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2020

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Recommended Citation

Dyer, Anna Presley, "Edith McGuire Duvall" (2020). *Tennessee State University Olympians*. 2.
<https://digitalscholarship.tnstate.edu/tsu-olympians/2>

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Edith McGuire Duvall

Born on June 3, 1944 in Atlanta, Georgia, to Alberta and Clifford McGuire, Edith McGuire Duvall was the youngest of four children. Athletic from an early age, Duvall's first experience with track and field started during an elementary school's May Day celebration. While it was fun and games in elementary school, Duvall started taking track more seriously during high school. She attended David T. Howard High School and was coached by Mrs. Marian Armstrong-Perkins. Coach Armstrong-Perkins had a prestigious reputation for training Olympic athletes, and since 1952, she had at least one former student competing on the U.S. Olympic team. Under Coach Armstrong-Perkins, Duvall became a star track athlete, especially when she defeated the top prep school sprinter in Atlanta, Fronnie Tucker. As a result of her outstanding performance, in 1960 Coach Armstrong-Perkins recommended Duvall attend Coach Edward Temple's summer track and field training camp at Tennessee State University in Nashville.

Reflecting on that intense, penetrating summer, Duvall recalls:

When I got to Tennessee State that first summer, and Coach Temple had us running, my legs had never felt like that before. I remember we could walk down the street, and it wasn't even a mile to the store, and I didn't even want to do that because my legs were aching so bad. We trained twice a day, because I was a sprinter and a long jumper, I had to practice twice a day, because we did the running in the morning, and then we did the long jump in the evening. So, that was a lot of training, but seeing those girls and one of the things that Coach Temple did when all of the high school girls hit the campus, he showed us the films that he had taken at track meets. And in those films it says eight girls in the

finals, and six of them would be Tennessee State, the Tiger Belles. So, when I saw that as a high school student I was, like, I was going to do anything this man tells me to do, because I wanted to be just like those girls. (as cited in Salisbury, 2009, p. 162)

However, her endurance paid off that summer because Duvall would earn herself a scholarship to Tennessee State in 1961. She began in the fall of that year and majored in elementary education. She would also become another standout Tigerbelle under Coach Temple. She ran the 100 and 200-meter races, as well as the 4x100- meter relays. In addition, Duvall was a gifted long jumper. During her collegiate athletic career, Duvall held AAU National Championship titles in the 100-meters, the 200-meters, and the long jump.

She made her international entrance in 1963 at the Pan-American Games in São Paulo, Brazil. Duvall took first place in the 100-meter dash and 400-meter relay. Since successes eventually led to her career highlight—the 1964 Olympic Games held in Tokyo, Japan. She ran against fellow TSU Tigerbelle and close friend, Wyomia Tyus, and Poland's Irena Kirszenstein and Ewa Klobukowska, who had beaten Tyus's and Wilma Rodolph's 100-meter time. While Duvall was predicted to win the 100-meter time, she actually came in second to Tyus for a close upset. However, she did come in first place and break Rodolph's record in the 200 meters, as she set a new world record of twenty-three seconds. Duvall would also win a silver medal as part of the 400-meter relay team. After her wins in Tokyo, Duvall became the second African American woman to win three medals in the same Olympic Games.

Duvall would return home with quite a few honors. McGuire would be a top ten finalist for the Sullivan Award. Established by the AAU in 1930, the Sullivan Award is presented

annually to the amateur athlete chosen as doing the most "to advance the cause of sportsmanship." She also came in fourth in the national ballot for Sportswoman of the Year. In Georgia, Atlanta mayor Ivan Allen Jr. declared January 29, 1965, as Edith McGuire Day, and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce awarded McGuire the Native Daughter Trophy.

When Duvall graduated from TSU in 1966, she also retired from competitive track and field as a six time AAU-All-American. She would later move to Detroit, Michigan with her husband, Charles T. Duvall and would start her near ten-year teaching career. The Duvalls would later move to Oakland, California, where they owned three McDonald's franchises. Duvall would become a well-known community activist and sponsor, especially supporting programs for underprivileged children. In 2008, the Duvalls would also make a generous \$1 million dollar donation to TSU and the women's track team.

Although now retired, Duvall still receives multiple honors for her athletic excellence. She was awarded the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Silver Anniversary Award in 1991. Furthermore, she been induced into several hall of fames including the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1975, the U.S. National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1979, the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in 1980, and the Atlanta Sports Hall of Fame in 2009.





Further Reading

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