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## Johnson to be inducted into Blue Raider Hall of Fame on Sept. 11 Earned OVC Track Athlete of the Year honors three times during his career

*Athletic Communications*

The fire in Dwight Johnson always burned like an inferno, and Middle Tennessee's All-American track and field performer used that fire, that competitive drive, to earn himself a place in the Blue Raider Sports Hall of Fame.

Johnson, who excelled in half a dozen different events during his career, will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on Saturday, September 11th, at 3:30 pm, prior to the football game with Austin Peay that evening.

Johnson was pleasantly surprised and humbled at being selected as part of the class of 2010.

"I really tried not to think about it through the years, as far as getting inducted," said Johnson. "Everybody wants to get inducted, but only a few do. This is incredible. Other than being a Christian, this is the most prestigious thing that has ever happened to me. It is rare to have the opportunity to leave a legacy, but MTSU has given me that, and I will never forget it."



Dwight Johnson was a three-time OVC Track Athlete of the Year. ()

"Dwight ran both relays (400m and 1600m), the 200m and 400m sprints, he competed in the long jump, the high jump and the triple jump, as well as the 300 meters indoors," recalled Head Track Coach Dean Hayes.

"Dwight was competitive in every event. He was also a big part of our run of ten consecutive OVC championships in the 1980s," said Hayes. "Everybody liked Dwight. He was funny, and kept them loose, but they also knew when he was running, that we would have a chance to win."

Johnson was an All-American long jumper in both 1984 and 1985, extending the success of MTSU's famous "Grasshopper Gang" of All-American jumpers. In acknowledging his accomplishments, the OVC selected Johnson as their Track Athlete of the Year three times.

Johnson won the OVC 200 meters in a record time of 20.65 seconds in 1985 and also anchored the winning 400 meter relay team that ran a record time of 40.83 seconds, the fifth fastest time in the nation that year. His other career best marks of 26-6 in the long jump, and his 20.65 time in the 200m are still ranked 4th on the all-time record list at Middle Tennessee.

Life was not easy for Johnson as a freshman, but things improved the next year as he had a breakout season.

"I had a rough year that first year. My parents divorced, my girlfriend left me and I hurt my knee," recalled Johnson. "Dr Johns did arthroscopic surgery on my knee, and did a great job. The next year was when I long jumped 26-6."

Another highlight for Johnson was when he ran 20.65 in the 200 meters at the prestigious Drake Relays. Then-Vice-President Bush presented his medal to him. Johnson finished right behind Olympian Calvin Smith, earning him a national ranking in the 200 meters for the first time.

Hayes said it would be hard to single out Johnson's most impressive track performance, but noted that one of them would have to have been in the mile relay during the 1986 OVC Championship meet.

"Dwight was running the third leg, and when he got the baton, he was in third or fourth place. By the end of his leg, he had gotten the lead for us, and our anchorman was able to hold on for the win."

He also played football for the Blue Raiders, but his success on the gridiron did not match his success on the track.

"I wish I'd done better, but I am thankful that I got to play college football," said Johnson. "I loved my teammates and coaches, and I am very proud that I went to MTSU."

Johnson lives in Nashville and is a site manager for PMC Parking Management. His daughter, Joveyance Johnson, will be a sophomore at Middle Tennessee this year, and his son, Reshard (which is Dwight's middle name), is 15 years old and 6-9. He lives in Brownsville, TN.

Joining Johnson in the Class of 2010 are Ed Bunio, Fred Niemeyer, David Richardson, and Steve Peterson.

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