

HERMAN BOONE
FOOTBALL COACH / MOTIVATOR

In 1971, Herman Boone faced the challenge of a lifetime, and his inspirational story was captured in the Disney film *Remember the Titans* starring Academy Award-winner Denzel Washington. In 1971, racial tensions ran high in Alexandria, VA, as three schools were newly integrated to form the T.C. Williams High School. It was from this union that the Titan football team was created. The former rivalries between the schools coupled with the strain between the black and white players resulted in a team that was far from united.

Tensions only escalated when Boone, assistant coach of the former T.C. Williams High School, was named head coach of the Titans, passing over Bill Yoast, the local favorite and successful head coach of the former white Hammond High. Yoast's supporters were angered by Boone's appointment, which was seen as a gesture of goodwill to the black community.

Remarkably, the two coaches were able to put aside their prejudices, and in doing so they unified their players to form a team whose common vision was to respect each other and win football games. At the same time, through the game of football, Boone and Yoast were able to help their small Virginian community put aside their intolerance and join together to support their children. The Titans became one of the best teams in Virginia, compiling a 13-0 record and went on to win the state championship.

Remember the Titans screenwriter Gregory Allen Howard said in a *Washington Post* interview, "Herman is Shakespearean. The beauty of Herman and what he did was that it was sort of unconscious. If you'd ask Herman when he took over T.C. Williams, 'Were you trying to make a point with these kids?' he would have said, 'No, I just want to win football games.' He had to get the players to get along to win football games. And it worked for just that reason—because it wasn't self-conscious. He did something quite beyond what even he realized."

Boone is now retired but continues to motivate and inspire audiences with presentations on respect, teamwork, community involvement and importance of character, among others. For more information please visit www.apbspeakers.com.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Lessons in Diversity
- Remember the Titans
- Building and Sustaining Winning Teams