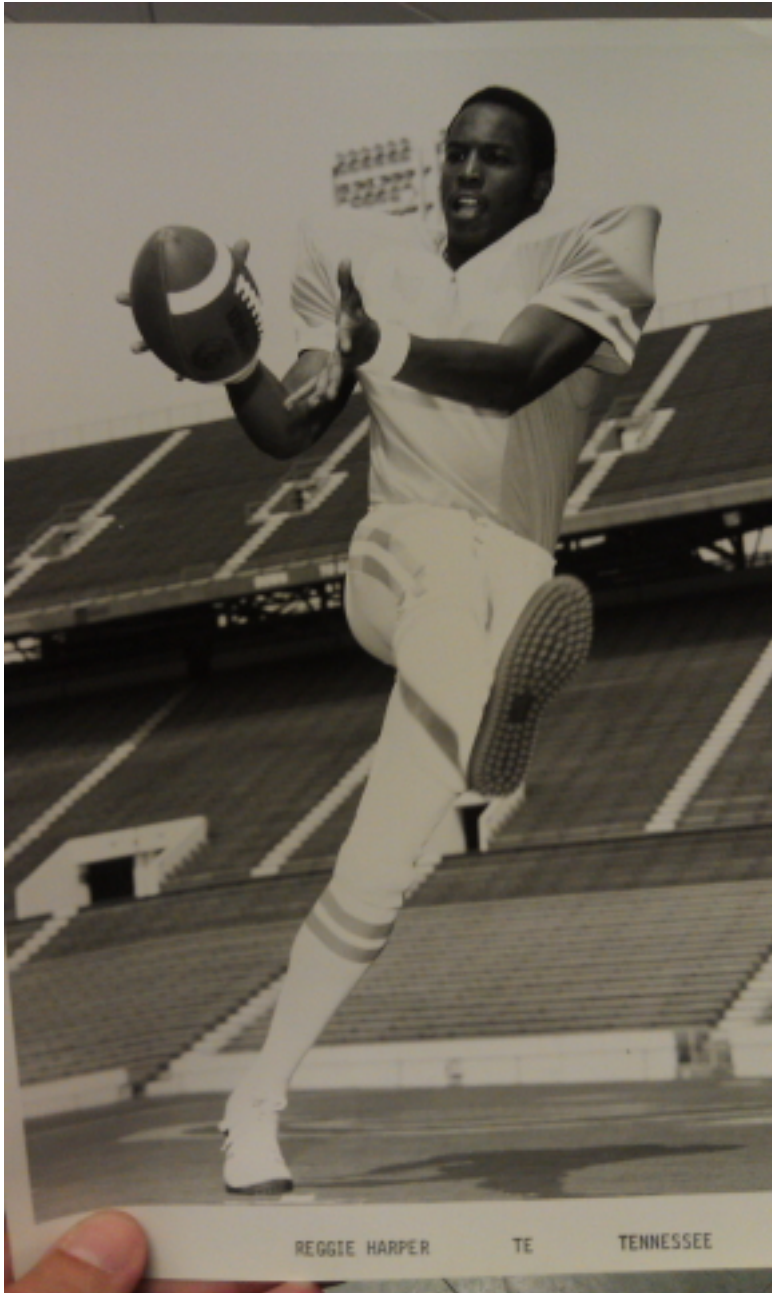


Former Jacket and Vol Standout Reggie Harper Passes Away

Written by Mark Darnell
Tuesday, August 28, 2012



Former Trousdale County Yellow Jacket and standout Tennessee Volunteer Reggie Harper passed away on Sunday August 19th, 2012. He was 53 years old.

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Harper was a standout athlete at Trousdale County during his prep career. He started on the High School Basketball team as an eighth grader and during his freshman year helped the team to win 29 games. While he had opportunities to play college basketball, he was a standout prep footballer for the Yellow Jackets.

While at Trousdale County High, football was Harper's game. He was a starter on three different squads that lost in the state championship game his sophomore through senior seasons. He won many awards and some have even considered him one of the best football players ever produced on the Creekbank. In the spring of 1977 a new college coach came to speak at the Trousdale County Football banquet, and he landed two prize recruits in Harper and teammate Donnie Oldham.

Following High School Harper joined first year coach Johnny Majors at the University of Tennessee. He was a four year starter at tight end and to this day still holds the Volunteer record for catches and total yards for that position in a career. According to the Vol record books he caught a total of 98 passes for 1,141 yards and 7 touchdowns. He was selected by The Sporting News to their Freshman All-American Team in 1977. He was an All-SEC selection his junior season and played in the Hula Bowl following his senior season. In 1980 he won the Mickey O'Brien Award, which is a Tennessee award given to the athlete who overcomes "physical obstacles" during his career to make a valuable contribution to the team.

Many people are remembering Reggie. Longtime Yellow Jacket radio man and Trousdale football guru, Jerry Richmond said, "Anyone couldn't help but like Reggie. He always had a way of making you laugh." Hartsville businessman and TC basketball teammate Dale Dies said Harper always wanted the ball when it was time to make a play, and he usually made it happen. Nicky Rittenberry, who has worked in Hartsville for 17 years, said, "I met him the first week I worked in Hartsville and it seemed like I had known him forever." Former Jacket signal caller Bryan Satterfield remembered, "Watching him play when I was a kid, I thought I was watching a superstar play football." One internet fan commented, "I'll never forget his one handed TD catch at Auburn in 1980. That was one of the most beautiful catches I've seen by a Vol."

Reginald (Reggie) Harper (53) entered into eternal rest on Sunday August 19th, 2012 at the University Medical Center in Lebanon, TN. Reggie was a 1977 graduate of Trousdale County High School, and a former University of Tennessee football player under Coach Johnny Majors. He leaves to cherish his memory one son Michael R Harper (Hartsville). Granddaughter Tatum Mooneyhan, (Lebanon). Father Robert Key (Helen) Timberlake (Nashville), Brother Rodney

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Solomon (Lebanon), sisters Kristi and Kysha Timberlake (Nashville), and a devoted Aunt Juanita (Rais D) Adams (Hartsville).

Photo courtesy of the University of Tennessee