

HILLARD LLOYD CHEATHAM “The Beast”

LLOYD CHEATHAM WAS BORN IN NAUVOO, ALABAMA, ON MARCH 20, 1919,

to Angie Mann Cheatham and Hillard Floyd Cheatham. He attended Carbon Hill High School in the mid 1930's. At Carbon Hill, he played both football and baseball, receiving All-State honors in both sports.

In 1938, Lloyd enrolled in Auburn University on a football scholarship. A versatile player, he played the positions of quarterback, fullback and blocking back in the single wing offense, coached by legendary Coach Jack Meagher. At 195 pounds, hard blocking, fast, and difficult to tackle, Lloyd quickly earned the nickname, “The Beast.” Off the field, he was a gentle giant and a popular player among the team and Auburn students. Cheatham had a strong sense of leadership/team spirit and his ability to create a “spark” in his team resulted in many come-from-behind wins and rallies. In 1940, he led Auburn to a victory over an undefeated Mississippi State team.

As a junior, Cheatham was awarded the Jacobs Award, which is awarded to the outstanding blocker within the Southeastern Conference. He was runner-up for the award his senior year. He was selected as the team captain of Auburn's 1941 team and was voted to the All-SEC team the same year. Additionally, in 1941, Cheatham was selected to play in the Blue-Gray Football Game. He played on the Gray team as the fullback and was appointed captain of the Gray team.

At Auburn, Lloyd excelled at baseball as well as football. He started as an outfielder and was the teams leading batter. He was selected to the All-Star game and immediately after graduation, upon the recommendation of Coach Jimmy Hitchcock, he began playing outfield for the Montgomery Rebels (the Original Biscuits).

After a few months, Cheatham reported to Chicago where he had been selected to the 1942 College All-Star Team, which consisted of college all-stars who played the defending NFL Champion Chicago Bears. The game, which was played preseason, attracted a record attendance of over 104,000 spectators.

After being offered a contract to the Atlanta Crackers Baseball team, Lloyd was drafted by the NFL Chicago Cardinals and played the 1942 season for the Cardinals. A side note to Lloyd's career is that he is one of only two Auburn players to be drafted twice in their career. Lloyd was drafted in 1940 and 1941 and Bo Jackson was drafted in 1986 and 1987.

As World War II broke out, Lloyd entered the Navy. He played on the famed Bainbridge Naval Football Squad, which was comprised of NFL players and college all-stars. He was the starting quarterback for the team dubbed “The Wonder Team.” In 1945, Cheatham was chosen to play QB on the Navy All-Star Team in Pearl Harbor. The team competed against All-Star Marine and All-Star Army teams to improve morale and provide entertainment for the troops.

In 1946 Cheatham returned to professional football upon being drafted as a quarterback for the New York Yankees of the newly formed All American Football Conference. Lloyd started in the 1946 championship game against the Cleveland Browns. He retired from football in 1948.

Lloyd then joined Chevrolet Motor Division in Corporate Management. He kept athletically involved through speaking engagements and activities with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He served as an adult and youth Sunday school teacher and engaged in numerous other church activities.

He was a member of Auburn Letterman Club and the legendary group Meagher's Mauraders. Hillard Lloyd Cheatham died June 11, 1989, in North Carolina. He left behind his wife of 47 years, Billie Bishop Cheatham.

