

To Herb with excellence

By Raymond Sharpe

Jamaica's first world record-holder, the Hon. Herb McKenley O.J., the pace-setter of Jamaica's glorious path in track and field athletics is the 21st recipient of the prestigious Norman Washington Manley Foundation Award for Excellence.

The former world 440 yards and 400 metres record breaker and Olympic gold medallist received the award at the G.C. Foster College of Physical Education and Sport last night from Youth and Community Development Minister, the Hon. Dr. Douglas Manley, son of the late National Hero in whose honour the annual award is made. A former runner himself, Dr. Manley and his father once held the 100 yards record at the

Secondary Schoolboys Athletics Championships.

The choice of track and field athletics was the second for sport since the Foundation decided in 1970 to honour a Jamaican who had distinguished himself or herself in one's chosen field. Previous awards have been made to outstanding Jamaicans in the field of medicine, education, music, science, journalism, agriculture and the arts, among others.

McKenley joins the late George Headley, O.J., the greatest of West Indies batsmen, as the other sports luminary to receive the Norman Washington Manley Foundation Award for Excellence.

Sports historian Jimmy Carnegie read the citation, providing pleasant reminders of the

amazing feats on the running tracks by the former student of Calabar High School, an institution of learning to which he has remained eternally loyal all these years.

Guest speaker at the function was the celebrated American middle distance runner Mal Whitfield who was very much a part of the scene when the excellence of McKenley was being paraded. He was right there when McKenley ran that spectacular relay leg to snatch an elusive gold medal in the final event of his last Olympics, the Games of the 15th Olympiad in Helsinki, Finland, 1952.

Whitfield was the anchor runner for the United States of America in the 4x400 metres relay. McKenley was on the third leg for Jamaica with two silver

medals after finishing second with identical times to American Lindy Remigino in the 100 metres and teammate George Rhoden in the 400 metres. Herb's fantastic leg, in which he cut down a 10-metre lead on the American Charlie Moore, set up a final passover to George Rhoden fractionally ahead of Whitfield. Rhoden maintained that slim lead for a Jamaican gold in a then world and Olympic record of 3:3.09.

Ever since he stopped running shortly after Helsinki, McKenley has given unstinting and beyond the ordinary service to track and field athletics, serving as president of the Jamaica Amateur Athletic Association and being head coach to Olympics, World Championships and other major events.

B/N McKenley J Herb



Herb McKenley (left) in one of his familiar roles for the cause of track and field athletics. Here he is seen receiving a cheque from Carreras Group Chief Executive J.D. Hall to assist in sending a group of young Jamaica athletes to meets in the United States of America. At centre is Neville (Teddy) McCook who succeeded him as president of the Jamaica Amateur Athletic Association.