-1996 Pittsburgh Steelers
 1997 San Francisco 49ers
 1998-2001 Baltimore Ravens
 2002-2003 Oakland Raiders

Elected Pro Football Hall of Fame: Jan. 21, 2009

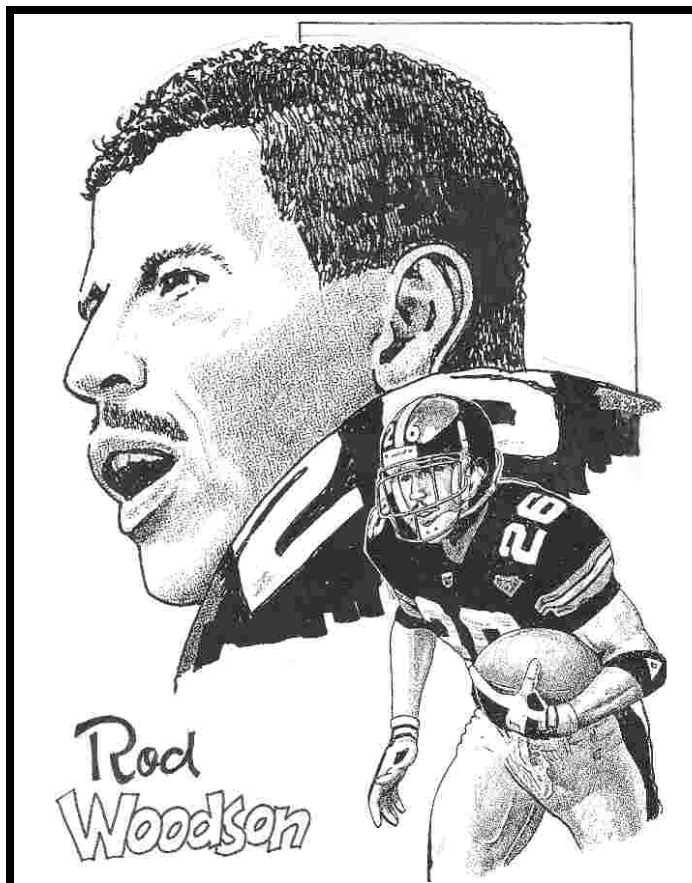
Steelers first-round draft pick (10th player overall), 1987 NFL Draft. . . Member of NFL's 75th Anniversary Team and NFL's All-Decade Team of the 1990s. . . NFL Defensive Player of the Year, 1993. . . Intercepted 71 passes in career. . . Is NFL's all-time leader in interception return yardage (1,483). . . Six-time first-team All-Pro choice. . . Earned All-Pro honors as cornerback, kick returner, safety. . . Named to 11 Pro Bowls.

Rod Woodson did it all during his college career at Purdue. He played running back and wide receiver on offense, played cornerback and safety on defense, and returned punts and kickoffs. As a result, it was no surprise when the Pittsburgh Steelers drafted the modern-day "triple threat" star in the first round of the 1987 NFL Draft.

Steelers coach Chuck Noll acknowledged Woodson's versatility by playing him at cornerback and as a kick returner, but he was too valuable to risk playing him on both offense and defense. Woodson responded by earning Pro Bowl honors in just his third season.

It wasn't, however, until Noll's successor Bill Cowher took over that Woodson really blossomed. In 1992 he was second on the team with 100 tackles and collected six sacks. The next season he had eight interceptions, 28 passes defended, forced two fumbles, two quarterback sacks, blocked a field goal attempt and recorded a team high 79 solo tackles. For his effort he was named NFL Defensive Player of the Year.

In his 17 NFL seasons (1987-1996 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1997 San Francisco 49ers, 1998-2001 Baltimore Ravens, 2002-03 Oakland Raiders) Woodson recorded 71 interceptions; 1,483 interception return yards; 2,362 punt return yards; and 17 touchdowns. The Fort Wayne, Indiana native also reached the end zone on an NFL record 12 interception returns, 1 fumble return, 2 punt returns and 2 kickoff returns. His interception return yards are also an NFL record and his 71 interceptions rank third all time.



Woodson, a member of the 1990s All-Decade Team, was named to the Pro Bowl 11 times; a record for a defensive back and in 1994 was one of only five active players to be named to the NFL's 75th Anniversary Team. The others were Jerry Rice, Joe Montana, Reggie White and Ronnie Lott.

Woodson's Stats

Year	Team	Gm	Int	Yds	Avg	TD	KR	Yds	Avg	TD
1987	Pit	8	1	45	45.0	1	13	290	22.3	0
1988	Pit	16	4	98	24.5	0	37	850	23.0	1
1989	Pit	15	3	39	13.0	0	36	982	27.3	1
1990	Pit	16	5	67	13.4	0	35	764	21.8	0
1991	Pit	15	3	72	24.0	0	44	880	20.0	0
1992	Pit	16	4	90	22.5	0	25	469	18.8	0
1993	Pit	16	8	138	17.2	1	15	294	19.6	0
1994	Pit	15	4	109	27.2	2	15	365	24.3	0
1995	Pit	1	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0
1996	Pit	16	6	121	20.2	1	0	0	0.0	0
1997	SF	14	3	81	27.0	0	0	0	0.0	0
1998	Bal	16	6	108	18.0	2	0	0	0.0	0
1999	Bal	16	7	195	27.9	2	0	0	0.0	0
2000	Bal	16	4	20	5.0	0	0	0	0.0	0
2001	Bal	16	3	57	19.0	1	0	0	0.0	0
2002	Oak	16	8	225	28.1	2	0	0	0.0	0
2003	Oak	10	2	18	9.0	0	0	0	0.0	0
17 Yrs	230	71	1483	20.9	12	220	4894	22.2	2	

Additional Career Statistics: Rushing: 1-0; Fumble Recoveries for TD: 1; Sacks: 13.5, Punt Returns 260 for 2362 yards and 2 TDs

PUNT RETURNS FOR TOUCHDOWNS

Part Five: 1990-1999

Compiled by Gary Selby

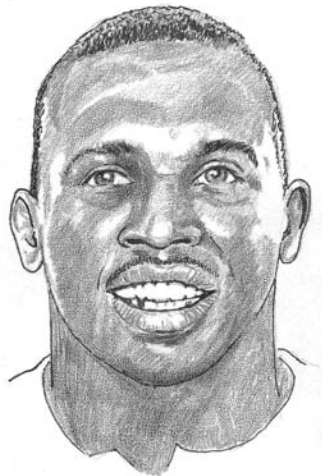
No.	Date	Scoring Team	W / L	Scoring Player	Opponent	Yardage
393	09 / 09 / 90	Giants	W	Dave Meggett	Eagles	68
394	09 / 16 / 90	Steelers	W	Rod Woodson	Titans	52
395	10 / 01 / 90	Bengals	L	Mitchell Price	Seahawks	66
396	10 / 28 / 90	Falcons	W	Deion Sanders	Bengals	79
397	11 / 04 / 90	Jets	W	Terance Mathis	Cowboys	98
398	11 / 04 / 90	Chargers	W	Nate Lewis	Seahawks	63
399	12 / 23 / 90	Chargers	L	Kitrick Taylor	Chiefs	55
400	12 / 29 / 90	Bears	L	Johnny Bailey	Chiefs	95
401	09 / 01 / 91	Redskins	W	Brian Mitchell	Lions	69
402	09 / 22 / 91	Redskins	W	Brian Mitchell	Bengals	66
403	09 / 29 / 91	Seahawks	W	Chris Warren	Colts	59
404	11 / 24 / 91	Raiders	W	Tim Brown	Bengals	75
405	11 / 24 / 91	Giants	W	Dave Meggett	Bucs	70
406	12 / 01 / 91	Bengals	W	Mitchell Price	Giants	78
407	12 / 15 / 91	Cowboys	W	Kelvin Martin	Eagles	85
408	12 / 15 / 91	Lions	W	Mel Gray	Packers	78
409	09 / 06 / 92	Chiefs	W	Dale Carter	Chargers	46
410	09 / 07 / 92	Cowboys	W	Kelvin Martin	Redskins	79
411	09 / 13 / 92	Redskins	W	Desmond Howard	Falcons	55
412	09 / 13 / 92	Lions	W	Mel Gray	Vikings	58
413	09 / 20 / 92	Bengals	L	Carl Pickens	Packers	95
414	09 / 20 / 92	Packers	W	Terrell Buckley	Bengals	58
415	10 / 25 / 92	Colts	W	Clarence Verdin	Dolphins	84
416	10 / 25 / 92	Steelers	W	Rod Woodson	Chiefs	80
417	11 / 01 / 92	Redskins	L	Brian Mitchell	Giants	84
418	11 / 09 / 92	49ers	W	Merton Hanks	Falcons	48
419	11 / 15 / 92	Cowboys	L	Kelvin Martin	Rams	74
420	11 / 15 / 92	Colts	L	Clarence Verdin	Patriots	53
421	11 / 22 / 92	Eagles	W	Vai Sihakema	Giants	87
422	11 / 22 / 92	Chiefs	W	Dale Carter	Seahawks	86
423	11 / 29 / 92	Browns	W	Eric Metcalf	Bears	75
424	12 / 27 / 92	Rams	W	Todd Kinchen	Falcons	61
425	12 / 27 / 92	Rams	W	Todd Kinchen	Falcons	35
426	09 / 05 / 93	Bills	W	Russell Copeland	Patriots	47
427	09 / 12 / 93	Cardinals	W	Johnny Bailey	Redskins	58
428	10 / 03 / 93	49ers	W	Dexter Carter	Vikings	72
429	10 / 03 / 93	Saints	W	Tyrone Hughes	Rams	74
430	10 / 24 / 93	Browns	W	Eric Metcalf	Steelers	91
431	10 / 24 / 93	Browns	W	Eric Metcalf	Steelers	75
432	10 / 24 / 93	Dolphins	W	O. J. McDuffie	Colts	71
433	11 / 25 / 93	Cowboys	L	Kevin Williams	Dolphins	64
434	12 / 12 / 93	Raiders	W	Tim Brown	Seahawks	74
435	12 / 13 / 93	Dolphins	L	O. J. McDuffie	Steelers	72
436	12 / 20 / 93	Giants	W	Dave Meggett	Saints	75
437	12 / 26 / 93	Browns	W	Mark Carrier	Rams	56
438	12 / 26 / 93	Saints	L	Tyrone Hughes	Eagles	83

No.	Date	Scoring Team	W / L	Scoring Player	Opponent	Yardage
439	12 / 26 / 93	Cowboys	W	Kevin Williams	Redskins	62
440	09 / 04 / 94	Browns	W	Eric Metcalf	Bengals	92
441	09 / 04 / 94	Giants	W	Dave Meggett	Eagles	68
442	09 / 11 / 94	Redskins	W	Brian Mitchell	Saints	74
443	09 / 25 / 94	Bengals	L	Corey Sawyer	Titans	82
444	09 / 25 / 94	Chargers	W	Darrien Gordon	Raiders	90
445	10 / 02 / 94	Bucs	W	Vernon Turner	Lions	80
446	10 / 09 / 94	Packers	W	Robert Brooks	Rams	85
447	10 / 23 / 94	Browns	W	Eric Metcalf	Bengals	73
448	10 / 23 / 94	Rams	L	Robert Bailey	Saints	103
449	10 / 30 / 94	Giants	L	Dave Meggett	Lions	56
450	11 / 20 / 94	Cowboys	W	Kevin Williams	Redskins	83
451	11 / 27 / 94	Chargers	W	Darrien Gordon	Rams	75
452	12 / 01 / 94	Bears	L	Jeff Graham	Vikings	60
453	12 / 11 / 94	Titans	L	Ernest Givins	Seahawks	78
454	12 / 18 / 94	Colts	W	Dewell Brewer	Dolphins	75
455	12 / 24 / 94	Redskins	W	Brian Mitchell	Rams	78
456	09 / 10 / 95	Steelers	W	Andre Hastings	Titans	72
457	09 / 17 / 95	Chargers	W	Andre Coleman	Eagles	88
458	10 / 02 / 95	Browns	L	Derrick Alexander	Bills	69
459	10 / 08 / 95	Panthers	L	Eric Guliford	Bears	62
460	10 / 08 / 95	Redskins	L	Brian Mitchell	Eagles	59
461	10 / 09 / 95	Chiefs	W	Tamarick Vanover	Chargers	86
462	10 / 12 / 95	Falcons	L	Eric Metcalf	Rams	66
463	11 / 05 / 95	Seahawks	W	Joey Galloway	Giants	89
464	11 / 23 / 95	Vikings	L	David Palmer	Lions	74
465	12 / 18 / 95	49ers	W	Dexter Carter	Vikings	78
466	09 / 01 / 96	Giants	L	Amani Toomer	Bills	87
467	09 / 08 / 96	Panthers	W	Winslow Oliver	Saints	84
468	09 / 08 / 96	Seahawks	L	Joey Galloway	Broncos	88
469	09 / 15 / 96	Packers	W	Desmond Howard	Chargers	65
470	09 / 29 / 96	Chargers	W	Darrien Gordon	Chiefs	81
471	09 / 29 / 96	Vikings	L	David Palmer	Giants	69
472	09 / 29 / 96	Rams	L	Eddie Kennison	Cardinals	66
473	10 / 13 / 96	Giants	L	Amani Toomer	Eagles	65
474	11 / 10 / 96	Rams	W	Eddie Kennison	Falcons	78
475	12 / 01 / 96	Packers	W	Desmond Howard	Bears	75
476	12 / 15 / 96	Packers	W	Desmond Howard	Lions	92
477	12 / 21 / 96	Patriots	W	Dave Meggett	Giants	60
478	12 / 22 / 96	Bucs	W	Karl Williams	Bears	88
479	09 / 14 / 97	Broncos	W	Darrien Gordon	Rams	94
480	09 / 28 / 97	Cowboys	W	Deion Sanders	Bears	83
481	10 / 19 / 97	Giants	W	Amani Toomer	Lions	53
482	11 / 02 / 97	Chargers	L	Eric Metcalf	Bengals	85
483	11 / 02 / 97	Chargers	L	Eric Metcalf	Bengals	67
484	11 / 09 / 97	Broncos	W	Darrien Gordon	Panthers	82
485	11 / 09 / 97	Broncos	W	Darrien Gordon	Panthers	75
486	11 / 10 / 97	49ers	W	Chuck Levy	Eagles	73
487	11 / 23 / 97	Jets	W	Leon Johnson	Vikings	66
488	11 / 30 / 97	Chargers	L	Eric Metcalf	Broncos	83
489	12 / 07 / 97	Ravens	W	Jermaine Lewis	Seahawks	89
490	12 / 07 / 97	Ravens	W	Jermaine Lewis	Seahawks	66
491	12 / 07 / 97	Redskins	W	Brian Mitchell	Cardinals	63
492	12 / 21 / 97	Bucs	W	Karl Williams	Bears	61

No.	Date	Scoring Team	W / L	Scoring Player	Opponent	Yardage
493	12 / 21 / 97	Chiefs	W	Tamarick Vanover	Saints	82
494	09 / 13 / 98	Ravens	W	Jermaine Lewis	Jets	69
495	09 / 13 / 98	Bengals	W	Damon Gibson	Lions	65
496	09 / 13 / 98	Jaguars	W	Reggie Barlow	Chiefs	85
497	09 / 13 / 98	Rams	L	Eddie Kennison	Vikings	71
498	09 / 13 / 98	Bucs	L	Jaquez Green	Packers	95
499	09 / 20 / 98	Bears	L	Glyn Milburn	Bucs	93
500	09 / 21 / 98	Cowboys	W	Deion Sanders	Giants	59
501	09 / 27 / 98	Ravens	W	Jermaine Lewis	Bengals	87
502	10 / 25 / 98	Packers	W	Roell Preston	Ravens	71
503	10 / 25 / 98	Seahawks	W	Joey Galloway	Chargers	74
504	11 / 02 / 98	Cowboys	W	Deion Sanders	Eagles	69
505	11 / 15 / 98	Seahawks	L	Joey Galloway	Raiders	56
506	11 / 15 / 98	Raiders	W	Desmond Howard	Seahawks	63
507	11 / 29 / 98	Bucs	W	Ronde Barber	Bears	23
508	12 / 13 / 98	Raiders	L	Desmond Howard	Bills	75
509	12 / 27 / 98	49ers	W	R. W. McQuarters	Rams	72
510	09 / 26 / 99	Seahawks	W	Charlie Rogers	Steelers	94
511	10 / 03 / 99	Rams	W	Az-Zahir Hakim	Bengals	84
512	10 / 18 / 99	Giants	W	Tiki Barber	Cowboys	85
513	10 / 24 / 99	Cowboys	W	Deion Sanders	Redskins	70
514	11 / 14 / 99	Colts	W	Terrence Wilkins	Giants	39
515	11 / 21 / 99	Bengals	L	Craig Yeast	Ravens	86
516	11 / 21 / 99	Jaguars	W	Reggie Barlow	Saints	74
517	11 / 28 / 99	Titans	W	Derrick Mason	Browns	65
518	12 / 05 / 99	Chiefs	W	Tamarick Vanover	Broncos	80
519	12 / 05 / 99	Lions	W	Desmond Howard	Redskins	68
520	12 / 12 / 99	Falcons	L	Winslow Oliver	49ers	58
521	12 / 12 / 99	Bengals	W	Craig Yeast	Browns	81
522	12 / 12 / 99	Vikings	L	Randy Moss	Chiefs	64
523	12 / 19 / 99	Broncos	W	Chris Watson	Seahawks	81



Desmond Howard



Tim Brown



Deion Sanders

When Lions Roared: Detroit's 1957 NFL Championship Season

By: Jim Sargent

The Detroit Lions have won National Football League championships four times since the team moved to the Motor City in 1934, but the most recent championship came in 1957. Detroit won the franchise's first NFL title over the New York Giants in 1935 with a well-balanced team led by the incomparable Earl "Dutch" Clark, an all-purpose quarterback later named to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Thereafter, the Lions waited fifteen years for the arrival of Clarence "Buddy" Parker, the reserve fullback who scored the final touchdown against the Giants in 1935. Hired by Detroit in 1950, Buddy served one season as backfield coach. In 1951, the Lions' board of directors picked him to succeed the fired Bo McMillin. Parker was an innovative, intense, hard-working head coach with a good offensive mindset who introduced the "two-minute drill" for late first or second half drives.

Parker was determined to win the NFL championship in 1951. After trading away his top two draft choices for proven players, his revitalized Lions fought for first place but narrowly missed, finishing with a 7-4-1 record and second in the National Conference (renamed Western Conference in 1953) to the Los Angeles Rams (8-4). Rebuilding again with draft choices and trades, Parker piloted the powerful Lions of 1952 and 1953 to NFL titles, both over the Cleveland Browns. By 1954 his highly regarded ball club, again quarterbacked by colorful field general Bobby Layne, later a Hall of Famer, won the West for the third straight time with a 9-2-1 record. Detroit played for a third consecutive league title, but Paul Brown's equally talented Cleveland team, led by Hall of Fame quarterback Otto Graham, routed the Lions, 56-10.

In 1955, however, following key injuries, including to Layne, and the retirement of giant middle guard Les Bingaman, Detroit fell to sixth (last) place with a 3-9 record. Still, the 1955 season was an aberration for Parker's team, and the Lions rebounded in 1956, fashioning a 9-3 record and finishing a close second to the 9-2-1 Chicago Bears. For 1957, Parker drafted a fine crop of rookies, including Steve Junker, a 6'3" 215-pound end from Xavier University. Junker ranked third in receptions for Detroit, making 22 catches for 305 yards and four touchdowns. End Jim Doran, the onetime Iowa State University standout who had a

receiver's good hands, led the Lions with 33 catches for 624 yards and a team-high five touchdowns. Halfback Howard "Hopalong" Cassady, the Heisman Trophy winner from Ohio State, ranked second with 25 receptions for 325 yards and three scores.

Spurred by Parker, Detroit acquired quarterback Tobin Rote in a six-player trade with the Green Bay Packers on July 25, 1957. The Lions, using an offense based primarily on running the football, now featured two first-rate quarterbacks. Bobby Layne, the free-wheeling 6'1" 195-pound signal-caller from the University of Texas, completed 87 of 179 passes for 1,169 yards and twelve TDs in 1957. Rote, the 6'3" 210-pound standout from Rice University who led the NFL in pass completions and touchdowns twice in his seven stellar seasons with the Packers, helped provide a one-two punch at quarterback. Both were starters, and thus Parker faced a ticklish decision every week. Evidently he planned to have the two signal callers split time, rather than either serve as backup. Linebacker Roger Zatkoff, who played alongside Rote for four seasons in Green Bay, called him a "very accomplished quarterback." For 1957, the strong-armed Rice standout completed 76 of 177 aerials for 1,070 yards and eleven touchdowns. He also tossed ten interceptions, while Layne had six passes intercepted. Still, Rote's leadership proved crucial, most importantly when he carried the Lions to three straight wins to end the regular season tied with the Forty-Niners, both at 8-4.

The Lions fielded standout veterans on offense like Layne, Rote, end Jim Doran, center Charlie Ane, guard Harley Sewell, and tackle Lou Creekmur as well as defensive stalwarts such as linebacker Joe Schmidt, tackle Darris McCord, safety Jack Christiansen, and defensive back Yale Lary. Also, several rookies made strong contributions. Following the preseason practices, Steve Junker and four other draft choices made the Lions, notably defensive back Terry Barr, from the University of Michigan, guard-tackle John Gordy, from the University of Tennessee, and tackle Ken Russell, from Bowling Green State. Also, the Lions traded with the Forty-Niners for John Henry Johnson, the team's only African-American player and later a Hall of Famer; dealt with Cleveland for hard-hitting Roger Zatkoff, the

Green Bay All Pro; and signed Gary Lowe, a defensive back from Michigan State who played for the Washington Redskins, but was released after one game in 1957.

By the mid-1950s, the Motor City's professional sporting life was dominated by the two-time NFL champion Lions, the NHL's Red Wings, who won three Stanley Cups between 1951 and 1955, and the Tigers, who climbed from fifth to fourth place in the American League in 1957. "Detroit has always liked professional football," Tex Maule observed in *Sports Illustrated* on January 6, 1958. "Detroit is a lusty, thriving, vigorous city and it has found a soul mate in the lusty, thriving, vigorous game." Indeed, the Lions captured the hearts of Detroit residents and fans all over Michigan. In Detroit and across Michigan, home to America's auto industry, the Lions were known as a hard-hitting, blue-collar team with a penchant for after-hours partying and drinking. That image, regardless of accuracy, seemed to fit the mindset of large numbers of fans who identified with their heroes in the Honolulu blue and silver uniforms. The Lions played their games at Briggs Stadium, home also to the Tigers. A cavernous facility that opened in 1938, the stadium now seated more than 54,000.

Detroit's up-and-down 1957 season kicked off with a disheartening note on August 12, when Buddy Parker, who, in private, often threatened to resign, made a surprise statement to the annual "Meet the Lions" banquet at Detroit's Statler Hotel. Seated on the dais before an audience of more than 600 officials, sportswriters, and fans, Parker said, "I can't handle this team anymore," and he quit. The temperamental coach left the hotel and flew out of town that night. Shortly after he departed, team officials named George Wilson as head coach. Wilson, forty-three years old, was a standout end with the Bears for ten seasons starting in 1937, and he had served as a Detroit assistant since 1949. Using Parker's offense and defense, the former Northwestern gridder had Detroit playing well. The Lions won three exhibitions but lost the fourth, 20-14, to the Pittsburgh Steelers, now coached by Parker. After finishing with a 3-3 mark, Detroit seemed poorly motivated when the regular season began.

On Sunday, September 29 in the opener at Baltimore, gravel-voiced Bobby Layne, Detroit's acknowledged leader since he arrived in 1950, moved the Lions to a touchdown on the second drive. Layne completed a 58-yard pass to end

Dave Middleton, the former Auburn standout, and Hopalong Cassady, the 5'10" halfback, ran two yards for his first career score. After that, Unitas, the onetime Steeler castoff, picked apart Detroit's secondary with four scoring passes, one each in the first and third periods and two in the second. Steady Bert Rechichar kicked four extra points and a pair of field goals, lifting Baltimore to a 34-7 lead after three periods. In the fourth quarter, Tobin Rote, who played the second half, directed another scoring drive, hitting wide receiver Jerry Reichow with a 22-yard rocket for a touchdown. Layne kicked both extra points, but the Lions' final score only made the game appear closer. Baltimore's defense throttled the visitors, allowing 23 yards on the ground and pressuring Layne and Rote. Jack Christiansen picked off two Unitas aeriels and defensive back Carl Karilivacz intercepted one, but those were the only dents Detroit made in Baltimore's offense.

Bob Latshaw of the *Detroit News* called it the worst opening day loss for the Lions since the present ownership took over in 1948. Overall, wrote Latshaw, the Lions were "manhandled" by the Colts. Still, Rote proved his worth that afternoon. A big, mobile, hard-running quarterback dubbed the "Rice Rifle," Rote, observed Martin Hendricks of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, was a fierce competitor who fired passes to his receivers and ran the football with power. His exploits for Green Bay teams that never rose above the .500 mark in his tenure won him All-Pro recognition as well as a trip to the Pro Bowl in 1956. Actually, one of Tobin's best games that fall lifted the Packers to a 24-20 upset of the Lions in a hard-fought contest at snowy Briggs Stadium on Thanksgiving Day.

In week two at Green Bay's City Stadium on October 6, the Lions dominated the Packers, 24-14, boosted by the running of the 6'2" 210-pound Johnson, who rambled for 109 yards. Rote, despite a bad cold, got the start and led the offense early, completing 9-of-20 passes for 81 yards. Detroit's opening drive was fueled when, on fourth-and-12 at the Packer 45-yard line, Yale Lary faked a punt and circled right end for 22 yards and a first down. Five plays later, Rote smashed over right end for two yards and Detroit's first touchdown. Three plays later, the Lions struck again. Christiansen, the elusive 6'1" speedster from Colorado State who was later selected for the Hall of Fame, picked off Babe Parilli's pass on the Packer 29 and, with timely blocking, scored. Layne kicked both extra points

and the Lions led, 14-0. In the second quarter, after the Packers went three plays and out, Layne capped a march with his short field goal for a 17-0 lead. Detroit's final score came on the first play of the fourth quarter when halfback Gene Gedman's plunge climaxed a 50-yard drive. Layne's kick made it 24-0, and two late Packer scores made no difference in the outcome.

On October 13 at Briggs Stadium, the Lions defeated the Los Angeles Rams, 10-7. According to George Puskas of the *Detroit Free Press*, the Lions' offensive guys cheered afterward in the locker room, "Yeah, defense! Yeah, defense!" The cheers were fitting, because Detroit's backfield picked off six aeriels thrown by Norm Van Brocklin, who completed 5-of-18 passes for the Rams. But the biggest incomplection occurred when end Elroy "Crazylegs" Hirsch, later a Hall of Famer, had the football slip through his hands on Detroit's goal line in the game's waning minutes. Christiansen and Yale Lary, each with two interceptions, paced Detroit's aggressive defenders. In the second quarter, when all of the points were scored, Lary ran one theft 30 yards to the Rams' 15, and the play set up Rote's touchdown pass to Reichow. Following Rote's 47-yard completion to Gene Gedman, Layne kicked a 24-yard field goal for a 10-7 lead. Los Angeles scored first when Lary tried to pass off a fake punt, but failed at the Rams' 48. Four plays later, Van Brocklin hit Jon Arnett for a 12-yard TD. Hard-hitting Joe Schmidt, the Hall of Fame middle linebacker from the University of Pittsburgh, led the pressure defense, with tackle Darris McCord nailing Van Brocklin half a dozen times. Also, each team missed a field goal in the last quarter, with the Rams' miss coming on the game's final play.

Playing inspired football at home against Baltimore on October 20, Detroit made a last-ditch comeback to win a thriller that sportswriters later ranked as the fifth greatest victory in Motor City football history. Wrote George Puskas of the *Free Press*, Layne led a "simply unbelievable comeback." The Lions scored three touchdowns in the final eight minutes—the last two coming with 89 seconds to play—to stun the Colts, 31-27. Again Johnny Unitas picked apart Detroit's defense in the first half, once more hitting on four touchdown passes (Rechichar missed the final placement). Baltimore led, 27-3, with 3:40 gone in the third quarter. Suddenly the Lions began to roar. The pass defense tightened up, and Rote took the Lions on a long drive concluding with

what appeared to be a face-saving 14-yard touchdown pass to Steve Junker. With just over three minutes left in the period, Detroit trailed, 27-10. Wilson pulled Rote when the third quarter ended. Enter the confident Bobby Layne of yesteryear, who led a drive highlighted by clutch passes to Junker for a first down and a 26-yarder to Cassady that, after Layne's kick, cut the deficit to 27-17.

With a crowd of 55,764 rocking the stadium at the corners of Michigan and Trumbull, the Lions' rugged defense stopped the Colts. After a punt, Layne led a drive featuring Cassady's circus catch of a 30-yard aerial, and he was pushed out of bounds at the one-foot line. John Henry Johnson barreled over the goal, Layne booted the point after, and the scoreboard read, Baltimore 27, Detroit 24. Time was running out for Baltimore. After the kick, Unitas, facing third and long, flipped a swing pass to Lenny Moore, who circled left end but was jolted at the 29-yard line by Carl Karilivacz, causing a fumble that Yale Lary recovered. Layne called a play suggested by Rote and Cassady, "8 drag," and Cassady beat former Lion Milt Davis deep. Layne floated the pass, and Cassady made the catch as he crossed the goal line. The clock showed 44 seconds left when Layne converted for the final 31-27 margin. Baltimore returned the kickoff to the Colts' 24. After a completion for five yards, Unitas was hit hard and fumbled, Detroit end Gerry Perry recovered on the 18, and the Lions ran out the clock. Detroit, Baltimore, and San Francisco now shared the Western Conference lead with 3-1 records.

On October 27 at the Los Angeles Coliseum, the Rams rode a fast start and three early scoring drives of nine plays each to defeat the Lions, 35-17. Los Angeles jumped to a 21-0 lead with less than three minutes gone in the second quarter. Fullback "Tank" Younger scored first on a three-yard burst, and Norm Van Brocklin finished the second and third drives with one-yard runs. Layne marched the Lions to a touchdown, capped by Gedman's one-yard plunge. Layne also kicked a nine-yard field goal with 52 seconds to go in the half, cutting the deficit to 21-10. In the second half, Rote led Detroit to a touchdown, with the versatile Reichow scoring on a six-yard pass. Trailing 21-17, the Lions appeared set for another stirring comeback, but it was not to be. Two plays into the fourth period, Jesse Whittenton, a fleet defensive back, picked off Rote's aerial and returned it to Detroit's 9. Three plays later, Van

Brocklin hit Leon Clarke for a touchdown, and the conversion upped LA's lead to 28-17. When the Lions stopped another Rams' march, Layne came off the bench. A few plays later, Bobby checked off a play at the line. But Johnson missed the audible, and Layne's pass bounced off his back into the arms of linebacker Dick Daugherty, who raced 32 yards for the clinching score.

One week later, on November 3, Detroit lost at San Francisco, 35-31, leaving the Motor City club with a 3-3 record. The Lions, who used to stay on the West Coast between games to practice and save travel time, trailed 28-10 with ten minutes left in the game. At that point, Rote began Detroit's comeback. Tobin climaxed an 80-yard drive with a 31-yard bullet to Jim Doran in the end zone, and Layne's kick cut the margin to 28-17. After forcing the Forty-Niners to punt, the Lions finished an 80-yard march when Rote hit Junker with a 15-yard scoring pass. The conversion made it 28-24 with 3:10 to go. Following the kickoff, two runs gained no yardage. On third down, Hugh McElhenny fumbled at the eight-yard line, and Jim Martin recovered. One play later, Rote found Doran in the end zone, and the Lions' bench went wild! Detroit led, 31-28, with 1:20 remaining. Tittle, however, rallied San Francisco. On the fourth play after the kickoff return, Y.A. passed to McElhenny, and "The King" carried to the Lions' 41, where Tittle called the last timeout. With 0:19 to play, the former LSU great arched an "Alley-Oop" pass to R.C. Owens in the end zone. The high-leaping 6'3" rookie flanker, a former College of Idaho basketball and football star, caught the football between Jack Christiansen and halfback Jim David. After a last-gasp Rote aerial failed, the Forty-Niners won, topping the Western Conference with a 5-1 record and taking a two game lead over the 3-3 Lions.

On November 10, Detroit traveled to Philadelphia and won a bruising battle, 27-16. At Connie Mack Stadium (formerly Shibe Park), Layne, who took over from Rote in the second quarter despite bruised ribs, threw three touchdown passes in six completions (he went 6-for-8 in the period), lifting Detroit to a halftime lead of 21-9. To help contain the Eagles, defensive assistant Buster Ramsey used relays of six tackles and ends for the four-man front: Gil Mains, Bob Miller, Ray Krouse, Darris McCord, Gene Cronin, and Gerry Perry. The front four harassed the Eagle quarterbacks all day, leading to 61 yards in losses and three picks—one each by Gary Lowe, Jack Christiansen, and Jim Martin. After an early Rote

fumble, Bobby Walston kicked a field goal. In the second period, Layne moved Detroit to paydirt in ten plays, with John Henry Johnson gaining big chunks of yardage. Layne converted and Detroit led, 7-3. On the next series, Eagles' quarterback Al Dorow connected with Walston on a 49-yard pass play. Dorow sneaked the final yard for the TD, but Walston flubbed the kick, leaving the Eagles ahead, 9-7. Layne struck back quickly. On the second play after the kickoff, he found Jim Doran in the end zone with a perfectly-thrown 43-yard pass, and Doran made a leaping reception between two defenders. After stopping the Eagles again, Layne led a three-play scoring thrust, and Hopalong Cassady scored the touchdown on a seven-yard reception. Layne's extra point put the Lions ahead, 21-9. He also kicked two field goals in the second half. The victory, coupled with the Forty-Niners' 37-24 loss to the Rams, left Detroit one game behind San Francisco.

At Briggs Stadium on Sunday, November 17, Detroit dominated San Francisco and won, 31-10. For the second week in a row, Layne led three touchdown drives in the second quarter, while Tittle's Forty-Niners managed only Gordy Soltau's 22-yard field goal. Altogether, Layne, the Texas All-American, marched the Lions 222 yards in 16 plays for three TDs while going 17-for-24 for 250 yards. His leadership made the second half, said Watson Spaelstra of the *Detroit News*, "a mopping-up operation." Tobin Rote opened the third quarter, and Detroit's first march resulted in a 22-yard field goal by Jim Martin. Midway through the final period, Rote led another drive, capping it with an eight-yard touchdown pass to Steve Junker. By then Detroit's defense had the game won. The front four, this week led by Gil Mains and Gene Cronin, threw Tittle for a total of 57 yards in losses on passing attempts. Rookie quarterback John Brodie directed a TD drive with less than five minutes to play, hitting Billy Wilson with a 20-yard scoring aerial. Meanwhile, R.C. Owens, defended most of the day by rookie Terry Barr, made only two receptions. Altogether, the Lions racked up 515 yards on the ground and through the air. Eight receivers, led by Doran with six catches for 137 yards and a score, gained for 370 yards. Bob Latshaw of the *Free Press* said the Lions rolled over San Francisco with "ridiculous ease," lifting Detroit into a three-way tie for first with the Forty-Niners and the Colts, all with 5-3 ledgers.

After looking like potential champions against the Eagles, Detroit dropped a crucial game at home

to Chicago, 27-7. After stopping the Bears' first march on downs, the Lions, led by Layne, drove 77 yards on eleven plays with Gene Gedman and John Henry Johnson lugging the leather. Gedman crossed the goal on a 7-yard run, and Layne converted for a 7-0 lead. An interception by each team prevented further scoring in the opening period. Chicago returned to the running game in the second quarter, riding the power of fullback Rick Casares and halfback Bobby Watkins, who scored from Detroit's 7. On the next series, Layne fumbled at the Lions' 15. Four plays later, the Bears settled for a 10-yard field goal by George Blanda, taking a 10-7 lead. Chicago stopped another Detroit drive, and three plays later Casares scored on a 25-yard jaunt. Blanda's extra point made the score 17-7 at halftime. In the third period, after the Lions lost a fumble on their 15-yard line, the Bears only needed quarterback Ed Brown's five-yard pass and two short runs by Casares for another TD. Blanda kicked his second field goal early in the fourth quarter, upping the lead to 27-7, and Chicago's defense continued to shut down Detroit. Following the first drive, Layne was "inefficient," said crotchety Watson Spoelstra of the *News*, and Rote was "scatterarmed." Observed George Puskas of the *Free Press*, Rote gave "possibly his weakest play of the season." Ed Brown, who converted on most of Chicago's third downs, completed 7-of-14 passes for 79 yards, plus the Bears gained 200 yards on the ground. In the end, the Lions' two-quarterback system had failed. The Motor City squad dropped to 5-4 and a second-place tie with San Francisco, after the Forty-Niners lost to the Colts, 27-21.

On Thursday, November 28, rising to the occasion at home, Detroit defeated Green Bay, 18-6. The Lions, playing with their backs to the wall—as often seemed true in 1957—came through on a rainy, cold Thanksgiving Day before a near-capacity Briggs Stadium crowd of 54,301. Outplayed in the first half and trailing 6-3 on a soggy field, the Lions roared back after halftime. Following George Wilson's heated talk, Detroit, which had produced 20 points total in the combined third periods of nine previous games, scored every way possible in the third quarter against Green Bay. On the first play following the visitors' kickoff, John Henry Johnson, who alternated at fullback with the oft-injured Leon Hart (who gained 38 yards), ran over right guard and through the mud for 62 yards to score. The next Lion drive led to the second of Jim Martin's three field goals, boosting Detroit's lead to 13-6.

Each team failed to sustain a march, and Yale Lary's booming punt fell dead on Green Bay's 6-yard line. Darris McCord and Gerry Perry sacked veteran quarterback Babe Parilli in the end zone for a safety, giving the Lions a 15-6 edge. Green Bay's free kick gave Detroit the ball at their 34. Johnson and Layne took three plays to run it to the Packers' 37, where Layne suffered an injury to his left shoulder and had to leave the game. Tobin Rote took over and moved the Lions to the 10-yard line, where Martin hit his third field goal for the final score. In the end, the win kept the Lions half a game behind the Colts (6-3), who would play the Rams on Sunday.

At home on December 8, after an open Sunday, Detroit outlasted Cleveland, 20-7. In possibly each team's roughest game of the season, the arch rivals played in freezing conditions. The Lions mounted yet another second half comeback to win, despite injuries suffered by four regulars, notably Bobby Layne. On Detroit's third possession, Jim Martin kicked a 27-yard field goal late in the first quarter. Early in the second period, the Browns drove to Detroit's 10, where Lou "The Toe" Groza missed a 17-yard field goal. On the next Detroit series, Layne, back to pass, was hit hard by Cleveland's Paul Wiggin and Don Colo. Bobby's cleats stuck, and his ankle suffered. The Lions' leader was carried off the field and taken to Detroit Osteopathic Hospital, where X-rays showed he had a fractured ankle. Layne was done for season.

At the half, George Wilson gave his team a stern directive, demanding (said Watson Spoelstra) they "win one for Bobby Layne—he's won plenty of them for you." Minutes later, Detroit's second-half kickoff was smothered by Cleveland rookie Milt Campbell and three Lions in the visitors' end zone for an apparent safety, but the officials ruled it a touchback—a call that sparked the Detroiters to life. The boisterous crowd of 55,518 (which set a franchise record of 334,447 for six home games), began whooping it up for the Lions, who held the Browns on downs. After a punt, Rote began a scoring march keyed by two passes to Dave Middleton. Rote's second dart was a 10-yarder that Middleton grabbed in the end zone with 6:47 showing on the clock. Just before the quarter ended, Cleveland rookie Milt Plum completed a quick drive with a 58-yard scoring pass to Ray Renfro. The Browns sustained another long drive, until Joe Schmidt inspired a defensive stand, stopping halfback Chet Hanulak on fourth-and-inches at Detroit's 4. Rote led a

march that ended when Martin booted a 27-yard field goal, giving Detroit a 13-7 lead. Cleveland responded with a drive that ended with Brown's fumble at Detroit's 27. Six plays later, with less than half a minute to go, John Henry Johnson scored from Cleveland's 4. Martin converted, and the Lions departed with a hard-fought victory.

The twelfth and final week of the topsy-turvy regular season pitted Detroit, minus Layne, against Chicago at Wrigley Field, Baltimore at Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles, and Green Bay at Kezar Stadium in San Francisco. On Saturday, December 14, Watson Spoelstra, the likeable *Detroit News* scribe credited with sparking the idea of the Sunday morning Baseball Chapel, observed that Layne and Reichow stood ready to help Rote against the Bears. Recalled Roger Zatkoff in a 2008 interview, "Even when he was on crutches, you would see Bobby Layne on the sideline, critiquing the defense as well as the offense. When he came off the field, Tobin Rote would come over and talk with Bobby about the next series. It was Layne's team all the way."

Playing at chilly Wrigley Field in Chicago on December 15, the Lions seized their third must-win game in a row, 21-13. The Motor City club started slowly, Rote suffered a miserable first half, and the Bears led at the break, 10-0. Leading still another second half comeback, Rote turned in thirty minutes of brilliant signal-calling. On the ninth play of an 80-yard offensive, Hopalong Cassady scored from the Chicago 3, and Martin's kick cut the lead to 10-7. After the Bears couldn't move the football, Rote led a 53-yard drive for the go-ahead touchdown. Dave Middleton grabbed a 9-yard bullet, marking Rote's 100th career touchdown pass. The key play was made by Iowa's Jerry Reichow, the 6'2" quarterback-turned-receiver. Facing third-and-12, Rote, calling a sideline pass, threw high and behind Reichow, who reached back, tipped the ball, juggled it toward his chest, and hung on as he hit the ground, making a critical first down. "Considering the importance of the play, that was the greatest catch I ever made," Reichow reflected in 2008. Following two runs, Rote tossed a 9-yarder to Middleton in the end zone. Martin's kick gave the visitors a 14-10 lead, and Detroit's defense continued to sparkle. With time running out and the Bears desperate to score, Ed Brown heaved a long pass that Christiansen intercepted, and the leader of "Chris' Crew" made a trademark 52-yard return. A few plays later, in the game's final minute, Johnson's two-yard plunge and Martin's

boot gave the Lions their final margin of victory. Detroit, winning just the franchise's fifth victory against the Bears in Chicago since joining the NFL in 1934, had become Rote's team.

In retrospect, when the Lions faced a big game they absolutely had to win or drop out of contention for the 1957 NFL title, they found a way to win, with tough-nosed defense, clutch plays by the stars, and big contributions from virtually every player. Detroit made the postseason for the fourth time in six years. On the same Sunday, the Rams eliminated the Colts in convincing fashion, 37-21. Also, the Forty-Niners tied the Lions—both now sported 8-4 marks—by defeating the Packers, 27-20. On Tuesday the Detroiters would make the plane trip to San Francisco, the site having been decided two weeks earlier by a coin toss in Philadelphia. In Cleveland on Sunday, December 29, the winner would face the Browns, champions of the Eastern Conference, for the NFL crown.

If the Lions ever won a "miracle" victory, that triumph came against San Francisco on December 22, 1957, at venerable Kezar Stadium on a sunny afternoon with a gridiron wet from rain and sprinkled with sand. The nationally televised game—blacked out in the Bay Area—was another first half disaster for Detroit, as San Francisco led, 24-7. At halftime, wrote Shelby Strother of the *Detroit News*, George Wilson screamed, "What the hell is happening to us?" Known for his fiery halftime speeches in which he often assaulted his team's pride, the coach summed up by saying, "You guys are quitters. We've totally given up out there." In a game ranked as the greatest in franchise history, the Lions, now wearing mud cleats, walked back to the field. They heard the public address announcer telling fans that tickets for the championship game with Cleveland would be on sale at the box office during the second half. Instead, the tickets proved worthless after the Lions gave a stirring performance that will be long remembered in Motor City lore. Detroit kicked off, and Hugh McElhenny, perhaps the greatest broken-field runner of the Fifties, wound his way for 71 yards, until Yale Lary forced him out of bounds on Detroit's 9. Spurred by Joe Schmidt, the fired-up defenders yielded just six yards on three rushes, and Gordy Soltau kicked a 10-yard field goal for a 27-7 lead.

The Lions ran three plays and punted, and Tittle and his offense took the field, ready to boost the score. On the first play, Y.A. was blindsided and

fumbled, and Bob Long, a 6'3" linebacker out of UCLA, recovered. With Johnson and Cassady slowed by injuries in the first half, Rote turned to Tom "The Bomb" Tracy, a 5'9" fullback from the University of Tennessee who had gained 46 yards all season. Nine plays later, Tracy, behind tough blocking, scored on a one-yard plunge. Rote provided the biggest play when he zipped a 14-yarder to Cassady on fourth-and-two at the 20. After Martin's kick, the Lions trailed, 27-14. Following the kickoff, Detroit held on downs. After a short punt return, the Lions had the ball at their own 41 with clock showing nineteen minutes left in the contest. Rote called Tracy's signal, and the 210-pound fullback from Birmingham, Michigan, sped around right end, cut back, and covered 59 yards for another touchdown. With Martin's conversion, Detroit, trailing 27-21, was back in the ball game. For the rest of the day, George Wilson later remarked, "It was a question of which was more dominating—our offense or our defense." On Detroit's next possession, the Forty-Niners keyed on Tracy, but Rote found Steve Junker for a 37-yard gain, and Junker carried to the Forty-Niners' 15. Rote sent Tracy around right end for ten yards. Rote banged ahead for three more, and, on the second play of the fourth quarter, Gene Gedman scored. Martin's accurate foot lifted Detroit into the lead at 28-27.

Throughout the second half, Schmidt was all over the field, slapping helmets, calling for big plays, and, partly by hard-hitting example, inspiring his teammates to greater heights. San Francisco got the football four more times, but on each possession a different Lion forced a turnover: Gil Mains recovered a Joe Perry fumble, Carl Karilivacz intercepted a Tittle aerial, and Schmidt made a big interception. The former Pittsburgh ace, the Lions' emotional leader, high-stepped his way to the 2-yard line before he was finally hauled down. Three plays later, with the clock showing two minutes to go, Martin booted a 13-yard field goal for the final margin of 31-27.

Ironically, the Lions scored 31 points three times against the Forty-Niners in 1957. Detroit lost the opener at Kezar Stadium, 35-31, won the rematch at Briggs Stadium, 31-10, and won the critical playoff in San Francisco, 31-27. To the players, the game meant an extra week's pay plus a shot at the NFL championship, including a winner's share estimated at \$4,200 per player. As one example of Detroit's sterling team effort, tackle Ken Russell, who dressed almost unnoticed in the Lions' raucous locker room, performed well in

place of the injured Charlie Ane. Reflecting on his career in 2008, Russell observed, "Not many people remember it, but we played the Forty-Niners in the playoff and the Browns in the championship game with the right side of the line manned by rookies: John Gordy at guard, me at tackle, and Steve Junker at end. And we had Terry Barr, another rookie, in the secondary. When was the last time any team won the NFL championship with four rookie starters?"

On Sunday, December 29, despite the NFL's hoopla in building up the nationally televised Sunday contest (blacked out for a 75-mile radius around Detroit), the Lions mauled the Browns, 59-14. Tobin Rote enjoyed his finest hour, passing for four touchdowns and running for another. Detroit's first drive resulted in Martin's 31-yard field goal midway through the period. On the ensuing Cleveland possession, Bob Long intercepted quarterback Tommy O'Connell and returned the pick to Cleveland's 19. After a Cassady run, Rote faked a pass and roared up the middle to the one-yard line. Tobin plunged over on the next play, and Martin added the point after for a 10-0 lead with 3:56 left in the period. Halfback Milt Campbell took Martin's kickoff, but he fumbled on the Browns' 22, and Terry Barr recovered at the 15. On third-and-nine, Rote hit Junker, who carried to the one. Three plays later, Gedman crossed the goal and Martin converted. "At the end of the first period," commented Louis Effrat of the *New York Times*, "the rugged Lions were hitting hard, outspeeding the Browns and showing considerably more alertness, had gained a 17-0 budge."

Cleveland scored early in the second quarter on Jim Brown's 29-yard touchdown run, cutting Detroit's lead to 17-7. After an exchange of punts, Rote again moved the Lions, with the big rushes coming with Johnson's 19-yarder and Cassady's 12-yard carry. Rote rifled a pass to Tracy for 16 yards, and the reserve fullback carried to Cleveland's 25 before he was tackled, and hurt. Following two incompletes, George Wilson, seeing his team facing third-and-long from the Browns' 26, called for a field goal. In the huddle, Rote, learning Junker could beat his man in the right flat, called a fake field goal. Junker recalled Rote saying, "What the hell? It's our money. Let's go for it!"

Martin set up at the 33-yard line, Rote kneeled to hold the try, and, on Frank Gatski's snap, Tobin got up and rolled to his right, flipping a 26-yard

pass to Junker as he crossed the goal line well ahead of Ken Konz, who had been drawn in by the fake. Martin kicked the point, and, to the delight of a partisan crowd of 55,263, Detroit led, 24-7, with 7:19 to play in the half. Following a Terry Barr interception and then Steve Junker's fumble on the Brown's 6, Barr picked off another O'Connell pass and returned it 19 yards for a score. Martin converted with 3:24 on the clock. At halftime, the Lions were in control with a lead of 31-7. In the second half, the Browns used ten plays to advance 80 yards and score, with Lew Carpenter going the final five yards around left end. Yale Lary returned the ensuing kickoff to Detroit's 22, and Rote broke the game open. Dropping back to the 10-yard line, Tobin arched a long pass to Jim Doran, who took it over his shoulder and completed a 78-yard touchdown play. Following Martin's kick, Detroit led 38-14 with just over six minutes gone in the period. Also, Junker scored on a 23-yard reception from Rote before the period ended. Midway through the fourth quarter, Rote hooked up with Dave Middleton for a 32-yard touchdown. Finally, backup Jerry Reichow threw a 16-yard touchdown pass to Hopalong Cassidy with 2:20 left to play.

Asked afterward if the team was out to prove Buddy Parker wrong, George Wilson, a pleasant man off the field, disagreed. Instead, Wilson told Sam Greene of the *Detroit News* that "the will to win was what carried the Lions to the championship. And after Bobby Layne was hurt, the boys all got the idea they could win with Tobin Rote." As if to confirm the point, Paul Brown commented about Detroit's best play: "I guess you'd have to say it was the one in which they obtained Tobin Rote in that trade with Green Bay before the season started." As a fitting reward, two weeks later Rote was named Hickok Pro Athlete of the Year for 1957, accumulating 234 points from a panel of more than eighty writers and broadcasters—and far outdistancing the next three nominees, bowler Don Carter (67), Y.A. Tittle (32), and Detroit Pistons' star forward George Yardley (30).

Further, the Lions, including Layne and Rote, who roomed together on trips, jelled and forged a closer team chemistry as the season progressed. In addition, the Lions became masters of the second-half comeback. For example, during the last three regular season games and the San Francisco playoff, Detroit scored 77 of the team's 90 points in the second half, while holding the four opponents to 13 points after halftime. Doak

Walker later pointed out what Layne believed: "He never lost a game in his life. Once in a while time ran out on him." Bob St. John aptly titled his biography of Layne, *The Heart of a Lion*. Layne had long since instilled confidence in his teammates. They could always fight back and win. Even after a fumble or an interception, Roger Zatkoff recalled, Layne would say, "Get the ball back, boys, and I'll get us some points." But as the season unfolded, Tobin Rote's performance reflected the same confidence and determination. By December, when he walked in the huddle, like Layne before him, all eyes turned toward the former Packer, because they knew he could get the job done. He was the leader. Rote remained an underappreciated quarterback with many Detroit fans, but the Lions could not have won the NFL title without him.

For the 1957 season, the Lions had the talent and experience, from the old pros to the rookies and new acquisitions, and the coaches, for the most part, made wise use of those players. As illustrated by the team's continued resilience and second-half comebacks, Detroit also possessed the intangibles needed to transform a very good team into a great one. Led by exceptional and, on occasion, sensational quarterbacking by Bobby Layne and Tobin Rote as well as a rugged defense spearheaded by the great Joe Schmidt, the Lions roared again, producing the greatest season in the history of Motor City football—and the last NFL title to date won by Detroit.

Sources:

Articles used include game stories for the 1957 Lions in the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* as well as playoff and championship stories from the *New York Times*. Also see Tex Maule's "All Hail the Lusty Lions" in *Sports Illustrated*, January 8, 1958, pp. 8-11; Martin Hendricks, "Rote was Highlight during Losing Era," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 11, 2007.

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The Shamrock Bowl

Houston, TX, December 17, 1949

by Mark Bolding

The final game in the history of the All America Football Conference (1946-1949) is generally regarded as the final championship game that took place on December 11, 1949 at Municipal Stadium in Cleveland, Ohio. In that game, the Cleveland Browns would win their fourth consecutive AAFC title. The Browns were the only team to ever win the AAFC championship, having won it four straight years from 1946 through 1949. In that final championship game, the Browns defeated the San Francisco 49ers, 21-7. But, this was not the final game in AAFC history. The final game actually occurred on December 17, 1949 at the Shamrock Charity Bowl All-Star Game at Rice Stadium in Houston, TX.

The National Football League and the All-America Football Conference had fought a nasty bidding war for players in the 1940's, but the sides had called a truce on December 11, 1949 when they announced a merger. The Browns and 49ers, along with the Baltimore Colts, would all be merged into the NFL for the 1950 season. The other AAFC teams ceased to be as the Buffalo Bills were merged with the Browns, the New York Yankees were split among the New York Giants and the New York Bulldogs and the Los Angeles Dons mixed with the L.A. Rams. The only team left out in the cold were the Chicago Rockets, who were disbanded.

For the City of Houston, there was hope that the formation of the new National-American Football League would bring an expansion team to South Texas. Glenn "Diamond Glenn" McCarthy, Houston oil tycoon, announced that he would sponsor an AAFC All-Star Game as a charity event to raise money for Holly Hall (Home for the Aged) of Houston, the Damon Runyon Cancer Fund and National Kids Day Foundation. In 1949, McCarthy had opened his \$21 million Shamrock Hotel on St. Patrick's Day. McCarthy owned many companies, over 400 gas and oil wells in Texas and was president of the United States Petroleum Association. McCarthy was a visionary Houstonian who loved his community and football. He dreamed of Houston being a professional football town. He had been tentatively assured of a new franchise by the AAFC, but that promise faded away with the merger. He was also a well connected man whose friends

included Hollywood celebrities. His Shamrock Bowl would give the community exposure and expose the community to professional football. The city had never before hosted a professional football game of this magnitude. It was McCarthy's Shamrock Bowl that would be the curtain call for the AAFC.

The game, which would pit the champion of the AAFC against a team of all-stars selected from the other six AAFC franchises, was the only all-star contest in the league's history. An imposing array of talent was picked for the game. The Cleveland Browns qualified by defeating the 49ers and they boasted perhaps the greatest team in the history of professional football to that point. The Browns went 14-0 in 1948 and were, along with the 1972 Miami Dolphins, one of only two teams in professional football history to accomplish an undefeated season. Led by quarterback, Otto Graham, and coached by the legendary Paul Brown, the Browns had posted a 56-4-3 record in their history. Stars for the Browns included fullback, Marion Motley, ends, Dante Lavelli, Mac Speedie and John Yonakor and center, Lou Saban. The All-Stars were led by rookie sensation, Y.A. Tittle, at quarterback from the Baltimore Colts, fullback, Joe Perry of San Francisco, and halfbacks, Buddy Young and Tom Landry of the New York Yankees. The All-Stars were coached by Red Strader of the Yankees and he and his assistants arrived in Houston about ten days before the game to begin the preparation. Strader's Yankees had lost a semi-final playoff game to San Francisco. The Browns arrived in Houston by rail on December 14, three days after their championship game victory in Cleveland. The Houston citizens were excited that the Browns arrived so soon and began to limber up at the Stadium just hours after checking in at the Shamrock. The weather in Houston during the week was disappointing, rainy and cold. But, Paul Brown had no problem with the elements having just come from miserable conditions the week before in Cleveland. When asked upon arrival if the rains would alter his team's practice plans, Brown responded, "I don't see why it should. We have been practicing and playing in rain all season." Houston was so focused on the game that the Houston Chronicle headline following the AAFC championship read, "*Browns Brush Aside 49ers To Qualify For Bowl Game.*"

The game was scheduled for a 2:00 pm kick-off with entertainment preceding it at 1:00 by radio stars, Jack Benny, Phil Harris (who starred on the Jack Benny Show) and Dinah Shore. The three entertained the crowd of 12,000 in a downpour.

Benny wore a Shamrock Hotel patrolman's raincoat and was munching on a hotdog. The fans, although small in number, were very enthusiastic about professional football coming to Houston.

The first ten minutes of the game was a mud brawl as neither team threatened. After two failed offensive series for the Stars, Coach Strader pulled quarterback George Ratterman of Buffalo in favor of San Francisco's Frankie Albert. Late in the first period, the All-Stars mounted a drive. Albert led the Stars on a 16-play drive starting from his own 32. Albert passed for 40 yards on the drive, connecting on passes to Chet Mutryn of Buffalo and Lamar Davis of the Colts to move the ball to the 26-yard line of the Browns. He then hit Otto Schnellenbacher of the Yankees for a first down at the 15. Buddy Young of the Yankees picked up five yards to the nine and Joe Perry of the 49ers got five and a first down at the four. From there, Mutryn carried twice for the score. His touchdown coming on a two-yard dive into the end zone with 1 ½ minutes to play in the first quarter. Albert's extra point was blocked by the Browns' line and the Stars led 6-0.

On the last play of the first quarter, the Browns Marion Motley burst through the line a jaunted 59 yards. He was brought down on the Stars 25-yard line. The Browns surged on the ground to the two-yard line, but were held on a goal line stand at the one. The All-Stars were forced to punt from deep in their own territory. The Yankees' Tom Landry punted to Cliff Lewis who returned it to the Stars' 40. On the first play, Graham hit Dub Jones who took it in at the five and skidded across the goal line. Lou Groza's extra point made the score 7-6 in favor of the Browns.

On the ensuing kick off, the Stars were assessed a penalty for clipping and had to start at their own nine-yard line. From there, the Stars mounted a 91-yard drive on 12 plays behind the passing of Albert and the running of Young. The big play of the drive came from the Browns' 26, when Young shot off tackle, sprinted to his right and took the ball 23 yards to the Cleveland 13. After a loss of two on first down, Albert, completely surrounded by Browns, passed to Al Baldwin of Buffalo who shook off defenders at the five and carried it in for a 25-yard touchdown. The score was 12-7 at the half.

In the second half, the defenses played to a stalemate in the mud. The Browns threatened three times in the fourth quarter. Early in the period, the Browns drove from the All-Stars 44 to the 16, but Jim Cason of San Francisco intercepted a Graham pass.

With eight minutes left, the Browns got a huge break when Young fumbled a pitch out from Albert and George Young recovered at the Stars' 21. But, on fourth down from the 17, Graham's pass to Edgar Jones was knocked down by Pete Layden of the Yankees. The Browns got one more chance starting at their own 32 after a punt late in the game. With passes to Dante Lavelli (29 yards) and Tom James (12 yards), Graham moved the champions to the All-Star 29. But, the Stars sacked Graham for a ten-yard loss on first down and held the Browns from there. The final was 12-7. The All-Star defense put pressure on Graham all day. It was unusual for the Browns to encounter such stern resistance in their short history. Graham was sacked for 55 yards in losses. It was only the fifth loss in franchise history.

It was the first game in the city's history that the players and the fans in the stands were integrated. The newspapers of the day noted the lack of racism among the Houston crowd as Buddy Young received the loudest cheers throughout the afternoon. He was the leading ground gainer on the day, rushing for 75 yards on 12 carries as the All-Stars out-rushed the Browns 162-82 yards. The Browns' Motley rushed for 69 yards in eight carries. Graham was 8 of 19 passing for 101 yards. Albert completed 6 of 13 for 70 yards.

The crowd was amazed at the professional spectacle. They remained throughout the afternoon, in spite of the weather. One fan was asked if she liked the game. She said, "Did I like the game? I sat through it didn't I?" Jess Neely, coach of the Rice Owls was impressed at the tenacious play by the pros, given the rough weather. It was the last game at the old Rice Stadium. A new 50,000 seat Stadium was to open the next season. It was the final game in the history of the AAFC and may have been a fitting ending. The Browns had dominated their league like no team before or since. The All-Stars took the opportunity to show their abilities and to prove that the talent in the league was not confined to the Cleveland organization solely. The Browns would survive this loss to win the world championship in their 1950, Cinderella season in the NFL. McCarthy's dream of professional football for Houston would come to pass, but her citizens would have to wait eleven years for the formation of another upstart league, the American Football League, and the Houston Oilers.

Carl Hairston

By Roger Gordon

Originally published in The Orange and Brown Report

As a defensive assistant with the New York Giants on draft day 1976, Marty Schottenheimer had his eyes on an obscure defensive end from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore by the name of Carl Hairston. The Giants were set to heed the young assistant's advice when the Philadelphia Eagles swooped in and stole Hairston, in the seventh round.

Eight years later, Schottenheimer got his man. After a solid stint – including a Super Bowl appearance – in Philadelphia, Hairston was traded on Feb. 9, 1984, to the Cleveland Browns, of whom Schottenheimer was then defensive coordinator. Hairston was shocked, to say the least.

"I about dropped the phone when I got the call (from the Eagles)," he remembers.

Although Sam Rutigliano was Cleveland's head coach at the time, Schottenheimer was the one responsible for bringing Hairston to Cleveland. A NFC guy his entire career, Hairston was completely oblivious to the Browns, and the AFC in general. He was not a happy camper.

"I was pretty ornery when I got there," he admits. "I wasn't the friendliest guy in the world."

It didn't take long for Hairston to become acclimated to his new surroundings. He joined a Browns defense that was slowly becoming one of the league's finest. Hairston was thrilled to be a part of it.

"It was just great playing with Sam Clancy, Bob Golic, Clay Matthews ... guys like that," he says. "We had some talented players. Our corners were two of the best in the league in bump-and-run, which gave us (the defensive line) more time to rush the passer."

Hairston says the entire defensive unit had a chemistry about it.

"We were a tight-knit group," he says, "on and off the field."

Despite a slow start in 1984 that resulted in a mid-season coaching change in which Schottenheimer replaced the fired Rutigliano, the Browns fielded a defense that allowed the fewest yards in the AFC. The unit was one of the stingiest in the league for the duration of Hairston's days in Cleveland, through 1989.

"Big Daddy," as strength coach Dave Redding nicknamed Hairston due to his 6-foot-4, 260-pound frame and "ancient" age of 31, led the Browns in sacks in 1986 and 1987. He totaled 37.5 for his Browns career.

Hairston's contributions were a large part of a pigskin revival on the North Coast that saw the Browns leave the doldrums of the 1970s and early 1980s in the dust. There were five straight playoff berths, four division titles and three AFC Championship Games. Only John Elway's remarkable feats left Hairston's Super Bowl with the Eagles as his lone trip to the Big Game.

On the lighter side, perhaps Hairston's most memorable individual moment with the Browns occurred, believe it or not, with the football in his hands. In a home game against the Cincinnati Bengals on Dec. 13, 1987, "Big Daddy" was on the receiving end of a lateral from Matthews after the Browns' linebacker had intercepted Boomer Esiason at the Cleveland four-yard-line. Matthews returned the ball to the Browns' 40 when he noticed Hairston, his only teammate in the vicinity, lumbering behind him looking for someone to block.

"Clay looks back at me," Hairston laughs, "and I'm like, 'Oh, Clay, don't do what I think you're gonna do.'"

Matthews did. He lateraled the ball to "Big Daddy." Hairston huffed and puffed his way 40 yards before getting taken down at the Bengals' 20.

"Everyone was laughing," Hairston says, "when I got back to the sideline."

After the Browns released him following the 1989 season, Hairston spent 1990 with the Phoenix Cardinals before calling it quits. He stayed in the game, though, first as a scout for the Cardinals and Chiefs, then as defensive line coach for the Chiefs and Rams (including the Super Bowl XXXIV champions) before settling in his current position as defensive ends coach for the Green Bay Packers in 2006.

Hairston, 55, resides right in Green Bay with his wife of five years, Cindy. He has two grown children from a previous marriage, son Carl, Jr., and daughter Crystal. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing and traveling.

Hairston enjoyed his six years with the Browns tremendously. He will always have a soft spot for the team, as evidenced by what occurred on the afternoon of Sept. 8, 2002. That was the day in which a 39-37 Browns victory over the Chiefs turned into a horrifying 40-39 defeat due to the infamous Dwayne Rudd helmet fiasco. Hairston was inside Cleveland Browns Stadium that afternoon as a member of K.C.'s coaching staff. His heart, though, went out to the Cleveland faithful.

"Definitely," he says. "I felt terrible for those fans."

* * * * *

CARL HAIRSTON

DE-DT-LB

Hairston, Carl Blake
 Maryland Eastern Shore
B: 12 / 15 / 1952, Martinsville, VA
 Drafted: 1976 Round 7 Phi

6-3, 260
 HS: Martinsville [VA]

1976 Phi 14	1981 Phi 16	1986 Cle 16
1977 Phi 14	1982 Phi 9	1987 Cle 14
1978 Phi 16	1983 Phi 16	1988 Cle 14
1979 Phi 15	1984 Cle 16	1989 Cle 16
1980 Phi 16	1985 Cle 16	1990 Pho 16

PFRA Elections

By Ken Crippen

It is time once again for PFRA elections. Since Bob Carroll and my jobs are influenced by the outcome of the elections, we are removing ourselves from the entire process. The Executive Director is appointed by the President and the Assistant Executive Director is appointed by the Executive Director. Therefore, Jeffrey Miller was appointed and accepted the responsibility for running the elections. All comments, questions, complaints, nominations and ballots are to go through him and not Bob or myself.

Now, let's get to the details. Send nominations to Jeffrey Miller for the following offices:

President: Presides over meetings of the Board of Directors, appoints the Executive Director, appoints the Editor-in-Chief of *Coffin Corner*, and makes sure that all corporate and tax responsibilities are fulfilled.

Vice-President: Chair of the Membership Committee. Responsibilities of the Membership Committee are determined by the Assistant Executive Director (appointed position).

Secretary: Responsible for the minutes of the Association and is the Chair of the Fundraising Committee. Responsibilities of the Fundraising Committee are determined by the Assistant Executive Director (appointed position).

Treasurer: Responsible for the finances of the Association, maintains books suitable for audit and under the discretion of the President, files any necessary reports or tax documents.

Each of these positions are for two-year terms, which will start January 1, 2010 and end December 31, 2012.

Whether you are nominating yourself or nominating another person for a specific office, please make sure they you/they are willing to fulfill all responsibilities of that office. If you are nominating someone else, Jeffrey Miller will contact that person to make sure they are willing to run for that office and are willing to accept all responsibilities of that office. ***Please note: All current officers need to contact Jeffrey Miller if you intend to run for re-election. You will not be automatically placed on the ballot.***

Jeffrey Miller
 300 W. Main St.
 Springville, NY 14141
 Phone: (716) 592-5710 (Please, no calls after 9PM Eastern)
 E-mail: ODOSAGIH@aol.com

ALL NOMINATIONS NEED TO BE TO JEFFREY MILLER NO LATER THAN AUGUST 1, 2009.

CLASSIFIEDS

4 FREE FOOTBALL WEBSITE:-www.boosterclubcfl.com (all lower case letters no spaces, if any difficulty in getting onto the site, contact www.digitalslingshot.com all lower case letters no spaces and they will assist you.). A different perspective on major league football of the 1960's. Also special items for sale.

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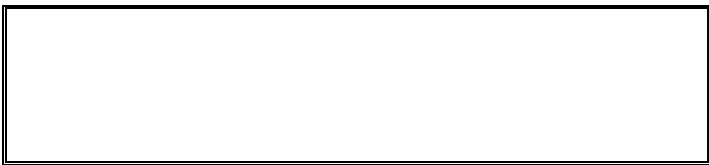
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BY THE WAY . . .

"Nurse, why is the office electric bill so high this month?"
 "Watts up, Doc."
 * * * * *

From David Neft: Nancy Kissinger is Henry's wife. Her maiden name is Maginnes and she is the daughter of Albert Bristol Maginnes (1920 Canton, 1921 NY). They were married 3-29-1974 (interestingly, just when the US Senate was starting to plan for the possible impeachment of Nixon).
 * * * * *

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