

# Longmire Lived the Dream of Playing Pro Football

By: Doug Imberi, DDJC Public Affairs

Long before Sam Longmire became a motor vehicle operator in the Bulk Division, hauling freight around the depot, he was hauling a pignose up and down the football field.

In 1965 Longmire was signed by the Kansas City Chiefs out of Purdue University as a wide receiver. The lanky 6'3" 200 pounder could cover 40 yards in 4.7 seconds, had good hands and could leave a defensive back flat footed after putting a quick move on him.

Also interested in Longmire while he was playing at Purdue were the Cleveland Browns, Philadelphia Eagles and Dallas Cowboys.

"I remembered the day they called me out of class to talk to the pro scouts," recalled Longmire. "Three of us signed with the pros."

Longmire liked Kansas City because all star quarterback Len Dawson attended the same high school in Alliance, Ohio, eight years earlier.

"We had the same coach, who taught us the same principles of the game," said Longmire.

As a free agent, Longmire made the team and earned the minimum \$7,500 salary in 1965.

"It was a dream come true," he recalled. "Growing up as a poor kid I remember watching Jim Brown, Lennie Moore and all the greats back then on TV. Afterwards we would play football until dark."

Longmire came up at the right time. Being tall and fast, he was perfectly suited for the wide receiver spot that was starting to be popular. The only problem was Kansas City already had an all pro wide receiver in Otis Taylor.

Most of Longmire's playing time was on special teams.

"They called us the suicide squad," he said. "If you didn't start on offense or defense, you played in all the kicking situations."



*DDJC motor vehicle operator and former Kansas City Chief, Sam Longmire.*

"I remember the time we played in Denver. On kickoffs they had the wedge, four big linemen about 280 pounds each that linked arms and nobody could get through them to get the ball carrier. I hit that wedge and the next thing I remember was laying on my back and the trainer was holding smelling salt under my nose."

He also recalled the time on national TV when he caught a 50-yard pass against San Diego.

"Everybody was congratulating and cheering for me, and my dad was so excited watching at home on TV."

He also recalled playing in the first Super Bowl, losing to the Green Bay Packers in the Los Angeles Coliseum in 1967.

After several injuries, Longmire hung up his football cleats after four years. Overtraining trying to beat out Otis Taylor left him vulnerable to injury.

"I wanted to do something else," he said. "Football and all the training it required consumed all my time. I was starved for other things."

He married an airline attendant and moved out to Oakland, where he worked as a sales rep for Del Monte Foods and managed a retail store later.

"I quit listing my career with the Kansas City Chiefs on job applications because all they wanted to talk about was football and I didn't get the job," Longmire recalled.

He eventually wound up working at Ft Ord. He transferred to the Naval Weapons Station at Concord. After a reduction-in-force he came to DDJC via the stopper list. Longmire now lives in Stockton.

He now enjoys drawing. He won first place in the DDJC Safety Poster Contest held last year. He also plays guitar in a band with other DDJC employees who played at last year's Employee Appreciation Day and the Combined Federal Campaign Kick-Off in Modesto.

*In this 1965 Kansas City Chiefs team photo, DDJC's Sam Longmire, #15, is seated next to former All Pro, Hall of Famer and Super Bowl IV MVP, Len Dawson. Both Longmire and Dawson attended the same high school and college.*