

**LARGER** THAN **LIFE**  
A CELEBRATION OF GREATNESS



**Wilma Rudolph**  
(1940 – 1994)

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## INTRODUCTION

- Wilma Glodean Rudolph was **an American athlete, and in the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, Italy, she became the first American woman to win three gold medals in track and field during a single Olympic Games, despite running on a sprained ankle.**
- She was named United Press Athlete of the Year (1960), the AP Woman Athlete of the Year (1960, 1961).
- She was inducted in the **National Women's Hall of Fame in 1994**, a track and field champion, Rudolph elevated women's track to a major presence in the United States.

## BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Wilma Rudolph was born on June 23, 1940 in St. Bethlehem, a part of Clarksville, Tennessee, twentieth of twenty-two children of Ed and Blanche Rudolph. **At the age of 4 it was discovered that she had polio.**

Because of the expense and difficulty of obtaining professional medical care, Wilma's mother usually treated her ailing child at home. Many nights her mother, tired after a long day's work, would sit on Wilma's bed and massage her daughter's leg well into the evening hours. Blanche Rudolph kept telling her polio-stricken daughter that she would one day walk without braces.

**It was with great determination and with the help of physical therapy that she was able to overcome her physical disabilities.** Growing up in the South during days of segregation, Rudolph attended an African-American high school where she played on the basketball team.

# Wilma Rudolph

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A naturally gifted runner, she later recruited for the track team. While still in high school, Rudolph qualified for the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, Australia. At the age of 16, she was the youngest member of the U.S. team and won a bronze medal in the sprint relay event. After finishing high school, Rudolph enrolled at Tennessee State University where she studied. She also trained hard for the next Olympics.

## CAREER IN OLYMPICS

Held in Rome, Italy, **the 1960 Olympics were a golden time for Rudolph.** She set world records in 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash and the 4 x 100 meter relay in the 1960 Olympics. **This first-class sprinter became a sports superstar, known around the world for her achievements.** She made numerous appearances on television and received several honors, including being named the Associated Press Woman Athlete of the Year twice.

## LATER YEARS

After retiring from competition in the early 1960s, Rudolph worked as a teacher and a track coach. She shared her remarkable story with the world in 1977 with her **autobiography, Wilma.** Her book was later turned into a television film. In the 1980s, she was inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame and established the Wilma Rudolph Foundation to promote amateur athletics.

Rudolph died on November 12, 1994, near Nashville, Tennessee, from brain cancer. In 2004, the United States Postal Service honored this Olympic champion by featuring her likeness on a 23-cent stamp. **She is remembered as one of the fastest women in track and as a source of great inspiration for generations of African-American athletes.**

## Quotes

“Never underestimate the power of dreams and the influence of the human spirit. We are all the same in this notion. The potential for greatness lives within each of us.”

## Quiz

1. Wilma was \_\_\_\_ years old when it was discovered that she had polio.
2. What was the name of the autobiography of Wilma Rudolph?
3. In which year was Wilma was inducted in the National Women's Hall of Fame?

Send your answers with your name and department to [one2one@clarislifesciences.com](mailto:one2one@clarislifesciences.com)

First 3 correct answers will get Clarista coupon worth RS. 50.

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