

Tommie Smith

October 2015 Calendar

While Tommie Smith may be known as a gold medal-winning Olympian, he is even more well known for making one of the strongest political statements in athletic history. It has been called one of the most iconic moments in modern Olympic history.

Born into a modest family, Tommie has always distinguished himself as an athlete. His early achievements earned him a scholarship to San Jose State, in San Jose, California, where he would eventually tie or break a total of 13 world records in track. He also would see success in basketball and football.

Tommie earned a spot on the U.S. National Track and Field team for the 1968 Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City, where he was the first man in the history of track and field to run the 200-meter race in under 20 seconds. His gold medal-winning time of 19.83 stood as the Olympic record for 11 years. During the awards ceremony, he and fellow athlete, John Carlos, held their fists in the air as a silent gesture to show solidarity with people fighting for civil rights and human rights.

While their statement was met with some criticism, most people look at it as an act of bravery, courage and a symbol of African American pride. Since his retirement from



competition, Tommie has dedicated his life to helping oppressed people. He also has become an author, college professor and coach. In 2008, he and John Carlos accepted ESPN's *ESPY Arthur Ashe Award for Courage*.

Tommie now lives in Georgia and continues to travel all over the country bringing awareness of health and wellness to America's youth.