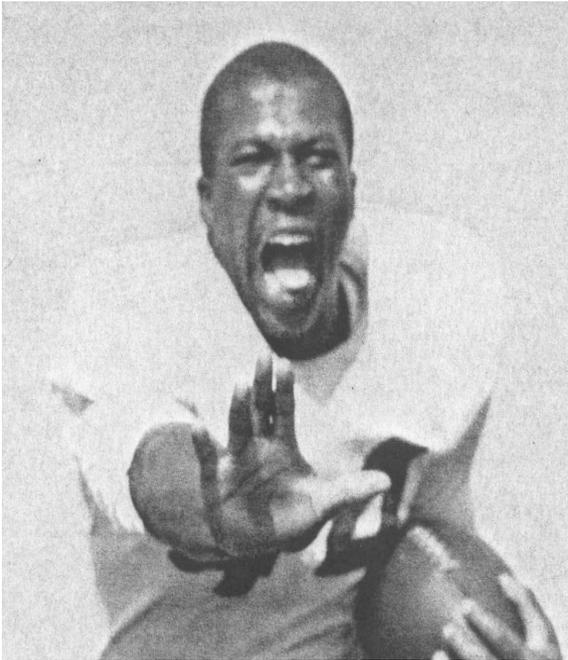


William “Shorty” Gray



William “Shorty” Gray was inducted into the Hawk Hall of Fame in 1982. William came to Maryland State College (MSC) from Norfolk, Virginia in 1957.

In 1958, William received All-Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) honors in football as a running back. William was key member of MSC’s 1957 and 1960 CIAA championship teams. During William’s stay at MSC, the Hawks compiled an overall record of 22 wins, 5 losses and 1 tie.

In 1961, William went on to play with the Saskatchewan Rough Riders of the Canadian Football League. His longest kickoff return was 82 yard and he collected 500 yards in one season with six

touchdowns.

After several years in Canada, He returned to the United States to play for the Orlando Panthers of the Continental Football League, where he was an All-League defensive back.

William graduated from MSC in 1976 with a degree in sociology. William returned to the nest in 1973 as an assistant football coach and assumed the responsibilities defensive coordinator from 1974 to 1977.

Throughout his career, William worked tirelessly to improve the lives of African-American youth in native Tidewater Virginia area. In 1994, lifelong friends William "Shorty" Gray, a former Canadian League football star, and Horace Balmer, a senior vice president of the National Basketball Association, were talking at the home of another friend and sports fan named Maurice Wilson. Balmer remembers saying, "You know what? When we are dead and gone, the younger generations will know nothing about the athletes who inspired us! We should do something about that."

The by-product of part Shorty’s work can be found at www.hraashf.org. Those weekends of conversations and fellowship became regularly scheduled meetings. It was out of those gatherings that the concept of the Hampton Roads African American Sports Hall of Fame was nurtured and brought to fruition. A non-profit organization was established to encourage youth to pursue personal and collective excellence. Its medium would generate

a multi-hued canvas of sports history from an African American perspective. William "Shorty" Gray was named the first president.