



COACH BERNARD "BLACKY" BLACKWELL

Coach Blackwell was a legendary figure in Mississippi coaching history who was one of the founder of the MAC. A native of Saucier, he was a three-sport letterman in football, basketball, and track at Ole Miss from 1944 to 1947. He was a *Times Picayune* All-American football player for the Rebels.

After earning his college degree, he entered the coaching profession in 1948 as a football coach at Northwest Junior College. He coached at West Tallahatchie High from 1950 to 1956, at Greenville High from 1956 to 1958, and at Pascagoula High in 1959.

In 1960, he arrived at Mississippi College in Clinton where he would remain in coaching until he was named as Assistant to the President of Mississippi College in 1972. In 1976, he was selected as National Director of the Mississippi College Alumni Affairs where he served until his retirement in 1993.

During his coaching career, Coach Blackwell was instrumental in creating the Mississippi Association of Coaches in 1954. He helped to shape the association into one of the most innovative and progressive coaching organizations in the United States. He developed the MAC into a professional association and fostered great relations between coaches, their schools, and the community at large.

Among his many achievements with the MAC, Coach Blackwell helped create the MAC Coaches Hall of Fame, which began in 1973. Coach Blackwell even served as emcee for the annual induction banquet for many years after the formation of the MAC Hall of Fame. He paid keen attention to the needs of the coaches and was instrumental in providing invaluable training opportunities with the coaching clinics he arranged.

His attention to details for the association and his desire to enhance the experience and profile of Mississippi high school athletics and their coaches led to his efforts in creating the Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Football Classic in 1988, the Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Basketball Games in 1991, and the annual State Games in Meridian.

For his efforts in leading the MAC as Executive Director through its formative years and beyond, Coach Blackwell received numerous honors. He was awarded the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Dwight Keith Award in 1987 and was bestowed the Mississippi College Order of the Golden Arrow in 1991. Coach Blackwell was inducted into the MAC Coaches Hall of Fame in 1980, the Mississippi College Athletic Hall of Fame in 1991, and posthumously into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame in 2001.

The Bernard Blackwell All-Star Football Classic is formerly known as the Mississippi High School All-Star Football Game and was originated in 1950 by Mississippi State coach Arthur "Slick" Morton. The Mississippi Association of Coaches assumed sponsorship of the game from the Jackson Touchdown Club in 1993. In 1994, the game was renamed for Coach Bernard "Blacky" Blackwell, the Executive Director of the MAC who served the association from 1962 to 1991 and departed this life in 1993. Through this game, the MAC is proud to continue to honor the name of Coach Bernard "Blacky" Blackwell and the coaching and administrative legacy he passed on to generation of coaches.