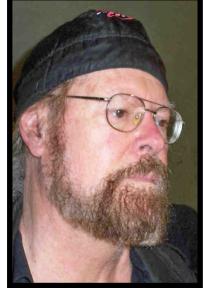


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Telford Telescope:

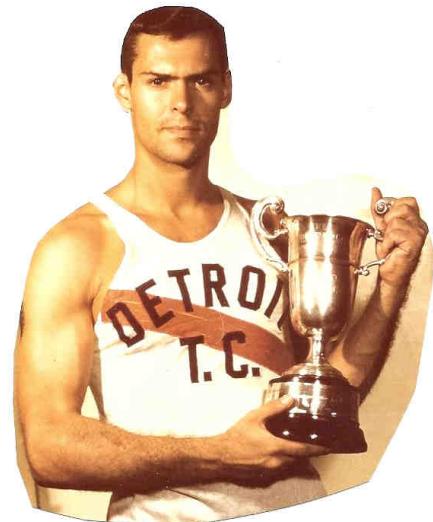
A 440-yard dash -- and a school board race

By John Telford, PhD.
SUN COLUMNIST

 in June, 1959, I was favored to win the 440-yard race in the North American Track & Field Championships in Waterloo, Ontario. I was 23--one year out of Wayne State, running for the Detroit Track Club--and I didn't win that race. I was clocked in 48 seconds--two seconds slower than times I'd run for WSU--and I got upset by 19-year-old Canadian Bill Crothers in a close race and had to settle for the silver medal. That Waterloo race was my PERSONAL 'Waterloo'--like the 1815 Battle of Waterloo Napoleon lost which he was favored to win in another long-ago June. Crothers--who would later win an Olympic silver medal--came down from Toronto to Yost Fieldhouse in Ann Arbor in February, 1960 and outran me yet a second time--this time at 600 yards--so I had to settle for silver again.

That spring, I drove north from Detroit to London, Ontario to race Crothers at 440 yards once again in a championship meet--and I finally beat him with a then-record clocking of 47.3 seconds in another very close race. In addition to the gold medal, my prize was the George E. McGill Memorial Trophy which I got to keep for one year--and then I had to defend it or surrender it to whoever won it the next year. I didn't defend it, because I wanted to win back my Michigan AAU 440-yard title I'd won in Kalamazoo in 1958 and 1959, and the 1961 Canadian championship was being held on the same day, so I sent back the trophy via a Canadian friend. Between the pages of a dusty old track techniques book I hadn't opened in years, I found a 1960 photograph I'd tucked in there and forgotten of me holding the McGill trophy (see photo). My friend Dr. John C. McGill is the Commodore of the DYC--and when I asked him if he's related to George E. McGill, he said he doesn't know--but he also said that his father, grandfather, and great grandfather in Scotland, where he grew up--were all named George McGill--an intriguing coincidence! (I love to hear John talk, because his Scottish burr reminds me of my Scotland-born father and his Scottish family.)

And speaking of losing to an opponent twice before finally winning -- I've lost twice running for the Detroit school board,



and I'm running a third time on Nov. 8. Maybe I'll win this third time--like I won against Crothers that third time in 1960 in London. I'm running now as a one-man LITERACY slate: I want to initiate a change in the reading-instruction program that DPS-SCD has been using unsuccessfully at the elementary level for the past six years. At its August 9 meeting, I told the current board that to keep doing what isn't working is tantamount to INSANITY--and I recommended a process which WILL work that I tried to adopt ten years ago as the DPS superintendent but was blocked by the then-emergency financial manager appointed by Republican governor Rick Snyder. Next to ensuring its students' safety, a school district's most obligatory responsibility is to ensure that all of its students learn to read and comprehend. When it educated me between 1941 and 1954, Detroit's public school district was among our nation's best. To say this is the case no longer would be an abject understatement.

In the 1950s, John Telford was an NCAA and NAAU All-American sprinter and was undefeated in Europe on the U.S. team. Hear him on WCHB AM1340 Saturdays at 9:30 a.m., Mondays at 6:30 p.m., and Fridays at 9:30 p.m.--and on the JOHN TELFORD-DETROIT Show on WJZZ Internet television Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. Contact him at

DrJohnTelfordEdD@aol.com or at (313) 460-8272.

NATIVE SUN

Poetry at the DYC



By Dr. John Telford
SUN COLUMNIST

At the DYC on Friday, August 5, I hosted a truly fabulous poetry extravaganza to a full house. It featured Howard Zinn Prize Poet Aurora Harris, author of the Broadside

Press publication 'Solitude of Five Black Moons', one of her poetry books. Here's a poetic line from that book-- "Listen, listen, to the whole earth purging / INSANITY / from its psyche..." I recited two of my poems that appeared in my 'Poet's Corner' in the 'Downtown [Detroit]

Monitor.' The second one-- 'Live and Love' --I chose because we need more love in our increasingly conflicted world. I also recited poems by my students Malaya Reed and Kris-

topher Gould, and I was happily photographed between two lovely poets--Crystal Jones and Tamika Davis (see photo).

The program was co-sponsored by the Di Medici Society--whereof I'm its Professor of Poetry, and by WJZZ Internet TV, on which I broadcast the JOHN TELFORD-DETROIT Show on Wednesday mornings---and which is owned and operated by Rodger Penzabene. Artist Angelo Sherman was there drawing pictures of those present, and Gloria Cunningham photographed the affair. We recognized two emerging poets--Cheryl Currie Wenskay and James J. Beasley. Audience

members who donated to the DYC Employees Christmas Fund received signed copies of my poetry book 'The life-long POETIC PRANCINGS of mad John.'

Keith Owens and Dr. Robert McTyre, who co-founded the prize-winning 'Detroit Stories Quarterly', author Charlotte Jones ('A' Ain't Always for 'Apple'), and 'solopreneur' Pamela Owens served on our distinguished panel moderated by author Cheryl Berill that discussed why patrons of poets and poetry are needed now more than ever. The promising young Ife ("Eye-Fay") Martin--the Michigan Forensics Poetry State Champion--brought down the house with her rap poem. A good time was had by all!

When he was teaching English and coaching track at Pershing High School in 1966, John Telford became a Sharon (Connecticut) Prize Poet. Author of the 2015 Detroit INK publication 'The lifelong POETIC PRANCINGS of mad John', he has a second book of poetry--'Athletes, Activism, & Apple Boughs' - A DETROIT Poetic Epic--being published later this year. He serves currently as the DPS-SCD Poet-in-Residence.

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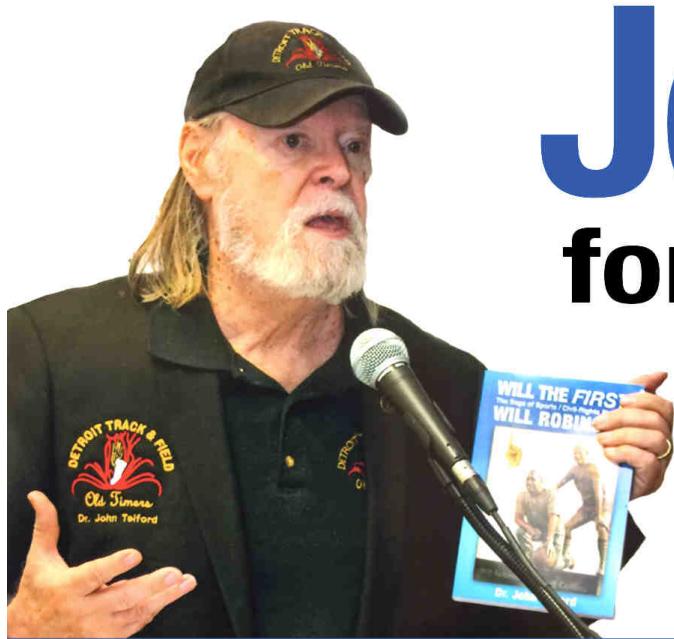
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