



Wilmer Thomas "Tommy" Bowman showed his ability to lead and direct as a teacher and coach for 31 years at Auburndale High School. Bowman graduated from Marianna High School in 1942 where he was a member of the swim team, played basketball and football and gained the nickname "Power Dive." Bowman set very high standards as a role model and success model at a young age.

After graduation, Bowman attended the University of Florida for 3 years playing Gator Football and part of the UF Track team from 1946-1949.

In 1949, Bowman transferred to Florida State University where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physical Education in 1950. While at FSU, Bowman was on the Track Team and set many records, many of which remain unbroken. Bowman loved everything about Track including 100 and 200 yard dashes, low and high hurdles, high jump, broad jump, shot put and javelin throw. His unbroken records include Season Point and Single Meet; both records have stood for 24+ years and remain unbroken.

Bowman was the first FSU runner to compete in the AAU National Decathlon Championships and the first FSU runner to qualify to compete in the US Olympic Decathlon Trials. Bowman held many bodybuilding titles most notably was Mr. Florida in 1957 and Mr. South of 1958. He earned a Master of Education Degree from Rollins College.

In 1951, Bowman began teaching, coaching and setting records at Auburndale High School. Bowman's coaching career was a very productive one and illustrated in a direct manner the influence he had on his students capturing the reasons for his success. Bowman led by example and never asked any of his students to do something he was not capable of doing himself. This approach resulted in the Hound Track Team winning four State Class A Championships in 1956, 1964, 1965 and 1967. In recognition of this achievement the Florida Athletic Coaches Association named Bowman the 1967 Coach of the Year. Bowman's son James L. Bowman said "My father demanded and expected the best from his students and he got it."

In 2007, Auburndale High School's Bruce Canova Stadium Track will be dedicated in Tom Bowman's name.

In addition to achieving career goals, Bowman gave back to Auburndale when he became Auburndale City Commissioner from 1974-75; served as Mayor in 1975-76. He was a member of several service organizations including vice-president of United Way, vice president of the Heart Fund, Rotarian, member of the American Legion, member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Board of Directors for the Marion Lea School for Handicapped and officiated at local "Special Olympics" Track Meets. Bowman was also a voluntary Probation Officer and a Volunteer Fireman.

Bowman was married to Mary Gordon-Bowman for almost 40 years. They have 4 children: John Napier Bowman, James L. and Joseph G Bowman (twins) and Annette Bowman-Hall. Mrs. Bowman said, "I am so thankful and honored for Tom to have received this honor. He loved his work and never asked anything of his students he would not do himself."