



PRESERVATION NEWS

Wichita County Historical Commission

Robert Palmer, Chairman

Wichita County Archives

Bryce Blair, Archivist

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Hours of Operation: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10:00am - 12:00pm & 1:00pm - 4:00pm

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wchitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/

Newsletter Editor: Becky Trammell

Wichita County Texas Archives is on [Facebook](#)

Volume CCXVIII

Location: Museum of North Texas History Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

AGENDA FOR MEETING: 1. Call to Order 2. Introduction of Guests
3. Business 4. Program 5. Adjourn

August 2020

From the desk of Robert Palmer

NO AUGUST MEETING

History is often made when the right person is at the right place at the right time. Johnie Lee Carroll, Jr. was such a person when he became the first black athlete at Midwestern University. Midwestern had admitted black students since 1954. (We dedicated a marker to desegregation north of the Fergueson Building.) Johnie was an outstanding basketball, baseball, and track star at Dogan High School near Streetman, south of Dallas. Black athletes in college athletic programs were almost nonexistent in the early 60s, especially in Texas. University of Oklahoma had recruited its first black football player, Prentice Gautt of Oklahoma City, in the late 1950s. It would be 1965 before Chuck Curtis, former Holliday and Jacksboro coach, would recruit Jerry Levias to play for SMU. Dennis Vinzant was Midwestern's basketball coach. Wichita Falls legend and Midwestern supporter Jesse Williams was actively looking for a black athlete to break the barrier. In a small gym in the small town of Streetman, population 250, counting all the dogs and cats, he found Dogan High School graduate Johnie Lee Carroll, Jr. Williams convinced Coach Vinzant to offer Carroll a four year scholarship. Johnny was an average basketball player scoring about 8 points a game over his high school career. He was an outstanding track star. Oh, how he could run! He was a quiet man. He would be followed at Midwestern by John Henry Young, a giant of a man who completely dominated the court when he played.

When Johnie finished his basketball eligibility, he needed one more year to graduate. The decision was made to start a track and field team. In the fall of 1963, notes were posted all over Midwestern announcing the athletic department was seeking people to run track. I was working on the lawn mowing crew with basketball players Bobby Cash and David Brewer. I had a very good track season my high school senior year in the spring of 1963. Cash and Brewer gave assistant coach Don Flatt my name. Flatt told me I would have to go to the Wichita Falls High School track

to try out. I ran a 440 for Flatt and he offered me a scholarship.

Eventually, 10 athletes would be given scholarships. After the first meet at Austin College, with six Texas colleges and five Oklahoma colleges participating, the number dropped to five athletes. East Texas State was coached by legendary coach Delmer Brown. Southwest Oklahoma, Central State, and Langston had outstanding track programs. We got murdered. The next meet at Tarleton involved five athletes: Johnie, myself, Leonard Talbert from Breckenridge, Gary Cardwell from Nocona, and Lowery Vaughn from Ft. Worth.

I learned a lot from Johnie. He was a quiet, very friendly, gentleman. In later meets, he would establish himself as one of the premier sprinters in the southwest. Leonard, a former state champion in the shotput, would do very well in the shotput, discus, and javelin. After a meet at Austin College, where we had done very well, we headed back to Wichita Falls. Coach Flatt was elated! He made the statement, "We would eat the best steak on the menu." We stopped at a cafe in Montague County. Flatt went in to set it up. We could see him arguing with the owner. When he came out he said we could eat in the main area, but Johnie would have to eat in the kitchen. We quickly huddled and concluded that, if Johnie ate in the kitchen, we ate in the kitchen and that's what happened. Johnny never got excited.

After graduation, Johnie taught and coached in Ft. Worth. His oldest daughter was an outstanding runner, winning many meets. He established the New York Life Insurance Company Track Club, teaching many young people the art of running with many ascending to national level events.

Johnie died March 1, 2020 and is buried in Ft. Worth. Jesse Williams died May 28, 2020. They will never be forgotten.

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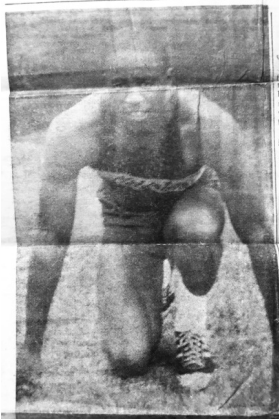
Monthly Report – July 2020

The Wichita County Archives is staying busy, even though we are closed to the public. In the last week of June we contacted the WF Chamber of Commerce and asked if we could copy their photo collection. After picking it up and bringing the collection to the archives; we learned there were probably about 1000 photos, some dating back to the early 1900's. John Yates and I have been working all of July at scanning and identifying the photos. It will probably take another month to finish this project. The WFCC collection features businesses and industry, churches, homes, SAFB, MSU, petroleum, aerial views and anything else they could use to promote Wichita Falls. This is an awesome collection and will be a great addition to our archives.

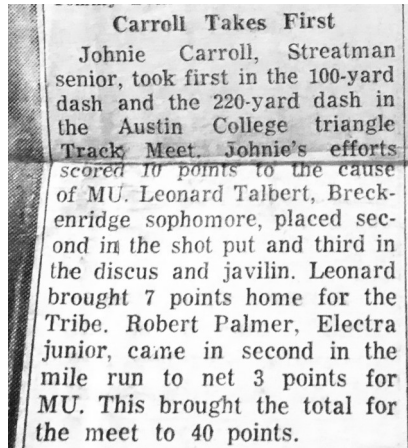
During the recent controversy involving the Confederate monument, the archives received requests for information from both sides of the argument. The faction wanting to keep the monument asked for information about those that placed the monument and when it was erected. The other side asked for information about the history of the Daughters of the Confederacy in WF. They also asked about the Ku Klux Klan and the Jewish community in WF. In all fairness to both sides, I provided all the information we had to both groups.

Comparing Wichita Falls to other communities trying to deal with this issue, I feel we have an advantage. From the beginning, WF was settled by a relatively equal number of Confederate and Union families. Considering this mix, the ideologies of neither side was allowed to flourish. Racism and segregation have been present in WF, but not to the extent most other communities have experienced. Case in point, Zales started in WF because the Klan in Graham, Texas ran him out of town. Another example was the blatant racist sign in Bowie, Texas warning blacks not to stay there overnight. Since the beginning, the black community has always had a large presence in Wichita Falls. We still have issues of racism in our community, but I feel we can be proud of the strides we have made.

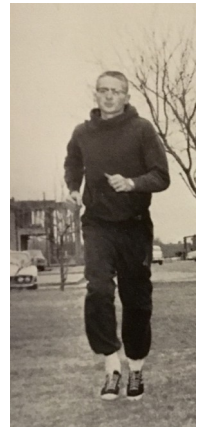
Tuesday, May 5, 1964



**Johnie
Lee Carroll
1964**



**Robert
Palmer**



Wichita County has its first marker from the new marker provider, Eagle Foundry. We hope to have an official dedication for the marker, honoring the Mytinger-Richardson House, sometime in the future.

Museum of North Texas History News

Due to continued issues related to Covid-19, the Museum remains closed. Please watch our social media for updates.