



OLYMPIC PRIDE, AMERICAN PREJUDICE/CORBIS

Left to right rear: Dave Albritton and Cornelius Johnson, record high jumpers; Tidy Pickett, track star; Ralph Metcalfe, sprinter; Jimmy Clark, boxer; Matthew "Mack" Robinson, sprinter. In front are John Terry (left), weight lifter and John Brooks, broad jumper.

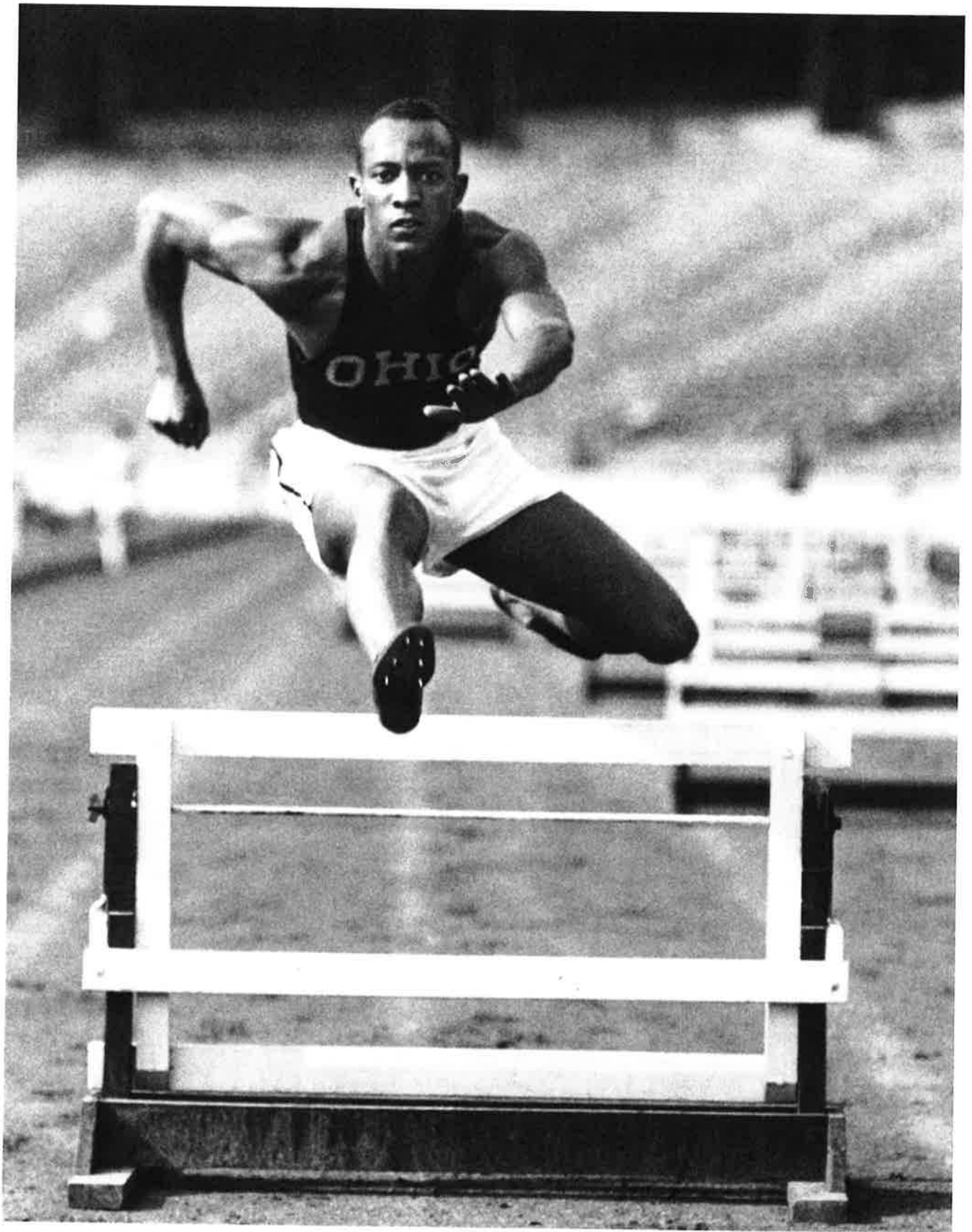
People often remember the 1936 Olympics in Berlin for track and field legend Jesse Owens taking home four gold medals, essentially triumphing over Adolf Hitler's hateful ideologies in his own backyard. At the time, Americans considered Owens to be representative of how the mighty U.S.A. was superior to Hitler and Germany.

But Owens was just one of 18 black athletes on the U.S. Olympic team brave enough to attend the games in Nazi Germany. This summer marks the 80th anniversary of those games, and the athletes' accomplishments are perhaps even more significant all these years later.

In "Olympic Pride, American Prejudice," a documentary set to premiere later this year, writer and director Deborah Riley Draper tells the story of these athletes who found success despite competing in a country with the world's most extreme Aryan supremacy and facing discrimination under Jim Crow laws at home.



Jesse Owens — 100-meter dash (Gold), 200-meter dash (Gold), Long Jump (Gold), 4x100-meter relay (Gold)



Archibald Williams — 400-meter run (Gold)



ULSTEIN BILD VIA GETTY IMAGES

Archibald Williams (center) after winning the 400-meter race.

“Archie Williams went on to become a Tuskegee airman. He was a trained pilot while he was at [the University of California, Berkeley] and he was a mechanical engineering major so he became a Tuskegee airman.”

Cornelius Johnson — High Jump (Gold Medalist)



ILLUSTRATION VIA GETTY IMAGES

“We interviewed three Germans who were at the 1936 games who are still alive, and everyone remembered Cornelis because he was a 7-foot black guy. So it was like, ‘Woa this guy is awesome. Not only did he win a gold medal, he’s super nice and he’s so tall!’ And they were fascinated with him.”

Tidye Pickett Biography



PICKETT, Tidye (Nov. 3, 1914 - 17 Nov. 17, 1986), track and field athlete, Olympian, and educator, was born Tidye Anne Pickett in Chicago, Illinois. Tidye Pickett began to participate in various Chicago Park District athletic programs open to black youth. One program included the Carter School playground under the Chicago Board of Education Playground Programs. At that time, Pearl Green, director of the girl's athletic program, impressed with Tidye's natural talent, entered her in various athletic competitions. Outstanding in track and field events, Pickett also began to run for other athletic organizations. She entered various races sponsored by the *Chicago Daily News*, church organizations, such as the Union Church Athletic Association and the YMCA, and she joined the Chicago Park District's South Park track team. Pieroth states that "at barely 5'3" and 100 pounds, Pickett could run faster than all of her competitors at these events.

At an invitation meet in the Armory on Cottage Grove Avenue, she met John Brooks. He went on to qualify for the 1936 Olympic team as a long jumper. Working with Brooks, Pickett became an outstanding hurdler and broad jumper, as well as a sprinter. She soon began running in citywide meets and traveling to competitions across the country and in Canada, winning everything she entered" (Pieroth, 32). As a seventeen-year-old student at Chicago's Englewood High, Pickett qualified as a member of the Olympic Team in July of 1932, becoming one of the first African American women, as well as the youngest African American woman, named to the 1932 U.S. Olympics squad.

Pickett's experiences as part of the 1932 Olympic track and field team were bittersweet. With much hoopla, the team members boarded a train to Los Angeles. They had a stopover in Denver, Colorado, where the girls stayed in a lovely dormitory. That evening a banquet was held in their honor, however, but both Pickett and Stokes were prevented from joining the celebration. Instead they were given a room in the attic, where they ate dinner together. Although Pickett qualified to compete in the eighty-meter hurdles, broad jump, and the 100-meter and eighty-yard sprints, she was not selected to participate in any event at the 1932 Olympic Games. Pickett believed that racism and politics killed her opportunity to display her talent.

Between 1931 and 1936 Pickett received countless medals and won many competitions around the country and in Canada. She won medals at numerous city and state championships for the fifty-yard dash and the low hurdles. As her skills developed, she earned recognition as an accomplished athlete in the 100-meter sprint, the running broad jump, and the eighty-meter low hurdles. At one time during her athletic career, she held the women's world record for the forty-yard dash and the Canadian world record for the running broad jump in 1934. In 1936 Tidye won the gold medal for the fifty-yard hurdles at the U.S. National indoor championships. Pickett attended the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Germany, and was expected to bring home the gold; however, she broke her foot in the eighty-meter hurdle semifinals, causing her to forfeit any further participation.

Following the 1936 Olympics, Pickett hoped to earn a spot on the 1940 team, but those games and the 1944 Olympiad were cancelled because of World War II. Tidye Pickett earned a bachelor's degree from Pestalozzi Froebel Teachers College (Chicago). She persevered and earned a master's of science degree in Education from Northern Illinois University in August 1956.

In September 1957, Tidye Pickett was hired as a teacher at Cottage Grove Elementary School in East Chicago Heights (Illinois) School District 169. She taught at Cottage Grove for one year before being appointed principal of Woodlawn School, in the same district. She served as principal for twenty-three years, and retired in 1980. At her retirement ceremony, the school district paid tribute to her by renaming the school, The Tidye A. Phillips School.

Tidye passed away at the age of seventy-two. She serves as an excellent role model not just for African American women but also for all women of all ages everywhere. Although she believed she suffered from discrimination as pioneering black female Olympians, she knew that her gifts help pave the way for women following in her footsteps as athletes, and proved that every person can "reach the impossible dream"; as she often told her daughters, once they dare to dream.

Ralph Metcalfe — 4x100-meter relay (Gold) & 100-meter dash (Silver)



UOLSTEIN BILD VIA GETTY IMAGES

Ralph Metcalfe (second to the right) and the rest of the 4x100 USA team, pictured with the silver medal-winning 4x100 Italian team.

“Ralph Metcalfe became a congressman.”



IMAGNO VIA GETTY IMAGES

David Albritton (far right) during the award ceremony for the high jump.

"Dave Albritton became a state senator."

David Albritton — High Jump (Silver Medalist)

Matthew "Mack" Robinson – 200-meter dash (Silver)



Mack Robinson (up top and third on the left) before the Olympics.

"[Jackie Robinson's] brother comes home from Berlin, Germany, where he beat up on Nazis on the track field and has a silver medal at the Olympics. So if his brother can do that, integrating baseball is not going to be so hard. That's something he's going to be in for. He's not going to be afraid because his brother did something equally, if not more, courageous."