

A really wonderful man

BIN MCKENLEY, HERB

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DEEP LOVE for his country, an unselfish human being, kind, caring all accurately describe the life of Hon. Herbert McKenley OM, OJ, CD who died at age 85 on November 26 at the University Hospital.

He was one who never found it difficult to go out of his way to help others.

Glen Mills, one of Jamaica's top sprint coaches, along with Olympians Keith Gardener and Neville Myton, yesterday held nothing back in describing what a wonderful person McKenley was.

"Herb's life to me was one dedicated to helping mankind," Mills, who now coaches 2007 World 200 metres silver medalist Usain Bolt, said.

"When he was in the high school coaching programme, he helped every athlete he could, no matter which school they were from. Whenever you had a problem in track and field, whether it was to sort out something with your scholarship, to get a visa, whatever, treatment for injuries, the name Herb McKenley was the answer.

"He never said no. It was unbelievable the energy he had when it came to helping others," added Mills. He said McKenley did many things for other people, even at his own expense.

According to Mills he is yet to see a human being that loved this country more than McKenley.

"If you want to get Herb really upset, just say something that was not complimentary to Jamaica.

"He also spent time lecturing athletes about the love of country and the pride to put on the uniform," explained Mills, who added "his life, achievements and examples will live on and is something everybody should try to emulate."

JAMAICA'S HERO

"I think he is a hero to this country," added Mills, who was brought into coaching by McKenley.

"Herb was very instrumental in my development in track and field at the national and international levels. When I came in as a youngster and a young coach, he was my mentor.

"He was the one who, I would say, brought me in," Mills said while pointing out he did not have any recommendation or experience ... "He believed in me and pushed me and propelled me into coaching at the national level."

Myton, who represented Jamaica at the time McKenley was coach, described him as "a kind gentle giant,"

"He was a very kind person, very caring and understanding, and he wants the best out of you," said

Myton who worked with McKenley during the 1964 Olympics, West Indies Championships in 1965, and in during the late 1960s at the Commonwealth and Pan American Games.

Meanwhile, Gardener, who first admired McKenley because of his running style, remembered the man and the fact that his "will to win was exemplary".

Gardner, who won the men's 120 yards hurdles in Vancouver, Canada in 1954 to become Jamaica's first Commonwealth Games gold medalist, said he adopted McKenley's running style from early.

"I tried my very best to run in the same form that he used. And what I learnt about him afterwards was that he was a man that is free-willed, and wanted to achieve his utmost, and at the same time, give unselfishly," Gardner explained.

"He always had time for you," said Gardner who won a bronze medal in the 4x400m as part of the West Indies team at the 1960 Rome Olympics.

"He was a man of track and field, and he built lives through the sport by giving his philosophy, his thoughts on other areas of life. And, what was even more telling was his love for Jamaica," Gardner said.

McKenley will be buried at National Heroes Park today, after an official funeral service at the National Arena, starting at 2 p.m.



FILE

In this October 2006 photograph, Herb McKenley looks at the token which was presented to him by residents of Cluster 3 on the Rex Nettleford Hall, University of the West Indies, shortly after it was named the Herb McKenley Cluster.