

*Inaugural*  
INDUCTION  
CELEBRATION



MEMPHIS SPORTS  
EXPERIENCE  
*AND* HALL *OF* FAME



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2019

## *Bicentennial Class*

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Fellow Memphians,

Few things have the power to bring people from all walks of life together like sports. If you go to any Memphis Tigers or Grizzlies game, you will see Memphis. You will see people from all races and backgrounds cheering their team and favorite players. It truly is an amazing experience.

In our City's bicentennial year and because athletics serves as a great unifier, we want to recognize those individuals who have played major roles through the years in bringing us closer together as a community. This year we are inducting 22 people into our Inaugural Memphis Sports and Experience Hall of Fame.

To the honored coaches, players, and supporters of the game, congratulations on this tremendous accomplishment. Thank you for your service to our community and for the joy you have brought into the lives of so many.

Sincerely,

Jim Strickland  
Mayor



Dear Honorees,

On behalf of the Memphis and Shelby County hospitality industry, it is our privilege to welcome you into the inaugural class of the Memphis Sports Hall of Fame, during this, our bicentennial year.

As our community celebrates a milestone year, Memphis Tourism, the Memphis Sports Council and the Memphis Redbirds have partnered to create the new Memphis Sports Experience and Hall of Fame at AutoZone Park. This exciting endeavor will provide a venue where visitors and sports enthusiasts can explore and marvel at the accomplishments of the past, present and future inductees.

Part of the mission of the Memphis Sports Experience and Hall of Fame is to honor athletes, coaches and contributors, while celebrating the rich history of sports in Memphis. By showcasing these individuals with this honor, we also hope to inspire and empower future generations of athletes to succeed on the field and here at home in their own community.

Congratulations to the inaugural class on this most deserved honor, know that your athletic legacies lay the very foundation for the Memphis Sports Hall of Fame.

Kevin Kane  
President & CEO, Memphis Tourism



Dear Memphis Sports Fans,

Welcome to AutoZone Park! We are honored to host the inaugural induction celebration for the Memphis Sports Experience and Hall of Fame and house this landmark exhibit on the 3rd Floor of the stadium.

A museum for Memphis' sports legends has been a long time coming in our city. With all of our culture and history, a tribute to athletics was the next gallery that needed a permanent residence. Memphis is a city of champions, and now residents and visitors alike have a place to play homage to the figures who have graced our fields and courts over our history. Sports play a major role in the fabric of our society, and it is going to be very exciting seeing different generations of fans learn about the various eras of sports in Memphis and swap stories about seeing these stars compete over the years.

Having the Memphis Sports Experience and Hall of Fame at AutoZone Park serves many purposes. First, as Downtown Memphis continues to grow and expand, it gives this exhibit a permanent, centrally-located spot for guests. Additionally, with professional soccer now housed at the stadium in addition to professional baseball, there will be many more opportunities for fans at these games to visit the exhibit. Our goal is to make this Downtown Memphis gem a 365-day facility, and developing the Memphis Sports Experience and Hall of Fame on the 3rd Floor certainly helps advance that mission.

As we celebrate today, congratulations to all of our inaugural inductees. We cannot wait to cut the ribbon on the Memphis Sports Experience and Hall of Fame. It is going to be a true beacon in our great city.

Craig Unger  
Memphis Redbirds and Memphis 901 FC President

## Sponsors



Special thanks to the Commercial Appeal photo archives for their contribution to our induction ceremony.



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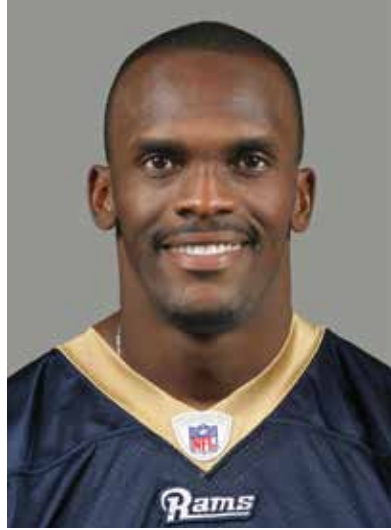
Memphis Sports Hall of Fame  
Project Manager  
**Pierre Landaiche**



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## BETTY BOOKER-PARKS

It was obvious at Hampshire (Tenn.) High School that Betty Booker-Parks was destined for basketball stardom. Expectations tend to soar when you average 30.2 points and score more than 3,300. She didn't disappoint, quickly adjusting to the college game as a freshman in 1976 for the Memphis State Lady Tigers with a 20.2 scoring average and leading them to a 27-9 record. Amazingly, 39 years later, this athletic, 5-5 guard still ranks as the school's all-time scorer with 2,835 points, and her 20.7 career scoring average is tied for first. Imagine what she would have done if there had been a shot clock and three-point field goal. Her dynamic play drew national attention as she played for all-star teams that toured Europe in 1978 and '79. She played in the Women's Basketball League for one season in 1980 before it folded, then returned to the court 14 years later as player-coach-manager of the new Memphis Blues. In tribute, her Lady Tiger number 31 jersey was retired, and she was inducted into the M Club Hall of Fame in 1985 and Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 2005.



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## ISAAC BRUCE

After a successful two-year stint at a California junior college, Isaac Bruce went big time as a Memphis State Tiger with 113 pass receptions, 1,586 receiving yards and 15 touchdown catches. In his senior season, he set records in receptions with 74 and 1,054 yards receiving. The receiver was drafted by the St. Louis Rams, playing there for 14 years, followed by two seasons with the San Francisco 49ers. The highlight of his career, without a doubt, is catching the winning touchdown pass for the Rams in Super Bowl 34. In his pro career, he caught 1,024 passes with 15,424 yards and 91 touchdowns. His Tigers' number 34 jersey is retired, and he is a 2015 inductee in the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame.



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## BILL DANCE

He thought he would be a doctor until driving home one night while in medical school in the mid 1960's he came to a scene of a horrible motorcycle crash that affected him greatly. So much for being a doctor, he turned to fishing and quickly reeled in championships, becoming fishing's first superstar. Sporting his trademark sunglasses and Tennessee Vols cap, he won 23 national bass titles, was three-time B.A.S.S. Angler of the Year, and in 1968 launched the "Bill Dance Outdoors" TV show that continues today. Saying he's "careful not to let this job turn into work," he's written seven books and his vast enterprise includes endorsements and promotional work, a magazine, conducting seminars, and a second TV show called "Bill Dance Saltwater." He's been inducted into four halls of fame: National Freshwater, Professional Bass Fishing, International Game Fish Association and Tennessee Sports in 2012.



## WILLIAM B. DUNAVANT JR.

He built his cotton trading company into a global giant, and exhibited the same dedication and commitment to excellence in his sports ventures. An accomplished tennis player who had a rivalry with the legendary Bobby Riggs, he built The Racquet Club in 1974, making it one of the nation's premier facilities and site of a long-running pro tournament that was a favorite stop for players. In 1984, he was owner of the USFL's Showboats, insisting it be a first-class organization and who with the signing of such stars as Reggie White were one of the league's top franchises. He sold The Racquet Club so he could provide the needed financial backing in leading the city's push to land an NFL expansion franchise in 1993. An avid hunter, fisherman and conservationist, he spearheaded the drive resulting in Ducks Unlimited moving its world headquarters here in 1992. He was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 2015, a fitting tribute to his tireless efforts to enhance the city.



## LARRY FINCH

In a city that cherishes its basketball heritage, Larry Finch stands out as one of the best. "Little Tubby" was a standout guard at Memphis' Melrose High, teaming with Ronnie Robinson to lead the Golden Wildcats to city, district and regional championships. The sharp-shooting 6-2 guard remained at home to play college, where he launched a championship career at Memphis State. He led the Tigers in three seasons to a 63-21 record, culminating during his senior season in 1973-74 with a trip to the NCAA Final Four. He averaged a school-high 22.3 points and set a school record with 48 points in a 1973 game. He earned all-conference and all-American honors, and his number 21 jersey was retired in 1974. He played briefly in the ABA with the Memphis Sounds before turning his talents to coaching, leading Memphis State to a 220-130 record and six NCAA tournaments. He was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1993.



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## AVRON FOGELMAN

Where would Memphis sports be without Avron Fogelman and his love of the city? In 1974, when the ABA's Tams were in danger of folding, the real estate developer became part of a new ownership group. A lover of baseball since playing in the Rotary Club league, he obtained a Double A franchise in 1978 and the Chicks were reborn, returning baseball after a year's absence. When the Rogues soccer team was for sale in 1980 and in danger of moving, he stepped up again to buy the team. Perhaps his grandest sports moment came in 1985 as part-owner of the Kansas City Royals. Calling it the "thrill of thrills," he hoisted the coveted trophy after the Royals won the World Series. Known for his benevolence and civic involvement, he's a longtime supporter of athletics at the University of Memphis and his alma mater Tulane. An avid collector of sports memorabilia, he was the first chairman of the Memphis/Shelby County Sports Authority, one of several boards he's chaired. In his honor, the southeastern leg of Interstate 240 is called Avron Fogelman Expressway.

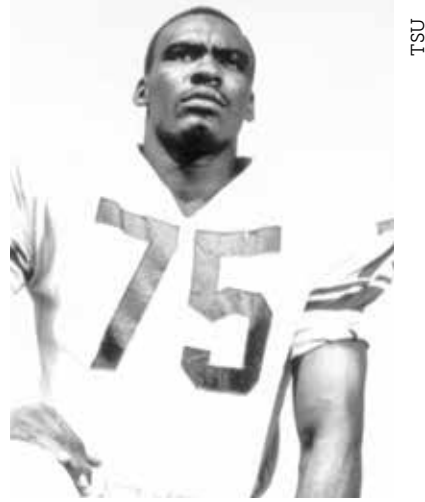


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## ANFERNEE "PENNY" HARDAWAY

"Born to Win" should be the title of Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway's autobiography. He's been a winner throughout his playing career, first at Memphis' Treadwell High School, then Memphis State University and in the NBA. As a standout star at Treadwell High, Hardaway capped a brilliant senior season, earning all-everything, scoring 36.6 points a game, and was named the Parade Magazine's national prep player of the year award. He continued his success at Memphis State as the 6-7 athlete led the Tigers to a 43-23 record and two trips to the NCAA tournament. Penny was a consensus All-American, averaging 20 points for his career. He was picked third overall in the NBA draft and his success continued in the pro ranks. He teamed with Shaquille O'Neal to lead the Orlando Magic to the 1995 NBA Finals. He earned all-NBA honors twice. In international play, Hardaway was a standout on the Olympic Gold medal-winning USA team in 1996. He was named the Tigers head coach in 2018.





## CLAUDE HUMPHREY

When speaking of Tennessee's greatest football players, Claude Humphrey certainly rates as one of the best. Humphrey, a product of Memphis' Lester High School, earned all-star recognition for the Lions before heading to Tennessee State. He led TSU to a sparkling 35-3-1 record, earning first-team All-American honors. The Atlanta Falcons made him a first-round pick, third overall, in the 1968 NFL Draft. He was a hit from the start, being named NFL Defensive Rookie Player of the Year. His career shows 122 sacks, six Pro Bowl appearances and All-NFL five times. His playing days were shared between 10 seasons with the Falcons and three with the Eagles, including the 1980 Super Bowl. He is an inductee into the TSU Hall of Fame, Georgia Sports Hall of Fame and Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, as well as being named to the Atlanta Falcons Ring of Honor. His stellar pro career was honored in 2014 with induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.



## JERRY JOHNSON

Legendary coach Jerry Johnson of LeMoyne-Owen is Memphis' most successful college basketball coach. That's saying something since Memphis is known as "Hoop City" and famous for its basketball. Johnson ranks first all-time in NCAA Division II basketball victories with 821 covering 46 seasons. Among those victories include the 1975 NCAA Division III national championship. No other Tennessee college team has won a men's national title in basketball. Johnson's Magicians captured 10 conference championships and producing eight NBA players. He earned coach of the year awards seven times and has been inducted into several sports Hall of Fames, including his college alma mater, Fayetteville State College in North Carolina, the SIAC Basketball Hall of Fame and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 2005. The senior statesman of Tennessee basketball still enjoys attending basketball games.



## GEORGE LAPIDÈS

At age 5, he knew he wanted to be a journalist. George Lapidès did that, and so much more, in a colorful five-decade career that had a profound impact on Memphis sports. He started in the mid '60's as a reporter at the Memphis Press-Scimitar before becoming sports editor and columnist, developing relationships with some of the country's top sports figures. After the paper closed in 1983, he served first as Rhodes College athletic director then was president of the Chicks and senior VP at Fogelman Properties. First and foremost a reporter, he turned to TV in 1995 as Channel 3's sports editor for 10 years. An unabashed Cardinals' fan, he saved baseball for Memphis, when in '97 with the Chicks leaving, he prodded Dean Jernigan to step up, leading to the Redbirds and AutoZone Park. Throughout the twists and turns, he was host for 45 years of the country's longest-running radio sports talk show, never hesitating to offer his opinions on what was best for the city he loved.



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## KEITH LEE

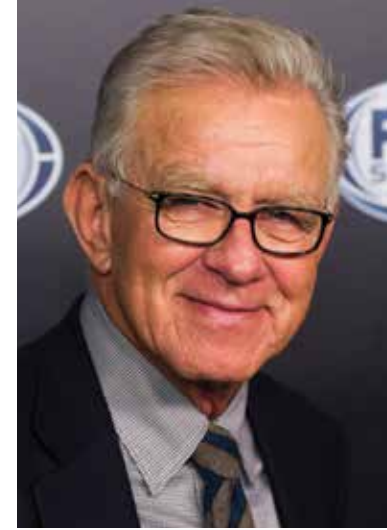
It's a mark of greatness when you're still the school's leading scorer and rebounder 34 years after you played. So, it is with Keith Lee, a wiry, 6-10, 205-pound center-forward with hands of glue. Coming out of West Memphis High, he was the must-have recruit and put the Tigers back in the spotlight. From 1981 through '85, the Lee-led Tigers posted a 104-24 record, won three Metro Conference Tournament titles, and appeared in the NCAA Tournament in each of his four seasons, highlighted by a berth in the 1985 Final Four. He averaged a double-double for his career with 18.8 points and 10.4 rebounds. No wonder he was named to 29 All-America teams and was a two-time Metro Conference Player of the Year. A first-round pick, 11th overall, in the 1985 NBA Draft, he played three seasons before retiring in 1989. Inducted into the M Club Hall of Fame in 1999, Lee's retired number 24 jersey hangs in the FedEx Forum rafters, a lasting reminder of his stellar career.



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## VERDELL MATHIS

Verdell Mathis is considered by baseball historians and those-in-the-know to be the greatest left-handed pitcher in the Negro Leagues during the 1940s. Not only was he an excellent pitcher, he also played in the outfield and at first base, hitting .300 or better on several occasions. However, pitching was his strong point. The 5-10, 150-pound hurler, nicknamed "Lefty," had many pitches in his arsenal, including a terrific curveball, a pretty good fastball, a screwball and a nifty change of pace. His pickoff-move at first was awesome, picking off Hall of Famer Jackie Robinson several times. He and his close friend, Hall of Famer Satchel Paige, are the only pitchers to have multiple wins in the Negro League All-Star game. What's more, he beat Paige on three occasions, including on Satchel Paige Day that attracted 30,000. He is a member of the Negro Leagues Hall of Fame.



## TIM MCCARVER

Hometown hero Tim McCarver excels in practically every endeavor he tries. He was a standout in high school at Christian Brothers, one of the few ever to earn All-City honors in football, basketball and baseball, and all-state honors in football and baseball. As a 17-year old graduate, he signed with the St Louis Cardinals, launching a 21-year career that spanned four decades. He led the Memphis Chicks in hitting before joining the Cardinals full time as their top catcher. McCarver played on the Cardinals' World Series championship teams in 1964 and 1967. He also played for Philadelphia, Montreal and Boston before retiring and moving from the playing field to the press box as an award-winning broadcaster. He earned several Emmy awards for broadcasting and was the recipient of the Baseball Hall of Fame's Ford C. Frick broadcasting award in 2012. McCarver was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1986.



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## NIKKI MCCRAY-PENSON

She's in the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, and a Collierville park is named after her. It's easy to see why. Nikki McCray-Penson was a prep All-American at Collierville, then twice at Tennessee. A versatile 5-11 guard, she was a two-time SEC Player of the Year, and her Lady Vols teams won three regular-season titles and two tourney championships. She was part of the star-studded U.S. national teams that won Olympic gold in 1996 and 2000, plus the '98 world championship. In an 11-year pro career, she was the ABL's MVP in 1997 and a WNBA all-star three times. Devoted to community service, she was honored in 2000 with selection to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. After 11 seasons as an assistant for two schools, she was named head coach at Old Dominion in 2017. No doubt, as she reflects on her career, she's grateful when she started playing at age 11 that her grandmother convinced her male cousins to let her play with them.



Ole Miss

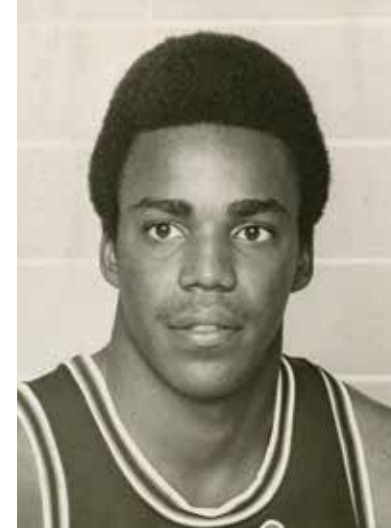
## DR. CARY MIDDLECOFF

After doing 7,000 fillings over 18 months in World War II for the Army Dental Corps, Dr. Cary Middlecoff was ready in 1947 at age 26 for something else. An accomplished golfer, having won four straight Tennessee State Amateur titles, the Ole Miss All-American decided to try the pro tour for two years. If not successful, he'd return to dentistry. Well, he won the third tournament he played and was on his way to becoming one of the 1950's greatest players. Over a 14-year span, he won 39 tour events, 10th-best all-time, including at least one each year until he retired in 1961. He posted two U.S. Open titles, won the Masters in 1955 and played on three Ryder Cup-winning teams. After retiring, the Christian Brothers High grad was a TV golf analyst for 18 years. He's enshrined in four halls of fame, including the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame and World Golf Hall of Fame. Famed golfer Bobby Jones was an admirer, saying, "I'd give the world to have a swing like that."



## CINDY PARLOW CONE

Cindy Parlow Cone went from having a poster of soccer great Mia Hamm in her room to being her roommate and playing together on the U.S. National team. At 16, she left Germantown High a year early in 1995 to attend North Carolina. A fearless midfielder at nearly 6 feet, she starred on back-to-back NCAA championship teams, was a four-time All-American and college player of the year three times. In 1996, she made the U.S. National team, where over nine years she won two Olympic gold medals and a silver, and the World Cup championship in 1999. After retiring in 2006, she turned to coaching, first as an assistant at North Carolina, then in 2013 as head coach of National Women Soccer League's Portland Thorns, who won the championship in her lone season. She was inducted into the U.S. National Soccer Hall of Fame in 2018, and in February was elected vice president of the U.S. Soccer Federation. A road in the Mike Rose Soccer Complex is named after her.



## RONNIE ROBINSON

Ronnie Robinson is one of the top all-around players in the rich history of University of Memphis basketball. He prepped at Memphis' Melrose High and was instrumental in the Golden Wildcats' championship seasons, teaming with Larry Finch. At Memphis State, the 6-8 forward was a three-year starter and three-time all-conference selection. Playing again with Finch, he earned all-American recognition his senior season as the Tigers advanced to the 1973 NCAA championship game, losing to UCLA. His career statistics are impressive, as he is one of only four Tigers to score 1,000 points and 1,000 rebounds, plus a school-record 28 rebounds in a game. He was drafted by the NBA, but elected to play for the ABA. He finished his basketball career with Finch on the Memphis Tams. His Memphis State jersey number 33 was retired in 1974.



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## VERTIES SAILS

Verties Sails was born to coach and to win! Sails, a product of Woodstock High School and LeMoyne-Owen College, spent his life in basketball, coaching at the high school, junior college and collegiate levels. The 13-time coach of the year produced the city's first state championship in 1974, leading the Melrose Golden Wildcats to a 35-0 record. He compiled 132 victories for Melrose before serving as a Memphis State assistant coach then becoming head coach at Southwest Tennessee Community College in 1979. The Saluqis under Sails posted a 709-276 record in 33 seasons. His teams won 16 conference championships and 10 regional titles. He was named The Commercial Appeal's 1999 Sportsman of the Year and is member of the TCCAA Hall of Fame, the NJCAA Hall of Fame and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame. And, few can say they've had two gymnasiums named in his honor.



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## FREDERICK W. SMITH

Memphis sports would not be what they are today without FedEx, and the company's history of support goes back decades. When the Danny Thomas Memphis Classic — Memphis' PGA TOUR stop — was struggling in 1986, FedEx became its title sponsor. This began a relationship that's lasted more than 30 years and has recently put a global spotlight on the city with the new WGC-FedEx St. Jude Invitational. The Memphis Grizzlies might not have moved to town in 2001 if FedEx hadn't agreed to a naming rights deal for FedExForum. And FedEx has long been a supporter of University of Memphis athletics — including the company's backing of FedExPark, the on-campus baseball stadium, which opened in 2010. Signature Memphis events like the Southern Heritage Classic and the AutoZone Liberty Bowl, as well as the Memphis Redbirds, have all received support from FedEx. And outside of Memphis, you'll see the FedEx name associated with FedExField, home of the Washington Redskins; the #11 FedEx Toyota Camry competing in NASCAR; the PGA TOUR's season-long competition; the FedExCup; the ATP Tour; UEFA Europa League; and UEFA National Team Football — bringing attention not only to FedEx, but to Memphis on a global scale. Simply put — it's nearly impossible to tell the story of Memphis sports without talking about FedEx, and the company's founder, Frederick W. Smith.



## DR. ROCHELLE STEVENS

From a state championship at Memphis's Melrose High School to international track and field fame, Dr. Rochelle Stevens kept winning. She was a national prep All-American and AAU Junior Olympic champion before going to Morgan State, where she was an 11-time All-American, winning NCAA titles in 400 meters and 200 meters. In international competition, Rochelle helped the USA 4x400 meter relay team to a silver medal in the 1992 Olympics. At the 1995 World Track and Field championships she was on the winning gold medal 4x400 relay team. She struck gold again in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta as part of the winning 4x400 relay team. She retired from active competition in 2000, but she continues her love for track and field by hosting an annual jamboree for youth. She was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 2006.



## MELANIE SMITH TAYLOR

She started riding at age 3 – we believe she did learn to walk first – and galloped to Olympic equestrian gold, as well as becoming a noted instructor, TV analyst and author. Her 2015 book, "Riding with Life: Lessons from the Horse," details how a rider and horse can team for success. It's what this Germantown native lived aboard Calypso, a Dutch bay gelding. Together, they led the U.S. show jumping team at the 1984 Olympics to its first gold medal. She's one of only two to win the Triple Crown of Show Jumping and the only one on the same horse ... you guessed it, Calypso. A member of the U.S. Equestrian team from 1975 to '87, she also won a Pan American Games gold medal and World Cup championship. In 1982, she was named U.S. Olympic Committee Sportswoman of the Year. A Show Jumping Hall of Fame inductee, she now serves as an event judge and conducts clinics. She's been an NBC-TV analyst for Olympics and other competition since 1988.



## “MEMPHIS” BILL TERRY

He loved the city so much, Bill Terry became known as “Memphis” Bill Terry. He moved to Memphis as a youth and played semi-pro baseball. The New York Giants tried to sign the hard-hitting first baseman in 1922, but he first hesitated, saying, “I’d just rather live in Memphis, that’s all.” He finally signed with the Giants and produced Hall-of-Fame numbers from 1923-36. He had six seasons of at least 100 runs batted in and 200 hits, hit .320 or better nine straight seasons and is the last player in the National League to hit .400. Terry also served as player-manager for the Giants, winning the 1933 World Series, which prompted Memphis to honor him with a parade attended by more than 100,000 citizens. He later claimed that the parade in his honor was the greatest event in his life other than playing baseball. Historians maintain he was the best lefthanded first baseman all-time in the National League. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1954, and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1968.



*Presented by*

