

Tuskegee University Athletic Hall of Fame

Ross C. Owens

Coach

ROSS C. OWEN, "Maker of Champions", was born in Ft. Scott, Kansas and is a graduate of Kansas Vocational School, Topeka, Kansas, where he made All-Conference honors in football, basketball and track.

He took his undergraduate work at South Dakota State College and distinguished himself as a freshman in winning letters in football and basketball. One notable occasion occurred when he made seven touchdowns in one game against Columbus College, and went on to average two touchdowns a game. He was selected captain of the basketball team while continuing to excel in football by chalking up wins against the University of Wisconsin, University of Michigan and Marquette University.

After graduating with honors from South Dakota State College, Coach Owen later received his Master's degree in Health and Physical Education from the University of Michigan and completed his residency requirements for the Doctoral degree at New York University. He later received special training in Physical Education from George Williams College in Chicago and Sarah Lawrence College in New York.

Coach Owen has contributed in many various ways to his profession. He served as Director of Health and Physical Education at Kansas Vocational School, Topeka, Kansas, 1925-26; Assistant and Coach in Physical Education, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, 1926-33; Recreational Supervisor, Fort Scott Kansas, 1933-35; Director, Health and Physical Education and Coach, Philander Smith College, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1935-37; Instructor, Health and Physical Education, Tennessee State University, Nashville, Tennessee, 1938-40; Associate Professor, Physical Education and Athletics, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, 1941-72.

He has successfully coached the following sports at Tuskegee Institute: football, basketball, track, tennis, baseball, gold and boxing. And in doing so, produced champion teams when it seemed impossible to do so. Champion teams and individual champions were not out of his reach.

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From 1955 to 1957, he served as Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics at Tuskegee Institute.

During the summer of 1941 through 1952, Coach Owen served as instructor at the American Red Cross Aquatic School, Nashville, Tennessee, and subsequently became a distinguished authorized National Red Cross Instructor in first aid and water safety.

Coach Owen is the author of many professional publications and holds membership in several local, state and national organizations. He has served as chairman of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Basketball Tournament since 1956; director of the Tuskegee Community Swimming Program; special committees on water safety programs of the American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. His Master's Thesis, "Leisure Time Activities of the American Negro Prior to the Civil War", has become a classic in Afro-American History as well as in Physical Education.

In his academic and social activities, he has established a rare pattern -- a combination of humility and dignity, courtesy and firmness, kindness and devotion to duty. Coach Owen or "Bub" (affectionately called by some of us) has been a colleague's loyal friend and a student's most valued treasure.