

## NORMAN WHITE SHIRT

“If he is determined to do something, he can usually find a way to do it,” was the motto Norman White Shirt selected for his personal section in the Pheasant yearbook during his senior year at the South Dakota School for the Deaf. He lived up to everything that the motto called for in becoming one of the finest all-around athletes in the history of the school in his specialities – softball, basketball, and track and field, particularly the latter.



The 5' 11" 140-pounder, a full-blooded Sioux Indian, was born on November 19, 1942 and raised in Wagner, South Dakota. He attended SDSD in 1949 and graduated with a diploma in 1963.

Although he was an above-average athlete in all sports, he was nationally known for his sensational career as a long distance runner as can be evidenced by the chronicle of his performances of more than passing merit, as follows:

1959: As a freshman, he turned in a creditable mile run time of 4:57.5, an accomplishment that not many freshmen school athletes could claim.

1960: He came in first with a clocking of 11:36.5 at the South Dakota state meet to become the first SDSD athlete to ever capture the individual cross country title.

1961: At the Midwest Deaf Relays in Omaha and Council Bluffs, Norman was clocked in 4:41.2 for first place in the mile run and anchored the SDSD sprint medley relay team to victory in 3:59.

At the Little Sioux Conference track meet, he finished first in the mile run with a record time of 4:36.8 and anchored the victorious SDSD sprint medley relay team of Willard Schumack, Joaquin Martin, Roland Hoppe and White Shirt.

Norman drew national attention when he ran a 4:34.8 mile at the Corn Palace Relays in Mitchell, SD to shatter the long standing Deaf American record of 4:36 set in 1936 by a Gallaudet University runner. He bettered the record approaching the end of the season when he was timed in at 4:28.9.

He was selected to represent the USA team at the World Games for the Deaf in Helsinki, Finland in August 1961. However, he was taken ill during the training session and did not recover in time to regain his peak physical condition and finished eighth in the 1500 meter race. Many at the site, including the USA team coach, Tom Berg, believed that he would have been a medalist if not for this misfortune.