



How integration succeeded on the gridiron for Georgia's Greene County High School

The 19 of Greene

Football, Friendship, and Change in the Fall of 1970

TONY BARNHART

WITH A FOREWORD BY CHARLES TURNER

"Google 'Mr. College Football,' and only Tony Barnhart pops up. Barnhart has established himself with superb writing, copious research, and great integrity over a lifetime of sports journalism. I can think of no one else who has earned the respect of virtually every competitor, fan, and administrator. His role in the beginning of the blending of white and African American student-athletes is a story that must be told. The forming of his unique high school team is an important marker in racial progress. The fact of a championship shaped from the nightmare of racism is the triumph of the human spirit. The writing of this beautiful book is the gift of a genius who was there for all of it. Read it with care—your life will never be quite the same." —**Bill Curry**, former head coach at Georgia Tech, Alabama, Kentucky, and Georgia State

Tony Barnhart was a newspaper reporter for thirty-five years before becoming a college football television analyst for ESPN, CBS, and the SEC Network. He is the author of five books, including *Always a Bulldog: Players, Coaches, and Fans Share Their Passion for Georgia Football*. Today he writes for his own website, TMG College Sports, and lives in Dunwoody, Georgia, with his wife, Maria.

The 19 of Greene narrates Tony Barnhart's experience with integration in small-town Georgia as a member of Greene County's first integrated football team. The longtime sportswriter, also known as Mr. College Football, details the Tigers' surprisingly successful season, the enduring relationships he formed with his teammates, and the difficulties of school sports integration.

The early chapters set the stage for Greene County's 1970 football season by outlining the roots of integration in the South beginning with *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and how it and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 eventually led to Georgia, and Greene County in particular, being integrated in the classroom and on the athletic field. Barnhart discusses how the three high schools in Greene County eventually became one by the fall of 1970. In addition, he outlines the rollout of the integration of the Greene County School District population in 1965–66 and how it eventually led to athletics being integrated in the fall of 1970.

Returning to each of the players, coaches, teachers, and administrators who contributed to that 1970 season, Barnhart interviews these contacts to revisit an important time in their lives. Their stories make plain that football merely served as the backdrop for the social interactions taking place in Greene County, Georgia, the South, and the United States at the end of the civil rights era and how change would be as rewarding as it was difficult.

Courtesy of the author



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