

Memphis Two-Sport Legend John Bramlett Passes Away

By Don Wade

John “Bull” Bramlett, who starred for the University of Memphis in football and baseball, and played in the NFL, passed away on Thursday, Oct. 23. He was 73.



BRAMLETT

“[John Bramlett](#) was a great football and baseball player for the University of Memphis, and we are deeply saddened by his passing,” [Tom Bowen](#), Director of Athletics at the University of Memphis, said in a statement. “John made a lasting impression in all that he did both on the football field and in his work and ministry. God bless his family.”

Last year, the school retired Bramlett’s No. 64 jersey. A linebacker out of Humes High School in Memphis, Bramlett played for legendary coach Billy J. Murphy for four seasons at the U of M (1959-62).

A speedy and intense player, if undersized, Bramlett made the varsity squad as a freshman in 1959 and became a starter midway through the year. The Tigers finished the 1959 season with a 6-4 record with marquee wins over Florida State and Southern Miss.

During the 1960 campaign, Bramlett helped the Tigers improve to an 8-2 record and the 1961 team also posted an 8-2 mark. As a senior, Bramlett registered two pass

interceptions that were returned for a total of 55 yards. The Tigers improved to 8-1 and in an important program milestone, Bramlett led the defense in allowing Mississippi State to score just seven points as Memphis State won its first game against an SEC opponent, 28-7, against the Bulldogs in Starkville, Miss.

Memphis finished the 1962 season ranked 17th in the nation by United Press International.

“Tiger Nation has lost a legendary figure in the history of Memphis sports,” said Tigers football coach Justin Fuente.

On the baseball diamond, Bramlett batted .323 or better all four years. As a senior, he batted .358, hit four home runs and stole 18 bases.

Bramlett was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals and stayed in professional baseball for three years before signing a contract with the Denver Broncos in 1965. Bramlett was the runner-up for Rookie of the Year honors in the old AFL behind New York Jets quarterback Joe Namath. He went on to play seven seasons for four teams in the AFL and NFL.

Following his playing career, Bramlett became a lay evangelist. He spoke to hundreds of churches, schools, prisons and at conventions. He also led NFL and MLB chapel services for the past 40 years.

Bramlett is survived by his wife, Nancy, and his sons, Andy and Don, who were also Memphis football lettermen. Funeral arrangements are pending at this time.