

## **Milam Native Remembered at Local Museum Event**

**In recognition of the upcoming Juneteenth Federal and State Holiday, the Milam County Historical Museum held an event featuring stories from the life of a famous Milam County native-son.**

**Coach William P. (Bill) Moultrie, a native of Rockdale, was fondly remembered by his niece Elissa Benford-Roberts during a program Tuesday evening in downtown Cameron. The Milam County Historical Museum sponsored the event to commemorate Juneteenth and to highlight the contributions of the African American community in Milam County.**

**Moultrie attended Rockdale's Aycok School for African American students and later attended Texas Southern University earning both an undergraduate degree and master's degree in Physical Education. He went on to earn another master's degree from San Francisco State and a divinity degree from Howard University.**

**Impressive as that is, Moultrie really made his mark in history by becoming a world famous, award-winning track and field coach. This stellar career gave Coach Moultrie the opportunity to become the first ever African American Olympic Coach and Olympic Official. With this information as a starting point, his niece, Elissa Benford-Roberts, educated and entertained a group of patrons at the Milam County Museum. She told many stories of her uncle's amazing career.**

**As the evening's keynote speaker, Benford-Roberts also brought many of Coach Moultrie's awards, medals, photos, artifacts, and personal items to show the museum crowd. She told about her uncle's many accomplishments as a coach at Stanford University in California and Howard University in Washington D.C. Speaking on her uncle's outstanding character, Benford-Roberts said, "My Uncle took a significant cut in pay to leave a wealthy university like Stanford, and take a position at Howard University, a traditionally African American University." She explained that he did it to help the less wealthy black college students that he could relate to and that he held so close to his heart. She added, "he just simply wanted to give back to his own community."**

**Moultrie won many awards and accomindations as a college coach including two Rose Bowl victories at Stanford and many conference titles at both Stanford and Howard Universities. He coached numerous famous athletes including 71 NCAA Track and Field All-Americans.**

**The speaker also told about Coach Moultrie's many adventures as he traveled the world as part of the USA's Olympic Track and Field Team and as an official for the International Olympic Committee. These coaching positions took him to places like Barcelona, Spain; Gothenburg, Sweden; and Atlanta, Georgia USA for the Olympic Games and various competitions. He was also the first African American to serve as a track referee at the Olympic Games in 1996.**

**Unfortunately, Bill Moultrie passed away in July 2014. But, not before being named to the U.S. Track and Field... Coaches Hall of Fame! Coach Mourtie's niece, Banford-Roberts concluded by saying, "Not too bad for a poor boy from Rockdale Texas."**

**To begin this evening's event, Milam County Museum Director Kyle Barrett spoke to the audience about the importance of June 19th, or Juneteenth in Texas History. Barrett reminded those in attendance that Juneteenth was first and foremost a Texas holiday. He read the Proclamation that General Gordon Granger of the Union Army first read to the people of Galveston on June 19, 1865. This announcement at long-last freed all the enslaved persons in Texas; over two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was written.**

**The event was capped off with refreshment provided by the Milam County Historical Museum Committee. If you missed this historic event highlighting Texas and Milam County History, then be sure to watch for other events like this coming soon to the Historic Milam County Museum located at 112 W. First Street in downtown Cameron. Museum hours are Thursday-Saturday 10am-3pm. Also, the Old Historic Milam County Jail Museum is open on Saturdays o10am-3pm or by appointment. Come by or contact the museum for more information. We would be happy to have you visit us this Summer.**