

RAYMOND HOWARD 'BULL' BROWN PASSES AWAY AT 100

by Thomas Corhern
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COOKEVILLE — The word “legend” gets passed around a lot in the sports world, but few people have ever seen or done all the things Raymond “Bull” Brown did for Cookeville and the Tennessee Tech sports community.



By all definitions, Brown was a legend.

Brown, who had just turned 100 over the weekend, passed away on Tuesday.

Hooper, Huddleston and Horner is handling the funeral, which is scheduled for 1 p.m. Saturday at First Baptist Church, with visitation between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the church. Burial will be in Crestlawn Cemetery.

Brown is survived by his wife, Mary, and daughters and sons-in-law Betty Rhea and Mousa Sadreddini and Martha and Larry Larkin of Nashville.

“Tennessee Tech lost a legend with the passing of ‘Bull’ Brown,” said TTU athletics director Mark Wilson. “He touched a lot of lives during his time associated with Tennessee Tech, which really was his entire life. Our prayers go out to his family and our lives are better because he touched them.”

Brown, as an undergrad at Tennessee Polytechnic Institute between 1933 and 1937, did something which is a rare feat today as he was a four-sport collegiate athlete, lettering four times in football, basketball and baseball and three in track and field — the most letters awarded to a Tennessee Tech student-athlete.

After graduating from TPI in 1942, Brown served in the Navy during World War II, then was a graduate assistant on the University of Tennessee football team after the war.

He received his Master’s Degree in health and physical education, then became the athletic director and head basketball coach at Milligan College.

But his heart belonged to Tech, where he returned as a coach and an instructor in 1947. In the coaching ranks, Brown was the men’s basketball head coach for eight seasons, assistant football coach for seven years and golf head coach for 16 years. As Tech’s golf coach, the Golden Eagles won three Ohio Valley Conference championships.

Even after retiring from the university in 1980, Brown, an avid golfer himself, continued to teach Tennessee Tech students until 2005, helping instruct the golf classes in Tech’s curriculum with the late Bobby Nichols and fellow Tech coach David Mays.

“He was just one of those unforgettable characters,” Mays said. “I thought the world of him. “What I liked the most about him was when we were teaching those golf classes, he gave everybody nicknames. He stuck to them. If he gave it to you today, he’d stick to it a week later. Some of them were hilarious. He even nicknamed Bobby — I think Bobby was ‘Rinky-dink.’”

Mays continued, “Readers’ Digest had a feature called ‘Most Unforgettable Characters.’ ‘Bull’ would be at the top of my list.”

For his performances as a student-athlete, Brown was inducted into the Tennessee Tech Sports Hall of

Fame in its 1976 class, the Ohio Valley Conference Hall of Fame in 1980 and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1983.

The university also established a scholarship in his honor.

Brown wasn't just a visible face for Tech athletics, he was also a familiar voice as he worked with WHUB as the station's sports director and hosted a daily sports program. He also worked on broadcasts of Putnam County high school sports and Tech football and basketball.

He was also an advocate for aging with dignity, teaching seniors to continue to be active. Governor Lamar Alexander appointed Brown as Chairman of the Tennessee Commission on Aging for eight years. Even at an older age, Brown continued to be active himself.

"He'd be out there on the course playing, well into his 90s," Mays said.

"He and I were still playing when he was 92 years old."

Brown was also a visible figure in the community, where he was a longtime member of the Cookeville City Council, serving for nine years between June 1979 through June 1988.

"He was a member of the City Council that hired me," said Cookeville City Manager Jim Shipley. "He was a great man and an excellent supporter."

Brown was also elected Vice-Mayor for two terms.

He was also a long-time member of Cookeville's First Baptist Church, where he served in a variety of different volunteer roles and was a Sunday school teacher for more than 40 years.

Brown and his wife were among the founders of the Silver Point Mission and taught Sunday school there for the Mission's first 10 years.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested contributions be made to the Raymond "Bull" Brown Scholarship fund, the First Baptist Church of Cookeville, the American Red Cross or a charity of your choice.

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Raymond Howard "Bull" Brown Obt.

Raymond Howard "Bull" Brown died peacefully Tuesday September 18, 2012 at his home in Nashville, three days after his 100th birthday. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, the former Mary Elizabeth Smartt (whom he married January 20, 1945 in Cookeville), and daughters and sons-in-law Betty Rhea and Mousa Sadreddini and Martha and Larry Larkin, also of Nashville. A long-time resident of Cookeville, he had a distinguished career at Tennessee Technological University where he served for more than 30 years as a faculty member and coach and where he was also a highly decorated student athlete. He graduated from Tennessee Tech in 1942 and served during WWII in the U. S. Navy. When he returned from the service he enrolled in graduate school at the University of Tennessee and also accepted a coaching position on the UT football staff. After completing his Master's Degree in Health and Physical Education at UT, he was named Athletic Director and Head Basketball Coach at Milligan College. He returned to his alma mater in 1947 as a faculty member and coach and remained there until his retirement in 1980. He was known to his numerous friends as "Bull," a nickname that he earned as a student athlete, and to the hundreds of students he coached and taught as "Coach." During his student days at Tech, Coach Brown earned 15 athletic letters in four separate sports, more than any other student athlete in the University's history. He twice received the coveted Athletic Medal. His coaching career at Tech included eight seasons as Head Basketball Coach, Assistant Football Coach for seven years and Head Golf Coach for sixteen years. Tennessee Tech won three Ohio Valley Conference golf championships under Coach Brown's

direction. He was also named OVC Golf Coach of the Year. He was inducted into the Tennessee Tech University Sports Hall of Fame in 1976, the Ohio Valley Conference Hall of Fame in 1980 and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1983. The Raymond "Bull" Brown scholarship was established in his honor at Tennessee Tech in 1995. For a number of years, Coach Brown worked with WHUB in Cookeville as the Sports Director and host of a daily sports program. He also provided "Play by Play" commentary for the Putnam County high schools and Tennessee Tech football and basketball games. Active in civic and community affairs, following his retirement, Coach Brown was a member of the Cookeville City Council for nine years and was elected Vice-Mayor for two council terms. He was appointed by Gov. Lamar Alexander and served as Chairman of the Tennessee Commission on Aging for eight years. As a long-time member of the First Baptist Church in Cookeville, Coach Brown served in a variety of volunteer roles and was a Sunday School teacher for over 40 years. He and his wife were among the founders of the Silver Point Mission and taught Sunday School there for the first 10 years of the Mission's existence. In 2005, Coach and Mrs. Brown moved to The Blakeford at Green Hills in Nashville to be close to their daughters and they attended Woodmont Baptist Church. A native of Alexandria, Tennessee, he was born September 15, 1912 to the late Nick and Willie Claire Brown. He was preceded in death by his brother, Walton Brown, and his sister, Helen Maxwell Carter. In addition to his wife and daughters, Coach Brown is survived by two nephews, Ron Maxwell (Judy) and David Maxwell (Vivian) as well as three nieces, Sara Warren (Billy), Lydia Holmes (Tim) and Esther Ruth Holder (Jack) and several great nieces and nephews. The family wishes to thank neighbors and the staffs of The Blakeford and Blakeford-at-Home, the staff at Alive Hospice, and Dr. John Thompson, Dr. John Bright Cage and Dr. Heidi Rand for their friendship and their loving care. Celebration of Life services will be held at the First Baptist Church in Cookeville on Saturday, September 22, at 1 pm. Dr. Randall Adkisson will officiate. The family will receive friends at the Church from 10:30 am to 1 pm, prior to the service. Interment with military honors will follow in Crest Lawn Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Noble Cody, Ken Peterson, James Seay Brown, Wallace Prescott, Dusty Rhoden, Flavious Smith, Kenny Sidwell, LaBron Bell, Ronpo bo Maxwell, David Maxwell and Bob Olsen. In lieu of flowers the family requests contributions be made to the Raymond "Bull" Brown Scholarship at Tennessee Tech, Box 1915, Cookeville, TN 38505, or to the First Baptist Church, 18 South Walnut Ave, Cookeville, TN 38501 or a charity of your choice. Hooper Huddleston & Horner Funeral Home is charge of arrangements (931) 526-6111.

*See more about the people and History of Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>