

# Alumni Spotlight - Greg Robinson



By Jamie Kornegay  
GSD Reporter

At GSD, we pride ourselves on charting the progress of our current students. We're also watching to see how students perform when they graduate and how their experiences here shape their journey into the wider world.

This month we spotlight an athlete whose success on the Grenada High School gridiron culminated in a noteworthy career in the NFL and induction in the Mississippi Community/Junior College Sports Hall of Fame.

Greg Robinson, son of Cleo Robinson and brother of

Michelle Robinson, graduated from Grenada High School in 1988. He currently lives in Lewisville, Texas, with his wife Angel and their four children, Alexandra, Arion, Aliyah, and Addison.

"Growing up, my family didn't have everything," Robinson recalls. "It was all about tough love at my house. My parents taught us how to provide for ourselves, how to be accountable, and how to work hard to achieve what we wanted."

Robinson applied those principles to athletics at Grenada High School, showing great skill at rushing and receiving for the Chargers football team. After graduation he shined as an all-star running back at Holmes Community College, racking up an impressive 1,700 rushing yards in two seasons. Later, in 2010, when Holmes chose its inductee to the Mississippi Community/Junior College Hall of Fame, they presented Robinson with the honor.

He capitalized on that early success during his next two seasons at Northeast Louisiana University, where he gained 1,700 more rushing yards as well as 25 touchdowns, catching the attention of the NFL.

In 1993, Robinson was an

eighth round draft pick with the Los Angeles Raiders. It was a dream come true for the young player, but Robinson remembers thinking, "Why did they draft me?"

The Raiders, scrambling to fill the massive shoes left by the recently departed Hall of Famer Marcus Allen, had five running backs positioned ahead of Robinson, including fellow Mississippian Tyrone Montgomery. But in the lead-up to the season opener, the Raiders' line-up grew slimmer from cuts and trades. As good fortune would have it, a spot opened up for Greg Robinson.

"For a kid from Grenada, Mississippi, to be called up to the NFL is one in a million," Robinson says. "It was a real eye-opener to go from a Mississippi town of 12,000 to a city of three or four million. But I embraced it. I told myself, it's time to dig deep. The Lord didn't bring me here to sit on the bench."

Robinson was the first rookie since Allen to land a coveted starting spot on the Raiders' offense. He used every opportunity to enhance his game and contribute to the team's 10-6 record that year, which culminated in a divisional playoff loss to the Buffalo Bills, who went

on to the Super Bowl that year.

At his peak, Robinson had a three-game hot streak in November of 1993, rushing for 70, 90, and 89 yards consecutively against the Chicago Bears, Kansas City Chiefs, and San Diego Chargers.

In 12 games, he led the team in rushing with 591 yards and caught 15 passes for 142 yards. At the time, no other rookie that season had such impressive numbers.

But life always throws surprises. Like many promising athletes, Robinson was sidelined by a late-season knee injury against the Buffalo Bills, forcing him to sit out the rest of the season and the next as well. He fought his way back and landed a spot with the St. Louis Rams in 1995, where he rushed for over 450 yards with one touchdown in two seasons. With his old knee injury continuing to plague him, Robinson left professional football after a bid with the Kansas City Chiefs in 1998.

Though forced to retire from professional athletics, Robinson wasn't defeated. He searched for ways to reinvent his life and found that paying forward the lessons he'd learned back in Grenada gave him as much satisfaction as glory on the football

field.

He found renewed purpose working for Boys and Girls clubs in Texas, where he met plenty of at-risk kids who didn't have the same guidance he had growing up. "I worked hard all my life," Robinson says. "Often I was mad at my dad when he made me mow the grass or do other hard jobs at home. But I took that with me, and in hindsight, I'm thankful he pushed me. I think my work ethic is what helped make me successful."

He currently serves as supervisor at juvenile detention center, where he tries to counsel youth offenders and helps them back on the road to success by sharing his knowledge about life.

His advice for today's GSD student is the same he offers the kids he mentors. "Dream big, dream early," he says. "Love, camaraderie, friendship – that's what it's all about. Put the effort in."

He adds, "No matter what you accomplish, you still have to fight at every level. Success doesn't just find you, but when the opportunity to succeed presents itself, you have to be prepared to act on it."



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