

## Sherman “The Gentle Giant or Tank” Plunkett



Sherman “The Gentle Giant or Tank” Plunkett was inducted into the Hawk Hall of Fame in 1977. In 1952, the Oklahoma connection clicked once again and provided Coach McCain with one of his finest football players. Sherman was an All-State offensive tackle who stood 6-foot-4 and weighed 290 pounds at the age of 18.

Sherman played high school football at Douglas High under Pieya Miller, a college classmate of Coach McCain, who advised him to attend Maryland State College (MSC). So like many “Oklahoma boys” before him, he boarded a bus and headed for tiny Princess Anne, Maryland. It would be no exaggeration to have called him a “Gentle Giant.”

Sherman was quiet, sincere, and respectful and had a very strong work ethic. As a result, his hard work and consistency was rewarded with him being selected by the Pittsburgh Courier as a Little All-American.

During his time at MSC, Sherman anchored an offensive line that helped the Hawks to an overall record of 28 wins, 1 loss and 1 tie, while averaging 21.6 points per game. In addition, Sherman’s quiet leadership enabled Hawks to win two Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) championships in 1955 and 1957.

The Cleveland Browns originally signed Sherman in 1956. But because of the Korean War, he entered military and earned All-Army honors in 1957. After his discharge, Sherman signed as a free agent with the Baltimore Colts. Blessed with exceptional speed and quickness for his size, Sherman began the starting offensive tackle for the Colts in 1960. He was traded to the San Diego Chargers in 1962. Then in 1963, he was traded to the New York Jets where he was a key member of the Jets 1968 championship team. Sherman retired in 1968.

The following are some selected quotes from the New York Jets fact book about Sherman:

- Offensive team captain
- named first team all-AFL by the players (Sporting News)
- among the best pass protectors in all of football
- unbelievably hard to get around

- quick feet and excellent balance
- very consistent player, does not make the "big mental error", excellent attitude makes him one of the club's leaders, easy going, and dedicated

Sherman's NFL statistics are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Games</u>	<u>Other Stats</u>	<u>Points</u>
1958	Baltimore Colts	12	NA	0
1959	Baltimore Colts	12	NA	0
1960	Baltimore Colts	12	NA	0
1961	San Diego Chargers	12	NA	0
1962	San Diego Chargers	14	NA	0
1963	NY Jets	14	NA	0
1964	NY Jets	14	NA	0
1965	NY Jets	14	NA	0
1966	NY Jets	14	NA	0
1967	NY Jets	<u>14</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>0</u>
Career Totals		<u>132</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>0</u>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>PR</u>	<u>Punt Return</u>			<u>Kick Return</u>			
			<u>Yards</u>	<u>Avg.</u>	<u>TD</u>	<u>KR</u>	<u>Yards</u>	<u>Avg.</u>	<u>TD</u>
1959	Baltimore Colts	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	12	12.0	<u>0</u>
1960	Career Totals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12.0</u>	<u>0</u>