

SPORTS

Grambling's Eddie Robinson Remembered

Coach sent more than 200 players to NFL

(AP) -- Former Grambling coach Eddie Robinson, who created a football powerhouse at the small, black college in northern Louisiana that turned out hundreds of NFL players, is being remembered after his April 3 death. He was 88.

The soft-spoken coach spent nearly 60 years at Grambling State University, where he set a standard for victories with 408 and nearly every season saw his top players drafted by NFL teams.

Doug Williams, a Super Bowl MVP quarterback was one of them.

"For the Grambling family this is a very emotional time," Williams said. "But I'm thinking about Eddie Robinson the man, not in today-time, but in the day and what he meant to me and to so many people."

Robinson's career spanned 11 presidents,

several wars and the civil-rights movement. His older records are what people will remember: In 57 years, Robinson compiled a 408-165-15 record. Until John Gagliardi of St. John's, Minn., topped the victory mark four years ago, Robinson was known as the winningest coach in all of college football.

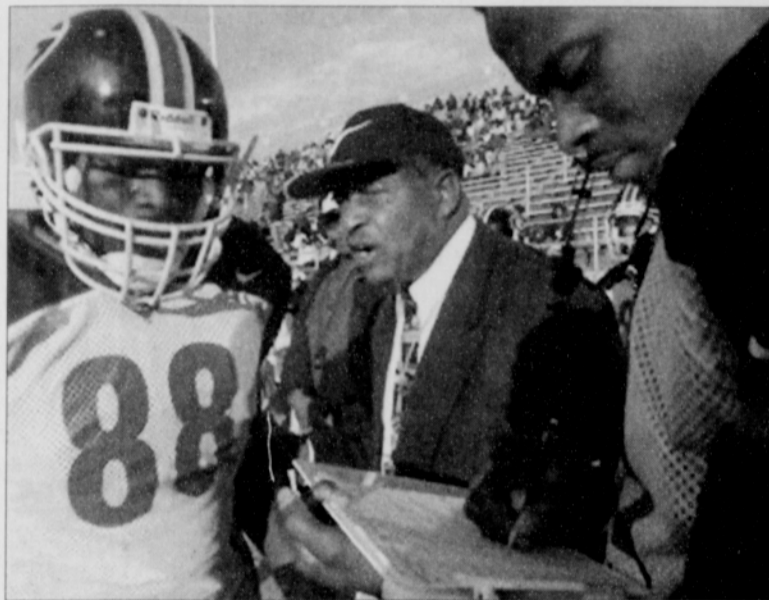
"The real record I have set for over 50 years is the fact that I have had one job and one wife," Robinson said.

Robinson had been suffering from Alzheimer's, which was diagnosed shortly after he was forced to retire following the 1997 season, in which he won only three games. His health had been declining for years and he had been in and out of a nursing home during the last year.

Robinson said he tried to coach each player as if he wanted him to marry his daughter.

He began coaching at Grambling State in 1941, when it was still the Louisiana Negro Normal and Industrial Institute, and single-handedly brought the school from obscurity to international popularity.

Grambling first gained national attention in



Grambling State football coach Eddie Robinson talks with players Tyree Madison (88) and Chiron Applewhite (right) at the Cramton Bowl in Montgomery, Ala., on Nov. 9, 1997. (AP photo)

Williams, who succeeded Robinson as Grambling's coach in 1998. Others went to the Canadian Football League and the now-defunct USFL.

Robinson's pro stars included Willie Davis, James Harris, Ernie Ladd, Buck Buchanan, Sammy White, Cliff McNeil, Willie Brown,

respected him."

Robinson was forced to retire after the 1997 season, after the program fell on tough times. His final three years on the sidelines brought consecutive losing seasons for the first time, an NCAA investigation of recruiting violations and four players charged with rape.

As pressure mounted for him to step aside, even the governor campaigned to give him one last season so he could try to go out a winner.

But that final season produced only three wins for the second straight year.

Robinson's teams had only eight losing seasons and won 17 Southwestern Athletic Conference titles and nine national black college championships. His den is packed with trophies, representing virtually every award a coach can win. He was inducted into every hall of

fame for which he was eligible, and received honorary degrees from several universities, including Yale.

When he began his career, Robinson had no paid assistants, no groundskeepers, no trainers and little in the way of equipment. He had to line the field himself and fix lunchmeat sandwiches for road trips because the players could not eat in the "white only" restaurants of the South.

He was not bitter, however. "The best way to enjoy life in America is to first be an American, and I don't think you have to be white to do so," Robinson said. "Blacks have had a hard time, but not many Americans haven't."

Robinson said he tried to teach his players about opportunity.

"The framers of this Constitution, now they did some things," Robinson would say. "If you aren't lazy, they fixed it for you. You've got to understand the system. It's just like in football, if you don't understand the system, you haven't got a chance."

His first season, Robinson's team went 3-5. His second year Grambling was 9-0 and did not allow a single point.

In 1943 and 1944 there was no football at Grambling because of the war. Robinson coached at Grambling High School those years and won a high school championship.

The same year Robinson started coaching at Grambling, he married his high school sweetheart, Doris, whom he courted for eight years.

Robinson is survived by his wife, son Eddie Robinson Jr., daughter Lillian Rose Robinson, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

"The other kids wanted to be players, but I wanted to be like that coach. I liked the way he talked to the team, the way he could make us laugh. I liked the way they all respected him."

— Eddie Robinson, former Grambling Coach

1949 when running back Paul "Tank" Younger signed with the Los Angeles Rams and became the first player from an all-black college to enter the NFL. Suddenly, pro scouts learned how to find the little school 65 miles east of Shreveport near the Arkansas border.

Robinson sent over 200 players to the NFL, including seven first-round draft choices and

Roosevelt Taylor, Charlie Joiner and Willie Williams.

Robinson said he was inspired to become a football coach when a high school team visited the elementary school he attended

"The other kids wanted to be players, but I wanted to be like that coach," Robinson said. "I liked the way he talked to the team, the way he could make us laugh. I liked the way they all



Eddie and Doris Robinson at their home in Grambling, La., in July 2004. (AP photo)

State Farm®
Providing Insurance and Financial Services
Home Office, Bloomington, Illinois 61710



Ernest J. Hill, Jr.

Agent
4946 N. Vancouver Avenue, Portland, OR 97217
503 286 1103 Fax 503 286 1146
ernie.hill@statefarm.com
24 Hour Good Neighbor Service®



Advertise with diversity in

The Portland Observer

call 503.288.0033

or email: ads@portlandobserver.com

Dayton

CONTEMPORARY
DANCE COMPANY

THE JACOB
LAWRENCE
PROJECT

"A TRIUMPHANT CELEBRATION
OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN
PRESENCE IN MODERN DANCE"
- CINCINNATI ENQUIRER



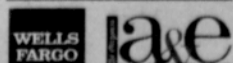
WEDNESDAY
APRIL 25 7:30PM

ARLENE SCHNITZER CONCERT HALL
TICKETS: \$19-\$43 plus service fee. 10% Discounts for students/seniors.
503-790-2787 - All ticketmaster outlets including PCPA Box Office.

Group Discounts / Info: 503.245.1600 ext. 201

www.whitebird.org

SPONSORED BY:



**Are you currently in an adjustable rate mortgage?
Is your rate increasing?
Are you behind in your mortgage payments?**

It's never too soon to think about refinancing.

You may have more options then you think.

Save hundreds of \$\$\$\$ per month and Call

360-823-1441
1-888-849-0588

222 N.E. Park Plaza Dr., Suite 115
Vancouver, WA 98684



Charlotte Martin



Dodgers to Honor Robinson



Jackie Robinson

Color barrier broken 60 years ago

(AP)-- Every player on the Dodgers will be No. 42 for a day.

Los Angeles will honor the late Jackie Robinson by having all of its players wear his jersey number on Sunday, April 15 when the Dodgers face the San Diego Padres at Dodger Stadium on the 60th anniversary of his becoming the first African-American player to play in a big league game.

"Jackie Robinson was a Dodger, and the most fitting tribute can pay to him is for the entire team to wear his number on the 60th anniversary of his breaking the color barrier," Dodgers vice chairman and president Jamie McCourt said.

Robinson made his debut for the Brooklyn Dodgers on April 15, 1947. The team moved to Los Angeles after the 1957 season.

Your Care Our First Priority



Dr. Marcelitte Failla
Chiropractic Physician

We are located at
1716 N.E. 42nd Ave.
Portland, OR 97213
(Between Broadway and Sandy Blvd.)

- Automobile accident injuries
- Chronic headache and joint pain
- Workers Compensation injuries

Call for an appointment! (503) 228-6140

