



Artis M. Davenport, II
Class of 1950

Artis M. Davenport, II, a native of Monroe, Louisiana, enrolled at Tuskegee University in the fall of 1944. He joined the football team and played fullback on offense and linebacker on defense. Two days after playing in the Prairie View Bowl game in Houston, Texas, he was drafted into the U.S. Army. After serving with the U.S. Armed Forces for 1 year, he returned to Tuskegee in the fall of 1947 and lettered as a fullback and linebacker. His last collegiate game was in the Turkey Day Classic against Alabama State University in 1949.

As a Health, Physical Education and Safety major, Davenport made the honor roll each semester. In 1949 he graduated from ROTC and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. Upon graduating in May 1950, he entered Infantry Officers Training School at Ft. Benning, Georgia, after which he was called to active duty where he remained until the summer of 1954. He returned to civilian life and enrolled at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. He received his Master of Science degree in Health and Physical Education in 1955 and Educational Doctorate in 1971, becoming the first black to receive a doctorate from the College of Physical Education.

Davenport's path of excellence continued in his professional career. Beginning with his career as a teacher and coach, he advanced to professor and then department chairman and director of athletics. He coached very successful collegiate track teams at Southern University at New Orleans, winning seven national track and field championships. He was named national coach of the year four times by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and three times by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. In addition to serving as track coach at SUNO for 38 years, he served as Director of Men's Physical Education and Intramural Sports, Project Director for the National Youth Sports Program, Chairman of the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, and Director of Athletics. Davenport had a graduation rate of over 90% when his athletes competed for three or more years.

Davenport worked at Bethune Cookman University part-time as assistant track coach. While at Bethune Cookman he was appointed head coach of the women's bowling team. The team won the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference championship and finished 4th in the NCAA National bowling championship meet.

He was involved in many community, professional, and service organizations including the YMCA, NAACP and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Davenport has been presented with awards from the City of New Orleans, the state of Louisiana, Southern University and most recently was inducted into the Nokia Sugar Bowl Hall of Fame in 2004.