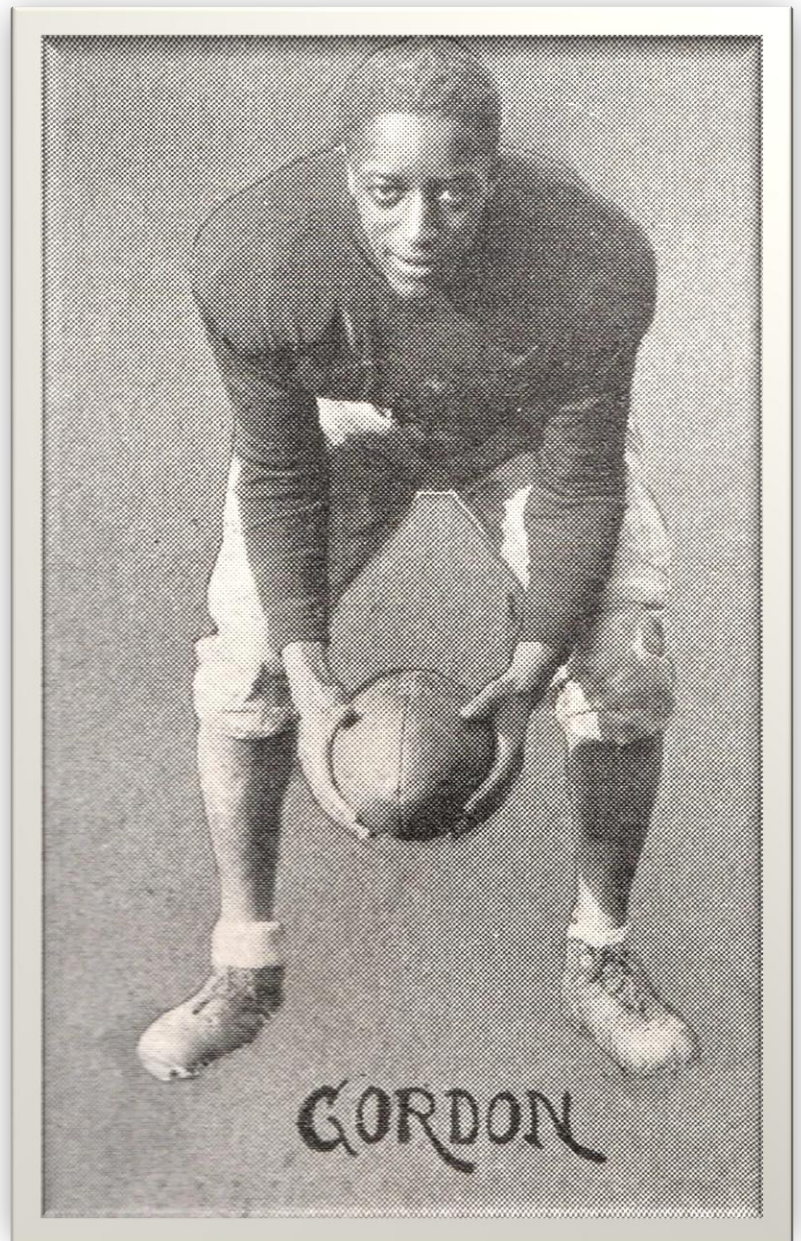
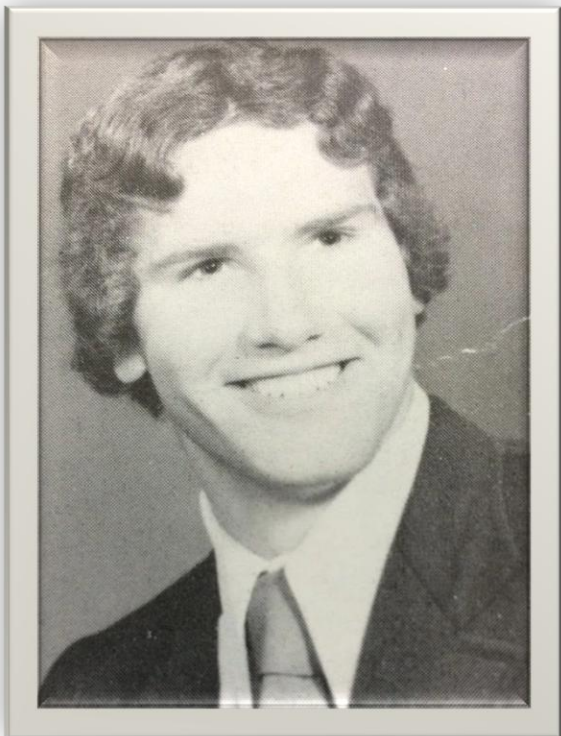


## **2025 Vignette #4: Whispers in Time** **Painesville's Early Trailblazer**

Lake County has a rich history of notable pioneers and legacies across many fields and disciplines. In recent years we have mentioned several notable local student-athletes. First was Mentor's **Jim Tressel**. Jim achieved success on the gridiron, as a coach at Youngstown State and Ohio State, as



*Harvey High School's Lorenzo Gordon (1911-1966)*

an administrator at Akron and Youngstown State universities and currently as our new **Ohio Lieutenant Governor**.

Grand River was the home of another local football star and NFL legend -- **Don Shula**. **Mel Fundermark** and **Tom Orosz** achieved local athletic fame at **Fairport's Harding High School**. Orosz's punting at OSU and in the NFL for the **Miami Dolphins** included being a member of a **Super Bowl** Championship team. The common denominator to all four men was being a **Lake County** student-athlete, and their sport was football.

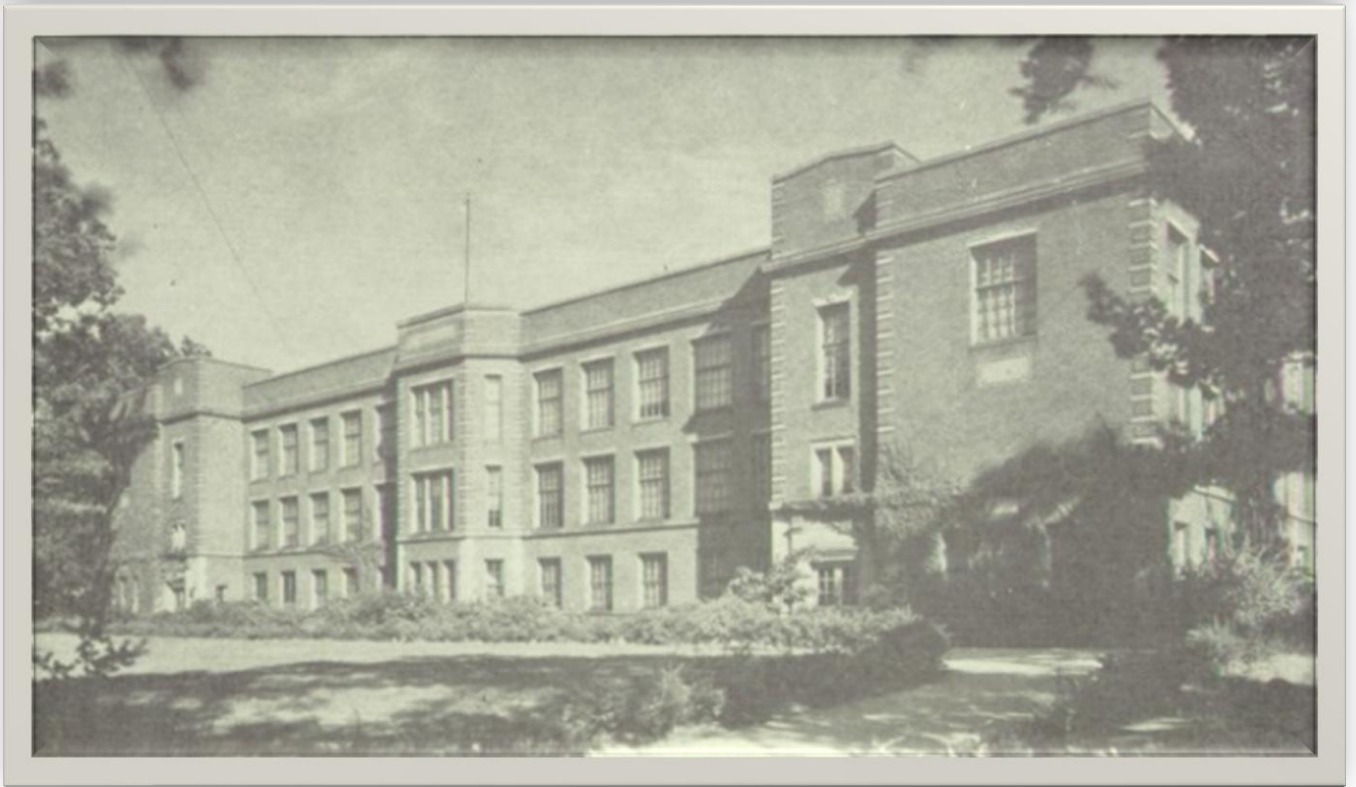
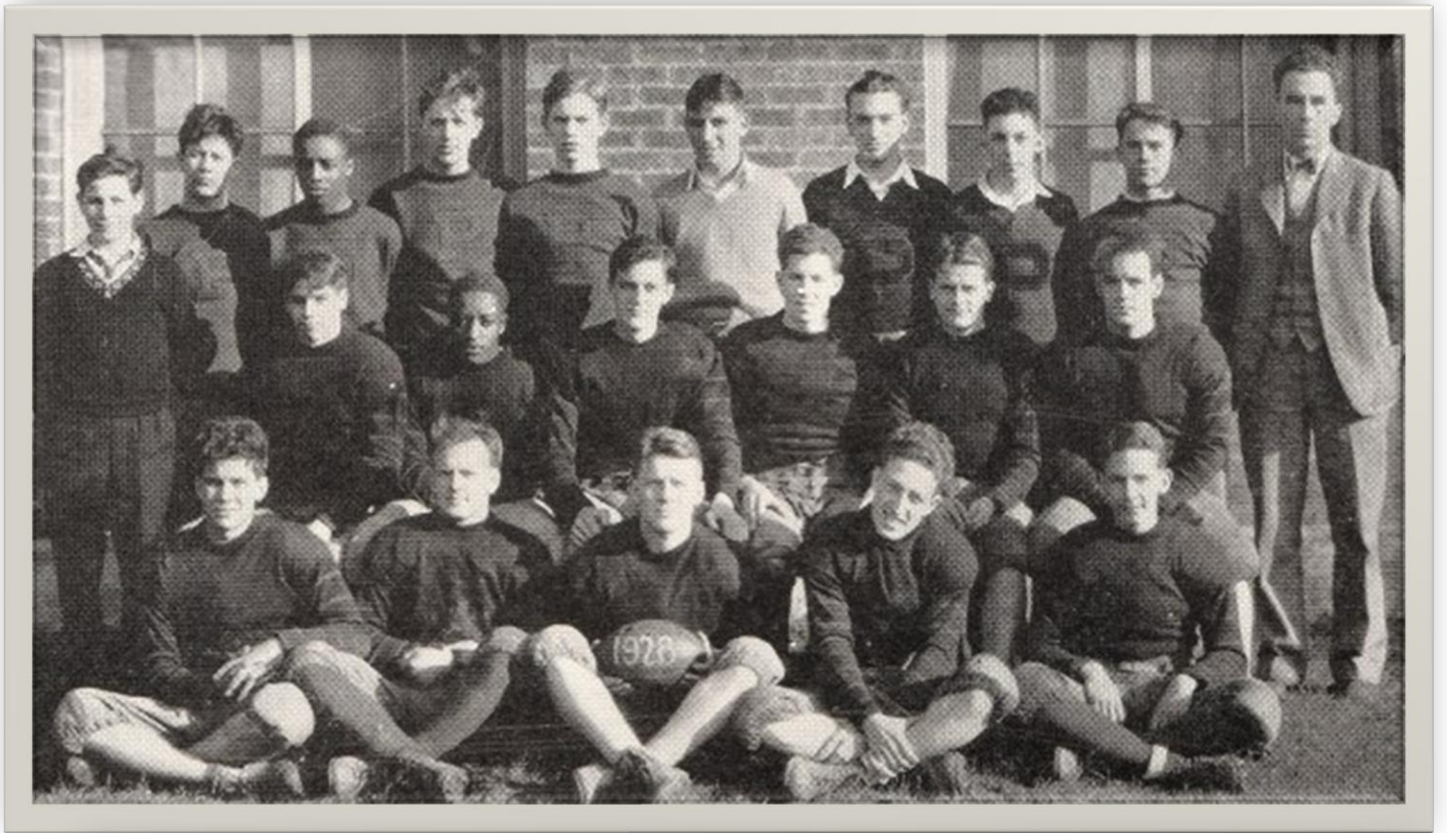


This month we look back to an early trailblazer from **Painesville's Harvey High School**. The legacy featured is a pioneer in many ways, too, and is an early example of the community's diversity. **Lorenzo Gordon**, a 1930 Harvey Graduate and believed to be the first Black student-athlete in the school's history, will be inducted into the **2025 Legacy Wing** of their **Red Raider Booster Club Hall of Fame**.

Lorenzo was born to **Wallace C. & Lucia Robinson Gordon** in Geneva in 1911, the eldest of seven siblings. The family soon moved to a

home on **West Eagle Street** in Painesville. Early on, Lorenzo took the lead as member of the **Union Congregational Church** Live Wire class as well as a recitationist for the **Dunbar Literary Society**. He was even a member of his school's **LeMasque Revue**. However, it was his athleticism that particularly distinguished him. As early as junior





high school, Lorenzo Gordon was a baseball standout with skills surpassing many upperclassman on the diamond. In a 1927 track and field meet, he finished fourth

among all grade level participants.



Lorenzo participated and lettered in three sports during his school tenure, garnering the most recognition in **Red Raider football** and

**Track and Field**. Nicknamed **“Ghost”** for his ability as a running back, while the team’s overall record may have been lacking, local **Painesville Telegraph** articles documented his outstanding prowess.

*“Ghost Gordon was the bright star of the game, running and tackling equally well,” the Telegraph reported. “He seemed to be everywhere.”*

His efforts against league titans Euclid Shore, Fairport, Mentor, Willoughby Union and Glenville resonate in printed archives. Lorenzo was also the first school record holder for the long jump. Despite playing but a single season in basketball in 1928-29, he earned his first and only league honor. Ghost Gordon attended **Wilberforce College** briefly and some mention of his football and track exploits in 1930-31 may be found.

<u>General</u>	
Marion E. Andrews	Thomas E. Kelley
Maurice E. Baldauf	Isabelle J. Kohankie
Helen K. Beverly	Robert G. Kohier
Teresa L. Borso	Velma J. Korpi
William F. Bowen	Esther Landy
Jack L. Butler	Frederick C. Leffingwell
Ruth H. Cleary	Juanita W. Luse
Elwood O. Davidson	Charles B. Mallett
Clarice I. Davis	Rose J. Mayor
Grace I. Eddy	William C. Moodey
Francis Francosky	Elsa Rockafellow
Earl O. T. Haffa	Sara Amy Salkeld
Juanita Jane Harwood	Ruth Elizabeth Wagar
Kenneth A. Hopkins	Kenneth P. Wiechel
Nick C. Horvath	Lorenzo Gordon
Ruth E. Jacobs	Allan E. Williams
Thomas M. Jenkins	Jay Woodruff
Claude B. Jolliffe	Selma E. Youngberg

What is known is that Lorenzo returned home, married his wife **Eunice Martin**, an Atlanta, Georgia, native in 1937. The couple called Painesville their home for much of their married life. He was a laborer for **Light Alloys**, then for the **City of Painesville**. Lorenzo was a member of **Starlight Lodge No. 433**, the **Elks** and his Union Congregational Church. He passed

away on September 17, 1966, with Eunice preceding him in death that May. Gordon and Eunice were laid to rest at **Riverside Cemetery** in Painesville. While his upcoming Hall of Fame Biography rightfully highlights his athletic and football accomplishments, the diversity and generational beacon that unites the city of Painesville, its schools, and those who called Painesville City home, should also be noted and celebrated.



**Sources:** harveyredraiders.com, *Painesville Telegraph* archives, Morley Public Library, 1930 Census Report, A History of Public Secondary Education, Allan Lee Baumgartner, OSU press, 1936.

Thursday February 13, 2025, News-Herald, p.C1, article adds more details about Lorenzo Gordon's performance on the field & court: <https://www.news-herald.com/2025/02/12/harveys-first-black-student-athlete-lorenzo-gordon-being-inducted-into-schools-athletic-hall-of-fame/?share=cvrttwhiawoedimssoe>

**Submitted by Dan Maxson** - Local Lore by Max, 2010-2016 - The News-Herald, Community Media Lab; Volunteer Docent, Curator - FHHS / Fairport Harbor Lighthouse & Marine Museum; Volunteer Curator / Docent - Old Stone School, Concord Township

Additional research from Virginia Jeschelnic.