

– SAM OWENS

Not only was Sam Owens, who died in 2007, a workhorse as a sports official. He was one of Clinton's outstanding citizens. He would have been pleased to be honored for tireless work in his community.

Sam was an historian who authored a book about the history of the town. He coached Little League baseball for 25 years and the American Legion team back when Clinton fielded a team. He was instrumental in founding The Clinton Museum and a deacon at Calvary Baptist Church. As a young man, he was a standout in football, basketball and baseball at Clinton High School.



Along with brother -- and fellow Hall of Fame inductee -- Truman, Sam formed the most distinguished tandem of officiating siblings in the history of the South Carolina High School League and, quite possible, the country. Sam officiated basketball for 49 years, football for 43, baseball for 40 and softball for 19. On Saturdays, he was a football referee in the South Atlantic Conference.

“We started out when were about 11 or 12,” Truman, the older brother said. “There was recreation ball, all around, and we just started from there. We got into high school ball in the late ‘50s. We just enjoyed it. There were so many good folks, coaches and players. We wouldn’t take anything for what we were able to achieve.”

Where striped shirts and whistles were concerned Sam Owens did it all. He served two terms on the SCHSL's Executive Committee and was president of the officials' associations in football and basketball and director of football, basketball and baseball.

Sam was referee at the Shrine Bowl and North-South Game, not to mention almost innumerable state finals in football and basketball. He is a member of the National Federation Hall of Fame and the South Carolina halls of fame for football and basketball officials. He won the National Association of Interscholastic Officials Distinguished Service Award for football and baseball and umpired the state's softball North-South Game.

“We worked over 50 games together,” Truman said. “We worked our 500th (football) game together, 600th game together, 700th game together, and we were at No. 795 when Sam passed away.”