

Hall of Fame series: David Washington

By Ray Sehorn

OROVILLE » David Washington graduated from Oroville High School in 1958 and won 12 Block "O" letters in his four years on campus. Many locals consider Washington the greatest all-around athlete in the history of Oroville.

He played four years of high school football, earning All Sierra Foothill League and All Northern California honors as a senior, and serving as captain during the team's undefeated 1957 season. He led his team to its fourth Sierra Foothill League title in five years.

Washington capped his senior year being named one of 25 players in Northern California to play in the prestigious North-South Shrine All-Star game at the Los Angeles Memorial



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Coliseum. His teammate Carl Overstreet was also named to the team as was their coach John Johnson, who was selected to coach the North Shrine team.

Washington also played four years of basketball, earning all-league honors as a junior and a senior, and all-Acker Tournament team as a senior. His 1957 team placed fifth in the highly acclaimed Tournament of Champions played in the Bay Area.

He was a member of the track and field team all four years as well and was a standout performer in four events. As a junior, he set the school record in the shot put with a heave of 53 feet, 5 inches, a mark that would have won that Northern Section event in 2016.

Washington was Block "O" vice president as a junior, and as a senior, was named

Senior Athlete of the Year in both football and basketball, the only student named in two sports.

Upon graduating, Washington was awarded a full football scholarship to the University of Southern California. In those days, Santa Monica Junior College served as a farm team school for the university, and Washington played on their National Championship team and earned his associate's degree. He then transferred to USC and earned letters in the two years he played there.

Following college football, Washington went on

to a nine-year career in the National Football League and the Canadian Football League. He is the only Oroville athlete to ever play in both professional football leagues. In the NFL, he played one year for the Dallas Cowboys and then went to Kansas City where he was active in most games. He played receiver for the Denver Broncos in 1968, where he told the coaches, "I want to play. I don't want to sit on the bench and take your money."

After his brief time in the NFL, Washington went on to a successful seven-year

career in the CFL. He signed with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and played tight end in that organization for several years. After retiring from professional football, he went to work for Canadian Pacific Railroad and owned and maintained several rental homes.

From 1972-95, he started and owned a successful used car business, and remained in Winnipeg, Canada for the remainder of his adult life. While in Winnipeg, Washington served as assistant high school football coach and also coached football and other youth sports. He

was well known in his community, loved by all who knew him, and considered a hero with a big heart.

Fellow Hall of Famer Duard Millett, Washington's high school basketball coach, said in an interview with the Oroville Mercury-Register, "He was an outstanding young man. That's what I admired about Dave. He was always smiling and happy-go-lucky, and a very good team man. Everyone loved him. He

was also very active in different clubs in school. He wasn't just an athlete — he was an all around young man."

Unfortunately, Washington's life was brief as he died in November 1995 in Winnipeg at the age of 55. As he had served in the United States Army Reserves for four years and was on active military duty for six months, Washington received a military burial at Memorial Park Cemetery in Oroville.