



0. HERMAN BOONE GETS THE JOB - Story Preface

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Herman Boone was promoted to head coach of the T.C. Titans in 1971. He helmed the school's talented team of football players as they made their way to the State Championship that year. Image online via T.C. Williams High School, Alexandria, Virginia.

Herman Boone, an African-American who came to T. C. Williams High as an assistant football coach in 1969, had less experience than his job competitor. By 1971, however, decision-makers at the already-integrated school wanted to consider affirmative action when selecting the head football coach for that year.

Bill Yoast, the winning white head coach of the winning Hammond High football team had a great record in Alexandria:

- He had the support of white football parents.
- He had what it took to stay on top.
- He had everything going for him - but he didn't get the job.

Herman Boone got the job.

Not everyone in the city of Alexandria was happy about that choice. After all ... so the arguments went ... the history of high school football with Coach Yoast was already known. Why wouldn't he be the "obvious" choice? Football itself, especially in its unique American form, has an interesting history. How did it change from ancient times when people played "ball" with their "feet?"

- From Japanese "Kemari" to Russian "Ballspiel" to French "La Soule," the game has evolved.
- The first American version - "ballown" - began at Princeton University in the 1820s, around the same time as British chaps were playing their own version of football in the streets of London.

Many historians believe American football was initially based on Rugby (the fast-paced game invented at the famous boy's school in Rugby, England) and later shaped by Walter Camp ("the father of American football"). The Rugby boys' school is still standing and rugby balls are still made by hand in the village. But the fast-paced, non-stop nature of today's rugby is much different from today's American football.

No matter the version, football is a team sport:

- In order to win championships, a team has to play as one.
- When Herman Boone was picked to coach the Titans of T. C. Williams High, he didn't have a "team." He had a group of talented young men who weren't sure that they wanted to play together.

- Blacks weren't keen to work with whites; whites weren't keen to work with blacks.
- Bill Yoast, the former head coach of the team's white players, was now Herman Boone's assistant, while Paul Hines was the offensive line coach.

By all accounts, the school's football program needed help. "Built-in" beliefs about other people are tough to shed.

But ... the Titans and their coaches would soon rise above long-held misconceptions. They began to perform together and became a winning championship team. Along the way, they would learn some important lessons about how to live life.

Gerry Bertier, one of the Titans' stars, had *his* life turned upside down the night of the 1971 football banquet. He'd just won the "Defensive Award in Football," due to his awesome efforts that season, but his football-playing days would end that night.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HERMAN-BOONE-GETS-THE-JOB-Remember-The-Titans>

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/HERMAN-BOONE-GETS-THE-JOB-Remember-The-Titans>

Media Stream



Herman Boone

Image, courtesy T.C. Williams High School.

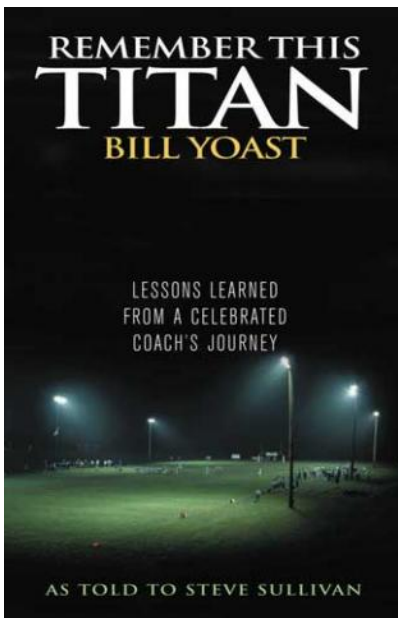
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Bill Yoast

Image, courtesy T.C. Williams High School.

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Remember This Titan - by Steve Sullivan

Image online, courtesy [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) website.

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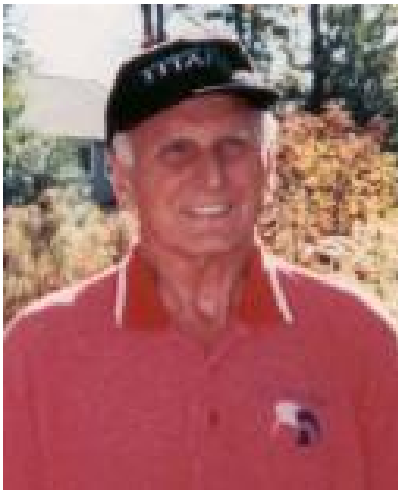


Herman Boone Photo

Image online, courtesy the Penn State University [website](https://www.pennstate.edu).

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Coach Yoast Photo

Image, courtesy T.C. Williams High School.

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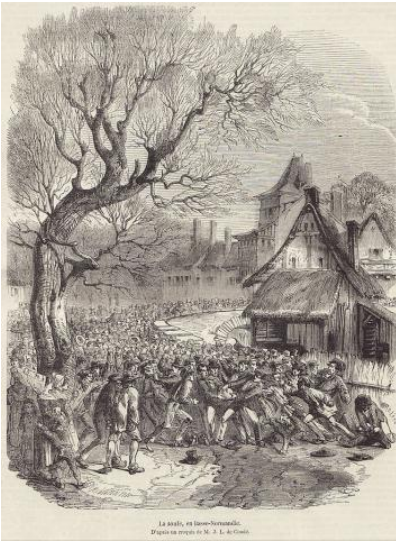
Kemari - Japanese Game

Image online, courtesy [Japanese-language](https://www.japanese-language.com) website.

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La Soule - A Football Game

Image, described above, published in *Illustration* - a French publication - on the 28th of February, 1852.

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La Soule Scene

[Image online](#), courtesy Arena-Stadium.org.eu - a French-language website.

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Celebrating a Win - The Titans in 1971

Image, courtesy T.C. Williams High.

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Gerry Bertier

Image, courtesy Gerry Bertier's family.

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