

# The Clerk's Black History Series



## Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



# William DeHart Hubbard

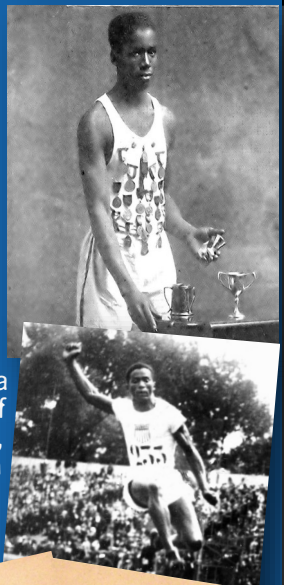
(November 25, 1903 – June 23, 1976)

First African-American to Win an Olympic Gold Medal in an individual Event (Long Jump)

Founder of the Negro American League Baseball Team, Cincinnati Tigers

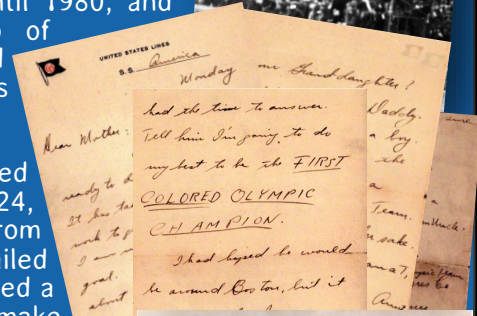


**William DeHart Hubbard** was born on November 25, 1903 in Cincinnati, Ohio. The oldest of eight children born to William and Carrie Hubbard, he attended and graduated from Walnut Hills High School where he excelled in the classroom and athletics. William played football while in high school and when the League Athletic Board declared him ineligible to play because of his race, the entire football team refused to play without him. However, it was Hubbard's achievements on the track that won the attention of a University of Michigan Alumnae, Lon Barringer who advocated for his attendance at Michigan. Barringer convinced William to enter a contest by the Cincinnati Enquirer wherein the student that sold the most new magazine subscriptions would win a \$3,000 scholarship to the University of their choice. With Barringer's help, by contacting every Michigan alum in the country and encouraging their purchase of a subscription, William won the contest and chose to attend the University of Michigan where he continued competing in track & field. While at Michigan, William was a three-time National Collegiate Athletic Association champion in the outdoor long jump and 100-yard dash as well as a seven-time Big Ten Conference champion in track and field. His 1925 outdoor long jump of 25 feet 10 1/2 inches stood as Michigan's team record until 1980, and today it still stands in second place. His 1925 jump of 25 feet 3 1/2 inches stood as a Big Ten Championship record until Jesse Owens broke it with a jump of 26 feet 8 1/4 inches in 1935.

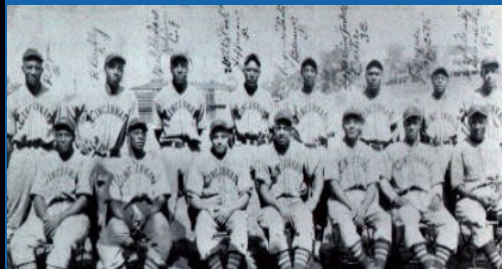


William's incredible track and field accomplishments earned him a position on the 1924 Olympic team. On June 26, 1924, William DeHart Hubbard boarded the *S.S. America*, from Hoboken, NJ, leaving for Paris, France. Before the ship sailed for what would be nine turbulent days at sea, William penned a letter to his mother defining the goal that he knew would make Olympic History - to be the first "Colored Olympic Champion." And that's exactly what he did. William DeHart Hubbard won the

Olympic gold medal for the running long jump, becoming the first African-American to win an Olympic gold medal in an individual event. After the Olympics, William returned to Michigan and set several more track and field records before graduating in 1927.



After college, William returned to Ohio where he became the supervisor of the Department of Colored Work for the Cincinnati Public Recreation Commission and remained there until 1941. During this time, in 1934, he founded the *Cincinnati Tigers*, a professional black baseball team that played in the Negro American League. The team wore hand-me-down uniforms from the Cincinnati Reds and lasted only one year. In 1957, William was elected to the National Track Hall of Fame.



The Cincinnati Tigers, 1934.

He worked as the manager of Valley Homes, a public housing project in Cincinnati until his retirement in 1969. And in 1976, after a series of small strokes, William DeHart Hubbard died at the age of 72.

In 2010, the Brothers of Omega Psi Phi, Inc., PHI Chapter established The William DeHart Hubbard Scholarship Fund honoring William DeHart Hubbard.

