

O.M. (BROWNIE) THOMAS

FOOTBALL: 1930-1931

Inducted: March 26, 1966



There have been many great linemen play for Southern Miss over the years. Some in the more modern era have been big and powerful, others in the 1940s and 1950s didn't have quite the size the players do today but used a combination of size and quickness, but the true pioneers of that position were players like O.M. (Brownie) Thomas, a guard in 1930 and 1931.

Thomas was one of the first players of that era to be recognized as an outstanding lineman. He was big for his day and had the speed and quickness that would make present day players jealous.

He was a smart player, who learned to use his instincts and his assets to outsmart the opposition and help put his team in position to win.

“Winner” is another word that you hear used quite a bit when people talk about Thomas. Although the teams that he

was associated with at Southern Miss weren't the best or most talented teams the school produced, Thomas always carried himself with a lot of pride and class.

Playing on the offensive and defensive line in 1930 and 1931 couldn't have been the easiest job to hold down on a football team, and it was obviously not the most glamorous. But, Thomas learned early that it didn't matter what position you played or who noticed you. What was important was the team, and he gave everything he had over his two seasons to make the team and the school successful.

It was the attitude and the mental approach to things that Thomas possessed that we can still see in our Southern Miss teams today. Thomas and his teammates were ready to tangle with any team, anywhere, and always went into the game believing they could win.

The 1930 team was the only team coached by John Lumpkin and under him Southern Miss finished 3-5-1. At times, the offense, led by Thomas up front, was explosive, like in the season opener when they defeated Clarke College 45-0, or midseason when they outscored Louisiana College 47-20 or late in the year with a 46-0 win over Delta State. But lack of depth and experience caught up with them most of the year.

Pooley Hubert coached the 1931 squad, and although they finished only 2-5 that year, it was obvious that Hubert had laid the foundation for some outstanding teams to come.

The 1931 team selected Thomas as its team captain, quite a tribute to his leadership abilities. Maybe the media and some of the fans weren't paying attention, but his teammates knew that he was one of the important components of the team.

There have been a slew of lineman pass through Southern Miss since the days that Thomas toiled in the trenches, but Thomas helped lay that unmistakable spirit the teams rally around today.

Skill, talent and leadership. All led Thomas into the Southern Miss Hall of Fame.