



Stillwater Pioneer Athlete Memorial



ELBERT EUGENE (GENE) HAMMACK

March 6, 1921 - September 29, 1998

Stillwater High School Class of 1939

18th Annual Memorial Induction Ceremony

September 28, 2013

Elbert Eugene (Gene) Hammack was delivered by a mid-wife on the family farm near Hochatown, Oklahoma. When Gene was 3 years old, his father died while helping siphon gasoline for some men whose car had run out of gas. His now widowed mother was left to raise 6 children and a foster child on her own. Prior to entering the 9th grade, Gene's two oldest sisters took

him to live with them in Stillwater.

Gene was a rawboned 6'2" natural athlete. Upon arriving at Stillwater High School, he was recruited to play football. He played in the first game he ever saw. Besides being an outstanding student, Gene played on the SHS basketball and baseball teams. His friendly smile and kind nature made him very popular. He served on the student council and was elected Sr. Class President.

His senior year at SHS, Gene's athletic ability was utilized as he was called on to play tackle, right halfback and end at various times on the single-wing offense. On defense he played defensive back. A highlight came in the game against Guthrie when he caught a pass while lying on his back. Gene and his lifelong friend, SHS quarterback Olen Miller, led the SHS Pioneer's to an unbeaten record and Cimarron Valley championship. The 1938 team only gave up 13 points all season. Gene was named first team end on the Tulsa World 1938 All-State High School football team. He played in the 1939 All-State Football Game at Taft Stadium in Oklahoma City.

In the fall of 1939 Gene played freshman football for Oklahoma A&M. As World War II began to heat up, Gene left college to become an Army Air Force pilot. It was at flight school in Shawnee that Gene met his future wife, Frances. Later, he became an instructor pilot at Corsicana, Texas. From there, he was transferred to a base in India where he flew C47 cargo planes over the rugged Himalayan Mountains into China. For his bravery, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, Gene and Frances returned to Stillwater and Oklahoma A&M, living at Vet Village on the North side of the campus. He graduated in 1948 with a degree in accounting and soon passed his CPA exam. While working for an accounting firm, he attended night school at OCU and obtained his law degree. In 1981, after a long and distinguished business career, Gene retired as Vice-President and Comptroller at Local Federal Savings and Loan in 1981.

Civically, Gene served as President and as Treasurer of Sertoma, was a member of the Lion's Club, Commissioner of the YMCA baseball board, and worked diligently on behalf of many annual YMCA membership drives. He was proud to be a Mason and was a 32nd degree Scottish Rite.

Gene and Frances had four children, Jim, Bob, Keith, and Lee Ann. Gene was an avid golfer and hunter and he always found time to be a Cub Scout leader and coach his children's athletic teams.

Another interesting note is that one chilly autumn night while in high school, Gene loaned his letterman's jacket to a friend. Sadly, it was never returned. In 1998, Santa Claus brought him a replacement SHS letterman's jacket. Thereafter, he proudly wore the jacket with the prominent "S" on the chest on many occasions. Today, that replica letterman's jacket is on display in the SHS Alumni Room.

Presenters

Dr. Jim Hammack and Bob Hammack