



# Ernie Davis, the Elmira Express: The Story of a Heisman Trophy Winner

*Robert Gallagher*

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## **Ernie Davis, the Elmira Express: The Story of a Heisman Trophy Winner** Robert Gallagher

Here, in this special anniversary edition, is the original, enduring story of Ernie Davis as told by those who were closest to him.

The basis for the Universal Pictures film *The Express*, Robert C. Gallagher's definitive biography is a story of outstanding athletic achievement and greatness. And it is a tale of unusual courage in facing a grave illness. Most of all, it is the account of a remarkable young man who inspired all who knew him.

As a sophomore, Ernie Davis led an undefeated Syracuse football team to its first National Championship and to victory in the Cotton Bowl. His brilliant performances continued throughout the remainder of his college years. He became a consensus All-American, surpassing the legendary Jim Brown's rushing records. The number-one draft pick in the 1962 NFL draft, he signed a record rookie contract with the Cleveland Browns and seemed destined for professional stardom. However, he never played a down in the NFL. That summer, he was diagnosed with leukemia. His lifelong dream would remain unfulfilled when he succumbed to the disease less than a year later.

In battling his illness, Ernie continued to show the dignity and heart of a champion, becoming an inspiration to the nation and moving President John F. Kennedy to eulogize him as "an outstanding man of great character".

Ernie Davis almost certainly would have made his mark in professional football. But it was not his football achievements alone that made his life unforgettable. Instead, it was his unique personal qualities that are most vividly remembered.

The description from the cover of the 1983 edition explained best the significance of this book and its full and rich portrayal of the life of Ernie Davis: "Until now the inspiration of Ernie's short but remarkable life could only be enjoyed by those who knew him personally. However, with the publication of *Ernie Davis: The Elmira Express* it is here for all of us to savor."

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