



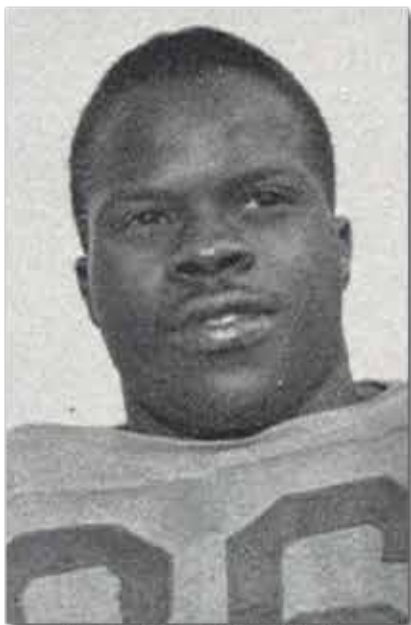
MAY 2024

## Society of 1925 Remembers Charles “Choo-Choo” Gladney

READ TIME: 2 MINUTES



In 1953, Charles “Choo- Choo” Gladney arrived on the Trinidad State campus as a new football recruit from Beloit, WI. Along with Frank Clarke, Tarzan Honor, and several others, Gladney would help deliver the 1953 Empire Conference championship. This team would follow-up their undefeated 1953 season with another Conference championship in 1954, finishing #2 in the nation.



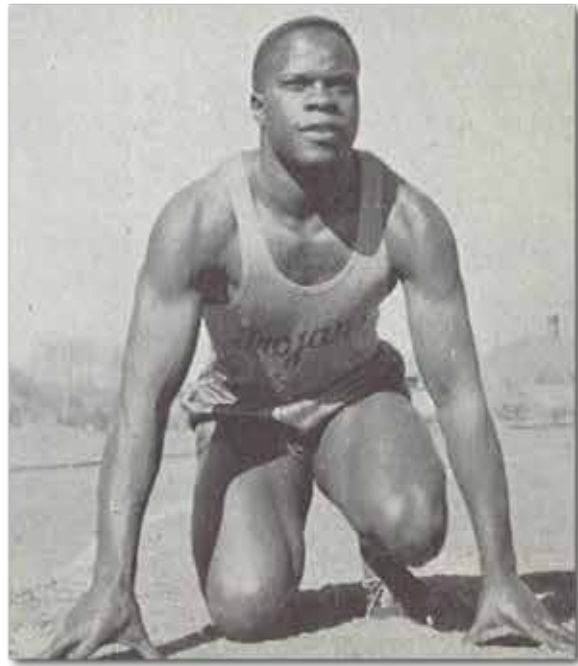
*Charles “Choo-Choo” Gladney*

This was truly a golden era for Trinidad State football.

In addition to the gridiron, Gladney also lettered in track and field, setting multiple school records along the way. His nickname, “Choo-Choo,” certainly applied, as the explosive halfback would take his skills to the University of New Mexico after graduating from Trinidad State. Teammate Frank Clarke would continue onto the University of Colorado, before enjoying a professional career with the Cleveland Browns and Dallas Cowboys.

During the 1950s, these young men were breaking down barriers for future Black students.

After graduation, Gladney would serve in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1957-59 before returning to civilian life in Pasadena, CA. His professional career culminated with his retirement from The Children's Way Foster Family Agency, although he would continue to serve as a board member. In addition to his professional life, Charles was passionate about beautiful cars and Blues music.



*Gladney moments before setting a conference record of 25 seconds in the 220 low hurdles*

A reunion at Trinidad State in 1994 provided an opportunity to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the 1954 championship team. Twenty-three of the 27 surviving members of the 31-man team joined the fun. Attendees included Gladney, Head Coach Dale Hardy, Assistant Coach Harry Wise, along with cheerleaders, and numerous fans and alumni.

Everyone renewed old friendships and shared happy memories.



*Charles "Choo-Choo" Gladney reunites with Coach Dale Hardy, Carroll Hardy, and former Trinidad State President Frank Armijo*

Trinidad State would host a college reunion again in 2004, which both Gladney and Coach Hardy would also attend.

"That 1954 team was exceptional," Hardy explained at the time. "We averaged 57 points per game, only giving up 7.8 points to our opponents."

“A representative from the Junior Rose Bowl came from California to watch us defeat Pueblo 64-0,” Hardy continued. “They were considering an invitation to Trinidad State, but they wanted an easier opponent for El Camino, the California team. We got passed over, but we all knew—we were just too good to play in the Junior Rose Bowl!”

Charles Gladney passed away in 2008, two years after the death of his wife, Virginia. Soon afterwards, Trinidad State was humbled to learn that Gladney had created a legacy gift in his estate plans.

The Society of 1925 is proud to honor the legacy of Charles “Choo-Choo” Gladney.

For information or ideas about legacy gifts at Trinidad State, please contact Toni DeAngelis at 719-846-5520 or [toni.deangelis@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:toni.deangelis@trinidadstate.edu). And if you’ve created a legacy gift, please let us know. We would love to honor you as a member of our Society of 1925.

*Click below for more information about the TSC Foundation Society of 1925.*



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