

A Feast and an Anniversary: St. Michael and All Angels and Althea Gibson CONTINUED

Earlier this year in late April, Florida A & M University and the City of Tallahassee honored Ms. Gibson by renaming a portion of the major thoroughfare of Wahnish Way, between Bragg Drive and FAMU Way, as Althea Gibson Way. The idea was initiated by St. Michael's member and former congressman. Al Lawson, Jr. The Invocation for the event was given by priest of St. Michael and All Angels, The Rev. Hugh Chapman. Father Chapman in his comments noted finding Ms. Gibson's entry in the registry.



In addition to the new street sign which intersects a Bob Hayes Lane sign, an historical marker of her accomplishments stands in front of the tennis courts on campus.

Her street sign is in good company with “Bullet” Bob Hayes, who was a Jacksonville and FAMU standout in track and football. The Bob Hayes Invitational Track Meet honoring Bob Hayes has been held in Jacksonville, Florida for 60 years since his Olympic Gold Medal win at the Tokyo, Japan Olympics in 1964. Bob Hayes is the only person in the world to have won an Olympic gold medal and a Super Bowl Ring; he won the Super Bowl Ring with the Dallas Cowboys in 1972.

NB My father's college days memories included an anecdote about Ms. Gibson having challenged him in the game of pool. He told me, “Althea beat me and most of the fellows at the pool tables on campus, much like the students play today”. Not that I didn't believe him, but, the PBS special

“Althea” mentioned her playing pool and mastering the game, which really convinced me that he had played her. Ms. Bruton’s parents, Queen Hargrett Bruton and George Bruton Jr., along with Althea Gibson matriculated FAMU in overlapping years; The Brutons graduated in 1951, and Althea Gibson graduated in 1953.

