

The background is a light teal color with several abstract shapes in a darker teal and white. On the left, there is a large white shape with a teal outline, resembling a stylized letter 'C' or a partial circle. On the right, there is a large teal shape with a white outline, also resembling a stylized letter 'C' or a partial circle. In the bottom center, there is a small white circle with a teal outline. In the bottom right, there is a white circle with a teal outline. The overall design is clean and modern.

Wilma Rudolph

By Emma Teefy

Introduction

Welcome to my project on Wilma Rudolph. In this project you will find out about Wilma and learn the inspiring story of her life. Hope you enjoy!

Early Life

Rudolph was born prematurely to Blanche Rudolph at 4.5 pounds (2.0 kg) on June 23, 1940, in Saint Bethlehem, Tennessee (now part of Clarksville). She was the twentieth of 22 children from her father Ed Rudolph's two marriages. Shortly after Wilma's birth, her family moved to Clarksville, Tennessee, where she grew up and attended elementary and high school. Her father, Ed, who worked as a railway porter and did odd jobs in Clarksville, died in 1961; her mother, Blanche, worked as a maid in Clarksville homes and died in 1994. Rudolph had several early childhood illnesses, including pneumonia and scarlet fever, and she contracted infantile paralysis (caused by the poliovirus) at the age of five. She recovered from polio but lost strength in her left leg and foot. After the doctor found out about her paralyzed leg he told her she would never be able to walk without a leg brace again. Physically disabled for much of her early life, Rudolph wore a leg brace until she was twelve years old. Because there was little medical care available to African American residents of Clarksville in the 1940s, Rudolph's parents sought treatment for her at the historically black Meharry Medical College (now Nashville General Hospital at Meharry) in Nashville, Tennessee, about 50 miles (80 km) from Clarksville.

For two years, Rudolph and her mother made weekly bus trips to Nashville for treatments to regain the use of her weakened leg. She also received subsequent at-home massage treatments four times a day from members of her family and wore an orthopedic shoe for support of her foot for another two years. Because of the treatments she received at Meharry and the daily massages from her family members, Rudolph was able to overcome the debilitating effects of polio and learned to walk without a leg brace or orthopedic shoe for support by the time she was twelve years old.



Wilma as a young child.

The exact leg brace that Wilma wore as a child.



Education

Rudolph was initially homeschooled due to the frequent illnesses that caused her to miss kindergarten and first grade. She began attending second grade at Cobb Elementary School in Clarksville in 1947, when she was seven years old. Rudolph attended Clarksville's all-black Burt High School, where she excelled in basketball and track. During her senior year of high school, Rudolph became pregnant with her first child, Yolanda, who was born in 1958, a few weeks before her enrollment at Tennessee State University in Nashville. In college, Rudolph continued to compete in track. She also became a member of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority. In 1963, Rudolph graduated from Tennessee State with a bachelor's degree in education. Rudolph's college education was paid for through her participation in a work-study scholarship program that required her to work on the TSU campus for two hours a day.



Wilma graduating from university.

Career

Wilma Rudolph was an American sprinter, who became a world-record-holding Olympic champion and international sports icon in track and field following her successes in the 1956 and 1960 Olympic Games. Rudolph competed in the 200-meter dash and won a bronze medal in the 4 x 100-meter relay at the 1956 Summer Olympics at Melbourne, Australia. She also won three gold medals, in the 100- and 200-meter individual events and the 4 x 100-meter relay at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, Italy. Rudolph was acclaimed the fastest woman in the world in the 1960s and became the first American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympic Games.



Wilma winning the 200m sprint in 1960 Olympic Games



Wilma holding one of her Olympic gold medals

Family

Rudolph dated boxing legend Muhammad Ali during the early 1960s. She was married twice, with both marriages ending in divorce. On October 14, 1961, she married William "Willie" Ward, a member of the North Carolina College at Durham track team. They divorced in May 1963. After her graduation from Tennessee State in 1963 Rudolph married Robert Eldridge, her high school sweetheart, with whom she already had a daughter, Yolanda, born in 1958. Rudolph and Eldridge had four children: two daughters (Yolanda, born in 1958, and Djuanna, born in 1964) and two sons (Robert Jr., born in 1965, and Xurry, born in 1971). The seventeen-year marriage ended in divorce.



**Wilma with her
husband and kids.**

Interesting Facts

- One of the most prestigious awards you can receive in Women's sports is the Wilma Rudolph Award of Courage given by the Women's Sports Foundation.
- Wilma was the 20th of her dad's 22 children which he had over two marriages.
- Wilma Rudolph was the first American Woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympics.
- Wilma originally wanted to be a basketball player but after she didn't make her High-School basketball team she decided to focus on just sprinting which was a life changing decision!

Reason

Three Questions

The reason I chose Wilma Rudolph was because my dad recommended choosing Wilma Rudolph and so then I researched her and found out that she was the perfect woman to do this project on because she is so inspiring and an amazing woman.

1. How did you feel when you were able to walk again?
2. What made you so determined to walk again?
3. Did you ever think you would win an Olympic medal?

References

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/wilma-rudolph>

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilma_Rudolph

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wilma-Rudolph>

<https://olympics.com/en/athletes/wilma-rudolph>

Thank you for watching my presentation!