# Most Amazing Story In Football History

If you are one of those people who can't run a block without puffing and blowing, you will realize how extraordinary it is for a man of 60 to be playing professional football.

By Sam Lacy

If you're not a sexagenarian, you may not appreciate this, but it could be that you'll find it highly interesting.

If you're 60 years old, you'd think the kids down the block were crazy if they knocked on your door and said, "Come on, man, let's play a game of football."

If you're under 60 — say 50, 40, or 30 perhaps — you'd think the same thing: "Those guys must be nuts!"

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**BUT THIS** is the story of a man who did just that—played football at the age of 60. Not one day, or two, but every weekend throughout the fall months of his 60th year.

The story of Robert (Bob) Marshall is probably the most amazing, yet most neglected, of any to come within the scope of those of us who claim to be specialists in the chronicling of tan sports.

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**WE HAVE** been content to read about and marvel over the tales of Alonzo Stagg, Bob Zuppke and other white men who coached for 40 and 50 years.

But right among us is a man who **played** from 1899 to 1942, a total of 43 years!

Mr. Marshall, now 77, lives in retirement at his home in Minneapolis, Minn. He and his wife, Mrs. Irene Marshall, are the hale and hardy producers of four children and 14 grandchildren.

Notwithstanding the longevity records of Satchel Paige, Jersey Joe Walcott, Archie Moore, etc., Mr. Marshall is truly one of the marvels of the ages.

For his is a career that parallels, for ruggedness, that of a champion in the prize ring, and far surpasses the virility needed on the baseball diamond.

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**BEFORE ANOTHER** word, and before it is suspected that Mr. Marshall's gridiron exploits were of the "atsy" type, let us be assured this very definitely is not the case.

Bob Marshall was the first colored player to play varsity ball at the University of Minnesota and twice (1905-06) was named to the second All-America eleven.

"I was the first choice by all the other All-America selectors of the time, but not by Walter Camp," he told the writer recently. But if there was a note of bitterness in his voice, it was concealed by the cheery smile that greets all visitors.

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**OLDTIMERS RECALL** that the late Walter Camp held the distinction of being THE All-America selector during the first quarter-century, mainly because he was the first sportswriter to hit upon the idea.

They also remember that he, for some reason or other, had difficulty recognizing the merits of tan athletes. But that is another story.

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**MR. MARSHALL** played 29 years of professional football. His career covered terms with the Marines of Minneapolis, the Rock Island (Ill.) Bears, the Ironwood (Mich.) Pros, and play-for-pay elevens in Hibbing and Duluth, Minn.

Before and since his activity in the pro ranks, Mr. Marshall had 14 years as an amateur and semi-pro gridder, including eight years of high school and college competition in his native Minneapolis.

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**EVEN TODAY,** when he spends most of his time "listening to all kinds of music," the former great of the gridiron enjoys more than anything else, a chat about football.

"I played four years at Central High School here," he relates as the trace of a glint begins to brighten his eyes. "We were state champions in all four years.

"After that, I enrolled at Minnesota University and was lucky enough to make the varsity in all four of my years there."

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**PAUSING ONLY** to reflect a moment, Mr. Marshall continues:

"I'll never forget in my freshman season, I played end against Michigan's famous 'point-a-minute' team of 1903. That was the Michigan eleven coached by the great Fielding Yost, and they had the great all-time All-American, Willie Heston, as quarterback.

"We tied them, 6-6, and Yost told the newspaper later we were the finest team he ever met.

"I guess you might say the 'greatest' game of my career was one played in my senior year in 1906.

"That was when we beat the University of Chicago, 4-2, the winning points coming on my place kick for a field goal.

"Chicago had another all-time All-American, Walter Eckersall, in her lineup at the time."

**(Editor's note: Until 1908 the value of a field goal was four points, which accounts for the 4-2 score. After 1908, the point value of field goals was reduced from four to three).**

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**WE RELATIVELY** young squirts, listening to a rehash of an elder's career, are inclined to take it with a grain of salt. Humor the old guy, we say to ourselves, and let him bask in whatever glory he can manufacture in the twilight of his life.

But there's no humoring Bob Marshall; there's no manufacturing of glory here. In fact, the story he tells is actually a modest one.

This old geezer was a veritable tyro!

Not until you do your own investigating, do you learn that Marshall actually was the first-string right end on Minnesota teams of 1903-04-05-06.

And in those four years, the Gophers won 40 games and lost only one!

That lone setback was achieved by Wisconsin, 16-12, on a drop kick in the last two minutes of their contest in 1905.

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**MR. MARSHALL** makes no mention of the fact that he place kicked 12 goals for points after touchdown in that 72-6 shellacking of Northwestern in 1905. But the records show it.

**Editor's note: Until 1912, touchdowns were worth five points. Thus 12 TD's and Mr. Marshall's 12 conversions totalled 72. The point value of a touchdown was raised to six after 1912).**

The records also disclose that Mr. Marshall not only provided the winning points personally in the 4-2 triumph over Eckersall and Chicago in 1906, but he was responsible for the 8-6 victory over Indiana that same season when he tackled the Hoosier quarterback behind his own goal line for a safety.

In his quiet modesty, our venerable hero fails also to make note of the fact that his athletic prowess was not limited to the gridiron—or to himself.

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**HE PLAYED** professional baseball with the famous Leland Giants of Chicago, as well as with pro nines in Minnesota, North and South Dakota.

And the sons he so casually refers to—Bob and Bill—were Golden Gloves champions for Minnesota in the late thirties.

Today, Bob Marshall, 77 years young, is in his seventh year of retirement from a lucrative employment in the flour mills.

He is the proud owner of his home at 3650 Fourth Avenue, South, paid for with money earned from playing football—until he was 60.

## Played 60 Minutes

**IF THERE** remains any doubt in the mind of the reader as to Mr. Marshall's remarkable durability, his next statement should allay that doubt, though he doesn't make it for that purpose.

"In my day, of course, we hadn't heard of the two-platoon system in college football. So, I played four straight years at Minnesota — 60 minutes of every game, except one.

"That was in 1905, against Northwestern. We beat them so badly, 72-6, that they sought some consolation by getting rough. Our coach, Dr. L. H. Williams, took me out just before it was over.

"After my graduation from Minnesota in 1906, I played as a pro, winding up with Kenny Haycraft's All-Minneosta All-Americans in 1935. In the three years I was with Kenny (1933-35), we were never defeated."

In 1942, after a tour of semi-pro competition, Mr. Marshall says he turned over his football gear to his sons, Bob and Bill.

## This Is Our Country

(Continued from Page 4)

strong, intelligent, well-educated. You'd do fine work, be a credit to your country," he said with fervor, carried away with the picture he had created.

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**THE BOY** was staring at him strangely. Then he exploded into a sharp, loud burst of derisive laughter. It brought the judge's head up like a dash of cold water.

"What's funny about that?" the judge asked, flushing crimson.

"I volunteered for the army two weeks ago," Williams answered, smiling crookedly.

"What the devil are you talking about?"

"Why shouldn't I have? I had nothing to leave behind — no girl, no job. I've been out of school for two years. I couldn't get a job as an engineer. I didn't expect that.

"But lately I've been trying to get on as a bench hand in an airplane factory at fifty cents an hour. I've written dozens of letters and had dozens of interviews. They're all alike — quick. They take one look at me, and say, 'There must be some mistake, Mr. Williams.'

"Two weeks ago I volunteered for enlistment as an aviation cadet. I qualified — except that they weren't taking colored boys in the air corps."

Of course not, thought the judge. What in the world had come over him? He'd been gushing like an old maid. Who ever heard of colored aviators? He had to keep a better grip on himself.

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**HE'D ALMOST** forgotten there were still certain realities one had to consider. Now he'd placed himself in a ridiculous position with the boy. Mortification crowded in on him.

"Now look, son," he said, trying to maintain control of the situation. "I grant there are certain — well, let's say, injustices. Nothing can ever be one hundred per cent perfect. . ."

He was rudely interrupted.

"Then I got this call. I'm all right for them when they need a mess boy, or somebody to clean the latrines. I'm good enough for my country when it comes to that. That's how much it is my country, you see."

Williams was talking slowly in a hard, staccato manner.

"By God, it is your country," the judge screamed back, his temper suddenly, irrevocably gone. "It's your country whether you know it or not, and if you haven't the simple patriotism to serve it in the way it asks, you'll do time."

## The Menace

(Continued from Page 1)

pet subject. "The fault," he smiled, "lies in our teacher-training. We are so busy teaching teachers how to teach, that we tend to neglect giving the teachers the knowledge of the subjects they are to teach.

"While it is well to recognize the social problems a child will face in adjusting to our society, it is more important that the teacher know thoroughly the subject matters she is trying to teach.

"Take a math teacher. Nowadays, the emphasis is on how to teach math, rather than the teacher's knowing math himself. Too often the teacher is just one chapter in the book ahead of his pupils.

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**"WHAT THINGS** should a youngster concentrate on if he wants to go into science and engineering?" was the next query.

The best thing, according to Nutt, is to learn all the mathematics and physics he possibly can as early as he can.

And, he added, one of the main things a scientist should have is a good Background in English.

"English?" I asked, stunned.

"Yes, English," Nutt replied, "for no matter how brilliant a scientist may be, if he can't explain it to other people, it's no good to the world."

AFRO Magazine Section

THE AFRO-AMERICAN, FEBRUARY 1, 1958



THE POLLY BERGEN SHOW'S

# Musical Director

He also has directed such TV spectaculars as "High Button Shoes," "Bachelor," and "The Helen Morgan Story."

By Louis E. Lomax

Luther Henderson Jr., a thirty - six year old musician-scholar, whose youthful ambition was to be a mathematician is the first to become musical director of a network TV show.

As musical director of the Polly Bergen show, seen every other week on NBC, Henderson must select the musical numbers to be performed, make the orchestrations, and conduct the special orchestra that provides the background for Miss Bergen's performances.

"I try to take my job in stride," Henderson said, "and I behave just as any other musician. The race question has no place in my work.

"I have given explicit orders to my agent that he must see to it that the orchestra is composed of men with the best musical backgrounds. I don't care about their race."

The reasons for this attitude lie deep in Henderson's personal background.

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**LUTHER HENDERSON JR.,** was born in Kansas City, Missouri. When he was four years of age his father, Luther Henderson Sr., moved the family to New York, where the elder Henderson pursued a career on the stage.

Mrs. Florence Henderson, mother of the now celebrated musician, joined the New York school system as did Luther Jr.'s sister, Mrs. Thelma Lewis.

Henderson began the study of music as a small child. He said:

"Music and the piano came natural to me. I never found it a chore and, unlike most child musicians, my parents never had to pull me away from the ball games to practice."

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**UNDER THE** tutelage of Sonoma Tally, and buttressed by the close friendship of such musical giants as Mercer Ellington and the latter's father, Duke Ellington, Henderson entered Juilliard School of Music and took his bachelor's degree.

Following his college education, Henderson joined the navy and became a kingpin in the musical aggregation at the Great Lakes Naval Base, near Chicago.

When the war was done, Henderson came home to a weary world. Slowly and methodically he began to make his way into the world of musical giants.

First "Beggar's Holiday," a musical Henderson scored in collaboration with Billy Strayhorn. Then for three years Henderson was allied with Lena Horne, figuring prominently in many of her most memorable renditions.

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**THE** "big push" for Henderson began little over a year ago when he joined NBC to do the musical chores for several spectaculars.

Few knew that the baton directing the music behind such warm productions as "Bachelor," "High Button shoes," and the "Helen Morgan Story" was waved by a man with brown hands.

And it was the "Helen Morgan Story" that proved to be the turning point.

"A few months before the show," Henderson said. "I met Miss (Polly) Bergen. We were introduced by our mutual agent John Greenhut."

Shortly after their meeting, Henderson did the orchestration for the albums "Bergen Sings Morgan" and "Last Night When We Were Young." Thus began the professional work that led to the Henderson appointment as musical director of the new Bergen series.

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**HENDERSON SAID:**

"My relationship with the other members of the Bergen company is wonderful. Each of us has a job to do and I do mine."

A warm, unassuming man, Henderson welcomes his new job as an advancement but he shys away from personalities. He said:

"All of us learn to qualify and do a job well. The proof of talent is in the performance. There is little left to be said. We are what we do."

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**INTERVIEWED** in their New York home during the Christmas holidays, the Hendersons were a picture of the modern professional couple on the move.

A sensitive artist, Henderson works at the large grand piano in his studio living room, employing a tape recorder to evaluate and polish his orchestrations.

Mrs. Henderson moved about the apartment, first taking Melanie out for air, then making phone calls to an employment agency in the hope of finding a competent nurse for the baby while the talented couple seek higher achievements in the world of art.

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**AND HENDERSON** let his mind roam the gamut of modern music.

"Yes, there is such a thing as African music and African culture. But American music is an olio. That is, it is a mixture of many elements. However, African music is the basic ingredient in American music . . ."

" . . . I like Rock and Roll . . it has its place. Of course, all things can be taken to extremes. This, I think, is bad. But when kept in bounds, Rock and Roll is fine with me . . ."

"My hardest job was learning how to play Boogie Woogie . . . I was playing in a Village Night club and the cats used to come in and say 'man let's hear some left hand; so I had to learn how to play it."

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" . . WHAT DO I want to do ultimately? . . . Just be a good musician. That's all I ever wanted to do and I suppose that is all I will ever want to be. Just be a good musician."

And those who know him best will tell you that that is precisely what Luther Henderson Jr., is . . . a good, if not great, musician.

But he is more: Luther Henderson Jr., is a symbol; a symbol of this latter day American who through talent and hard work has overcome the barriers and is now a first rate human being.

## 100 Percent In Math

Like many senior students at N.Y.'s Evander Childs High School, in the Bronx, Luther Henderson took the New York Regents examination to determine his future course of study.

"To the complete amazement of my teachers, parents and myself, I scored 100% on the mathematical section," Henderson recalled. "This meant that I must enter college and become a math major."

But, as has oftimes been the case, the aptitude test measured the man's mind without consideration for the beating of his heart.

And after two years as a math major at New York City College, Henderson revolted against the coldness of theoretical math and returned to music, his first and only dedication.

LUTHER HENDERSON JR.

## A Proud Papa

Henderson is married to the former Stephan Locke and they have a thirteen-month-old daughter, Melanie.

Mrs. Henderson is a performer in her own right, having been seen in such stage productions as "Pick Up Girl."

She is currently recording a number of spot commercials for a nationally advertised product.

The typical, proud father with Melanie bouncing on his knee, Henderson expressed a deep affection for Luther III, 8, and Denison, 17, his children by a former marriage.

"When I look at my oldest I think I am growing old. Sometime I am tempted to introduce him as my younger brother," Henderson said.