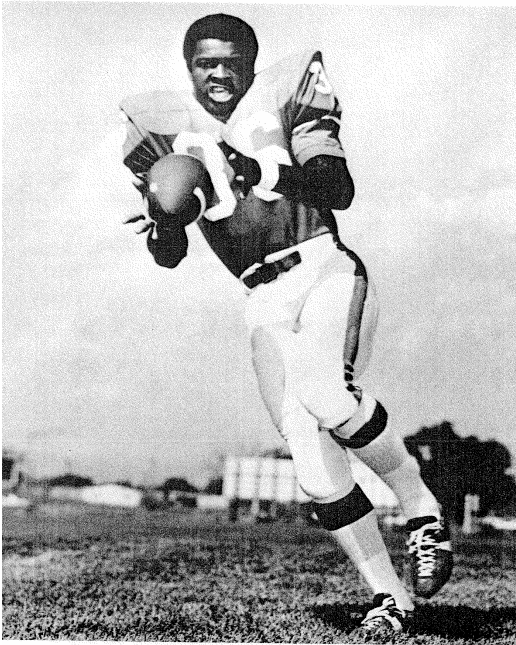


William “Billy” Thompson



BILL THOMPSON
DENVER BRONCOS

William “Bill” Thompson was inducted into the Hawk Hall of Fame in 1984. William was recruited by Coach Sandy Williams to attend Maryland State College (MSC) from Sterling High School in Greenville, South Carolina.

In high school, William was a four-year letterman in three different sports: baseball in center field, basketball at guard, and football at quarterback. At MSC, he continued his athletic prowess as a four-year letterman in football and baseball.

From 1965 to 1968, William helped the Hawks to compile an overall record of 20 wins, 9 losses and 1 tie. William also enjoyed a brilliant career at Maryland State (now the University of Maryland Eastern Shore), earning All-CIAA honors three times as a defensive back and being named team MVP as a senior. He also twice earned NAIA All-

America honors. Thompson also made All-CIAA three times in baseball as a centerfielder.

After being drafted in the 3rd round by the Denver Broncos in 1969, he led the American Football Conference (AFC) in both kickoff and punt return. William was All-AFC four times (1977, 1978, 1979, and 1981) and participated in the Pro Bowl in 1977, 1978, and 1981. William is the only player in history of the National Football League to return 4 fumbles for touchdowns. William, an All-Pro performer, was a 12-year starter for the Broncos and was on the game’s finest and most consistent strong safeties.

William, regarded by many as the best defensive back in Denver Broncos annals, was the only Ring of Fame inductee in 1987. He was the first player in team history to play 13 seasons with Denver, and he was the team captain for many years. William, despite being retired for 18 seasons, still ranks second on the Broncos' all-time list for games started with 178, second in consecutive starts with 142, and sixth in games played with 179. He finished his career with 61 turnovers, (most in team history), 40 of which came via interceptions (third in team history).

He holds two NFL records, one of which has stood for over two decades. As a rookie in 1969, William became the only player in NFL history to lead the league in both kickoffs and punt returns in the same season. He is also one of only two players in NFL history to return four opponent fumbles for touchdowns. William was a three-time Pro Bowl

selection (1977, 1978 and 1981), and earned All-NFL honors twice (1977 and 1978) and All-AFC honors four times (1977-1979, 1981). William was a college scout for the Broncos for two years before moving into his current position as Director of Player Relations and Alumni Coordinator.

As Alumni Coordinator, William works with the Denver Broncos Alumni Council and former Broncos who live in the area, who are considered an important part of the Broncos' organization. William is also a member of the Board of Directors of the African American Leadership Institute and The Metropolitan State College of Denver. He also volunteers time with the Urban League, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and several other non-profit organizations. William, his wife Barbara, and their son Richie make their home in Aurora, Colo. William's NFL statistics are as follows:

| | | Defense | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| <u>Year</u> | <u>Team</u> | <u>Games</u> | <u>INT</u> | <u>Yards</u> | <u>Avg.</u> | <u>TD</u> | <u>Fum.</u> | <u>Points</u> |
| 1969 | Denver Broncos | 14 | 3 | 92 | 30.7 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| 1970 | Denver Broncos | 9 | 2 | 65 | 32.5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1971 | Denver Broncos | 14 | 5 | 83 | 16.6 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| 1972 | Denver Broncos | 8 | 1 | 4 | 4.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1973 | Denver Broncos | 14 | 3 | 96 | 32.0 | 1 | 2 | 12 |
| 1974 | Denver Broncos | 14 | 5 | 105 | 21.0 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| 1975 | Denver Broncos | 14 | 2 | 97 | 48.5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1976 | Denver Broncos | 14 | 5 | 122 | 24.4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1977 | Denver Broncos | 16 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1978 | Denver Broncos | 16 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 1979 | Denver Broncos | 16 | 4 | 57 | 14.3 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 1980 | Denver Broncos | 16 | 2 | 49 | 24.5 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 1981 | Denver Broncos | <u>16</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>3.5</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Career Totals | | <u>181</u> | <u>44</u> | <u>784</u> | <u>17.8</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>42</u> |

| | | Punt Return | | | | Kick Return | | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| <u>Year</u> | <u>Team</u> | <u>PR</u> | <u>Yards</u> | <u>Avg.</u> | <u>TD</u> | <u>KR</u> | <u>Yards</u> | <u>Avg.</u> | <u>TD</u> |
| 1969 | Denver Broncos | 25 | 288 | 11.5 | 0 | 18 | 513 | 28.5 | 0 |
| 1970 | Denver Broncos | 23 | 233 | 10.1 | 0 | 9 | 188 | 20.9 | 0 |
| 1971 | Denver Broncos | 29 | 274 | 9.4 | 0 | 5 | 105 | 21.0 | 0 |
| 1972 | Denver Broncos | 4 | 82 | 20.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| 1973 | Denver Broncos | 30 | 366 | 12.2 | 0 | 1 | 25 | 25.0 | 0 |
| 1974 | Denver Broncos | 26 | 350 | 13.5 | 0 | 13 | 325 | 25.0 | 0 |
| 1975 | Denver Broncos | 13 | 158 | 12.2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| 1976 | Denver Broncos | 6 | 60 | 10.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| 1978 | Denver Broncos | <u>1</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>3.0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0.0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Career Totals | | <u>157</u> | <u>1,814</u> | <u>11.6</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>46</u> | <u>1,156</u> | <u>25.1</u> | <u>0</u> |

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Team</u> | <u>Other Stats</u> |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1973 | Denver Broncos | 1 TD/Fum Rec |
| 1978 | Denver Broncos | 1 TD/Fum Rec |
| 1979 | Denver Broncos | 1 TD/Fum Rec |

1980 Denver Broncos 1 TD/Fum Rec