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LEGENDARY CHAMPIONS.  
NATIVE DAUGHTERS.  
OVERCOMERS.  
GAMECHANGERS.**

All fitting titles for Pat Head Summitt and Wilma Rudolph, who both stand in bronze anchoring Liberty Park in their Clarksville, Tennessee hometown.

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# PAT HEAD SUMMITT

## ACCOLADES

- 1976 Olympic Silver Medalist (athlete)
- 1984 Olympic Gold Medalist (coach)
- First U.S. Olympian to Medal Both as an Athlete and a Coach
- Appeared in every NCAA Tournament during her Coaching Career
- 16 SEC Regular-Season and Tournament Titles
- 8 NCAA National Championships
- 7-Time NCAA Coach of the Year
- 2000 Naismith Basketball Coach of the Century
- 2009 – First NCAA Coach to Reach 1,000 Victories
- 2009 – Ranked 11 of the 50 Greatest Coaches of All Time in All Sports
- 2012 Arthur Ashe Courage Award
- 2012 ESPY Presidential Medal of Freedom



Photo: Tennessee Alumnus



# WILMA RUDOLPH

## ACCOLADES

- 1956 Olympic Bronze Medalist
- 1960 Olympic Gold Medalist (3 events)
- 1961 Sullivan Award as America's Outstanding Amateur Athlete
- 1960 and 1961 Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year



# WILMA RUDOLPH

**Wilma Glodean Rudolph** was born on June 23, 1940 in a region of Tennessee known, at the time, as St. Bethlehem, which later became a part of Clarksville. Rudolph was born into a large family, being the 20th of her father's 22 children. Her father, Ed, worked as a railroad porter while her mother, Blanche, worked as a maid.

Born prematurely, Wilma weighed only 4 ½ pounds at the time of her birth. At the age of 4, she fell victim to pneumonia and the polio virus, leaving her left leg temporarily paralyzed. Her mother began taking her to a physician in Nashville who incorporated physical therapy into her treatment. Eventually, Wilma overcame the paralysis and was walking with a leg brace at the age of 8, then improved to wear specially made orthopedic shoes for a few years after the brace was removed. Regarding her infantile paralysis, Wilma said, **“My doctors told me I would never walk again. My mother told me I would. I believed my mother.”**

Once Wilma regained her strength, she took an interest in basketball, eventually joining the girls' team at her all-African-American school, Burt High School. She became well-known throughout the community while racking up points for her team, frequently having her statistics featured in the local newspapers.

During one of the high school basketball games, Tennessee State University Track and Field Coach Ed Temple noticed Wilma. Impressed with Wilma's speed, he recruited her to his collegiate track team. Just one year later, she was competing in her first Olympic Games.

At the age of 16, **Wilma was the youngest member of the 1956 U.S. track and field team**, competing in Melbourne, Australia. During the games, she earned her first medal, a bronze medal in the women's 400-meter relay.



However, it was four years later during the 1960 Olympics in Rome, Italy that Wilma truly made a name for herself. She competed in the 100-meter and 200-meter races, and the 400-meter team relay; she received gold medals in all three events, setting the record as the **first woman** from the U.S. to receive **three gold medals in a single Olympics Game**. Wilma was informed that upon her arrival in Clarksville, there would be a parade and ceremony held for her, but she told the coordinators that she was only willing to be there if it was a bi-racial, unsegregated event where everyone was welcome. The coordinators agreed, and in turn, Clarksville hosted its **first large gathering that involved people of all races**.



Following the 1960 Olympic Games, Wilma retired as a runner and pursued a degree in education from Tennessee State University. She taught at Cobb Elementary and coached track at Burt High School in Clarksville. In 1976, after her second divorce, Wilma and her three children moved to Indiana where she hosted a local television show and ran a community center.

In mid-1994, Wilma was diagnosed with a brain tumor that eventually took her life on November 12, 1994; she was only 54. She passed away in Brentwood, Tennessee and is buried at the Edgefield Missionary Baptist Church in Clarksville near the Mason Rudolph Golf Course. Her legacy has lived on for decades. Wilma Rudolph Boulevard, in Clarksville, was given its name in dedication of her in 1994. In August of 1995, Tennessee State University honored her by naming a newly built dormitory the “Wilma G. Rudolph Residence Center.” Additionally, a life-sized bronze statue of Wilma Rudolph has been placed at the Wilma Rudolph Event Center located at 1190 Cumberland Drive in Clarksville, and a permanent exhibit about her is on display at the city's Customs House Museum, 200 S. Second Street. Despite her untimely death, Rudolph's legacy is still very much alive, and she continues to **inspire people around the globe**.



# PAT HEAD SUMMITT

**Patricia Sue Head** was born on June 14, 1952 to parents Richard and Hazel Albright Head. Her early years were rooted on the family farm in southern Montgomery County, Tennessee. The early childhood influences of Pat's close family upbringing and lessons learned on the farm gave her a strong work ethic and a solid foundation.

Because no high school athletic programs in Montgomery County included girls' basketball at that time, the Head family moved to nearby Henrietta where Pat played competitively at Cheatham County High School. This provided her the opportunity to become a leading college prospect – **launching what would become a celebrated sports career.**

Pat went on to play basketball at the University of Tennessee at Martin, earning All-American honors while playing for UT-Martin's first female basketball coach, Nadine Gearin. In 1973, she was selected for her first U.S. National Team and represented the U.S. at the World University Games in the Soviet Union. She returned to UT-Martin her senior year with loftier goals, including making the U.S. Olympic team. Four games into her final season, however, she suffered a nearly career-ending knee injury. In 1974, she received her B.S. in physical education.

Within the year, Pat was offered the head coaching position for the **University of Tennessee Lady Vols where she coached for 38 years (1974 – 2012.)** With Summitt as head coach, the Lady Vols appeared in every NCAA Tournament from the inaugural in 1982 until her retirement in 2012, and advanced to the Sweet 16 every year except 2009. Coach Summitt achieved unquestionable Southeastern Conference dominance, winning 16 SEC regular-season titles with the Lady Vols, as well as 16 tournament titles.



Photo: UT Sports

In 30 NCAA tournament appearances, Coach Summitt's teams advanced to the Final Four 18 times and won a record eight NCAA National Championships.

At her retirement, she was the all-time winningest coach in NCAA basketball history of either a men's or women's team in any division. **In 2009, she became the first coach in NCAA history to reach 1,000 victories.**

She finished her coaching career with 1,098 wins in 1,306 games (.841). She was named NCAA Coach of the Year seven times, coached in the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I.

In 2011, Pat publicly announced her diagnosis of early-onset dementia. Alzheimer's type, and the University of Tennessee named her Coach Emeritus. Later that year, she founded the Pat Summitt Foundation Fund, with proceeds going toward cutting-edge research against the disease.

Pat Summitt died on June 28, 2016 at the age of 64. The Pat Head Summitt Plaza and Legacy Park was dedicated in Clarksville's Liberty Park on June 15, 2018. Undeniably, she is an international legend in athletics, coaching and motivational speaking. The story of Pat's remarkable life and career is an enduring legacy for future generations with a powerful message of life-long values – about courage and fulfilling one's potential – a story of dreaming big and **“shooting for the stars.”**

