

Ray Davidson



Raymond W. Davidson, Jr was born and raised in Wharton, Texas. At age 15, he bettered the world age group record in the long jump while competing in AAU track in the summer of 1955. At Wharton High School he was a four sport letterman, all state halfback in football, state champion in the 440 yard dash and a member of the National Honor Society, graduating 4th in the class of 1958.

Davidson entered Rice Institute in the fall of 1958 on a track scholarship. He graduated from Rice University with a B.A. in history in 1962. Upon graduation he went on to Texas University to study Architecture. He became a member of the Pi Delta Theta Fraternity and was all-intramural competing for the fraternity.

In 1963 he entered flight school after joining the Navy. He later trained as a computer programmer. He played a season with Pensacola Goshawks and in San Diego as a player-coach for his undefeated West Coast Naval District Champions of 1966.

In 1967 he began his official coaching career at Wharton Jr. High School under head football coach and athletic director Eddie Joseph. Eddie's son, Gary Joseph, now head coach at Katy High School, was his 72 pound quarterback.

After two years in Jr High, Davidson took the head track job at Humble High School under his old high school coach Alan Boren. In his first season he had only fifteen athletes in his track program. Over the next four years he won back to back district championships and had over ninety athletes in his program.

In 1973 he moved to Klein High School where he was head track coach and director of the Klein Festival, a five state post season meet. In 1975 his two mile relay set a new state record of 7:45.0. In that same year he was elected to the THSCA Track Advisory Committee where he began to push to add the triple jump to the boys UIL track events.

In 1979 Davidson took the track job at Wharton County Jr College. There his teams won five conference and regional titles, placing in the top five nationally four times. He was selected National Jr. College coach of the year in 1982 and again in 1984. His teams produced 37 All-Americans, 16 national champions and 2 national records. Five of Davidson's Wharton County graduates went on to become Division I track coaches. Presently, of those five, one coaches at Tennessee, one at A&M, one at Monterey Tech and one is now athletic director at Blinn Jr College.

In 1987 Davidson went to Rice University as an assistant to Steve Straub. In 1995 he was named head track coach. In fourteen years at Rice he recruited or coached 20 Rice athletes who received All-American honors 50 times and produced two NCAA Champions and one NCAA record. While at Rice one of Davidson's athletes, Jarrett Erwin became the first ever recipient of the NCAA sportsmanship award for all sports. In his six years as head coach at Rice, Davidson's belief in high academics, took his teams from a GPA of 2.6 to a GPA of 3.2 at the time of his retirement. That same group went on to become the number one academic Division I team in the nation and in the same year won the outdoor WAC conference championship by 50 points under his former assistant, now head coach, Jon Warren.

While still at Rice, Track and Field News, in two separate occasions, selected Davidson's prized recruits Bryan Bronson and Tommy Oleksy as the nations's top recruits. Bronson went on to become ranked number one in the world in the 400 intermediate hurdles. Another recruit, Kareem Street-Thompson attained the number two ranking in the long jump while still in college. Kareem is the only college graduate to jump over 28 feet and run under 10 seconds in the 100 meters.

During his career, Davidson has been a THSCA guest lecturer in 1983, 1992, and 2001.

Raymond Davidson retired in 2001 leaving behind three separate giant wood sculptures of the Rice Owl mascot, which he built to be seen on the campus today. He and his wife Helen moved to Brenham to continue renovation on their "new" 1902 home. Living in Brenham, Davidson then returned to his roots and coached the next three years in Brenham Jr. High. In the last two years his 7th and 8th grade track teams both averaged 250 points apiece per track meet.

In 2004 Davidson retired again...sort of... and now works as a volunteer track coach and advises speed development in the football off season program that produced 14 athletes who run the 40 yard dash under 4.60. This coming off season he expects to have at least twenty athletes under 4.60.

Raymond and Helen have a son, Terrell Coble 37, who is also a Rice graduate. He and wife Michelle have two children, TJ (10) and Jasmine (5). They have a daughter Lisa (36) married to Ron Hinds with two children, Ariel (6) and Isaac (2) and another daughter Julie (35) married to Kevin Garb.