

2024 Hall of Fame Inductee Tom Robinson – Denver

“Beyond the impact Tom Robinson has made in this Association, our state and nationally over the course of his 30-plus year career as a coach, teacher, administrator, white hat referee, Hall of Famer, Big 12 replay expert, husband, father and grandfather, we are all better people for having had Tom in our lives,” CHSAA commissioner Rhonda Blanford-Green said.

Hired by former commissioner Bob Ottewill, Tom was the first African-American administrator in the history of CHSAA.

For 20 years at CHSAA, Robinson oversaw officials – the first administrator in CHSAA history to assign a female official to a boys’ basketball Final Four – and the sportsmanship program, as well as boys and girl’s golf. He was an institution and a role model at the Association, and was widely respected throughout the entire membership for his exceptional passion and integrity.

“Tom was an inspiration in so many ways,” CHSAA assistant commissioner Bethany Brookens said. “He taught me how to play golf, he and Cleo taught us all how to have a wonderful and successful marriage, he taught me the officials mechanics for basketball and he gave me loyal friendship and a respect for all people. An incredible, ethical, good man and mentor; I miss Tom greatly already.”

Tom was a graduate of Regis Jesuit High School. He attended Colorado State University, where he competed in football, basketball and track and field. After graduating in 1969, he began officiating that summer and started his first full teaching contract at Regis Jesuit in 1969. Tom taught math and coached multiple sports – head basketball coach from 1983-93 – at the same school for 31 years before becoming a CHSAA assistant commissioner in 2001.

He and his wife, Cleo Parker Robinson, shared 51 years of marriage, with Tom as a stalwart behind-the-scenes pillar of Cleo's own dream - the creation of what was to become an icon of dance in America - Cleo Parker Robinson Dance (CPRD). Tom was a co-founder, served on the Board of Directors, and was business manager for the organization for many years, addressing every aspect of a non-profit arts entity.

Tom was also the president of the National Association of Sports Officials and the replay coordinator for the Big-12 Conference. He announced on Dec. 15, 2021, that he would be retiring at the end of the school year.

The impact of Tom’s death will be felt for many years to come, but his compassion and dedication have left a legacy and he will serve as a shining example for all those in the Association to follow.

“Even from the outside looking in, Tom was definitely a person to aspire to be,” said Rashaan Davis, CHSAA’s first-ever assistant commissioner overseeing activities. “He always seemed cool, calm, and collected, which is something I know I needed. So, to be a staff member now and understand that Tom laid the foundation for me being a black male working at CHSAA and to be an educator coming into this role, to be patient and recognizing all voices at this level is very powerful. I do not think anybody did it better.

Tom is survived by his wife, Cleo Parker-Robinson, founder and director of Cleo Parker-Robinson Dance, and his son, Malik Robinson, executive director of Cleo Parker-Robinson Dance. He was looking forward to playing golf with Cleo and being there for his two granddaughters and grandson.