



## Levi Thomas

Football Player, Teacher, Coach, Fire Rescue Chief, and Public Servant

A native of Kingstree, South Carolina, Levi Thomas matriculated to Miami, FL in 1960 where he attended George Washington Carver and Francis S. Tucker Elementary Schools. Thomas joined the inaugural Green Hornets football team in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at the age of thirteen (1966) and joined the Southwest Boys Club football team the following year. Thomas' love for football and his desire to perform at his best, instilled in him a sense of discipline, relentless effort and the energy of repetition to claim success and a winning edge. This early structure in his youth had a profound impact on his professional and personal life leading to his many groundbreaking accomplishments.

Thomas went on to play football at Coral Gables Senior High School and started at left offensive guard on the J.V. team his freshman year (1968). He was a backup offensive lineman and special teams player his junior year on the acclaimed 1969 National Championship High School Football team. Thomas was a starter his senior year (1970) at left offensive guard.

Thomas was recognized for his outstanding play and was selected to the following post season teams: Miami News 1st Offensive All-County Football Team, Miami Herald 2<sup>nd</sup> Offensive All-City Team, Home News All-State football team and voted Outstanding Offensive Lineman of the Year by his teammates and coaches. Thomas also lettered in Track and Field.

Thomas was awarded a football scholarship in 1971 and attended Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. Throughout his four years of play at Fort Lewis College, he started at multiple positions including tight end, wide receiver and defensive back. Thomas graduated from Fort Lewis College in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in both Political Science and Physical Education and Recreation.

In 1975, Thomas was hired at Miami Palmetto Senior High School and then made a transfer to South Miami High School in 1979, where he taught History and American Government and coached varsity football and was the Head Boys Track and Field Coach at each school. In 1980, he led the South Miami High School Boys Track team to its first winning season in the school's history.

In 1981, Thomas changed careers and joined the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department. Throughout the course of his distinguished career, Thomas challenged himself and set personal goals to become competitive via the promotional process. He excelled and moved through the ranks as Firefighter, Fire Lieutenant, Fire Captain and Chief Fire Officer. Thomas was appointed Fire Division Chief in 1996 to head up the department's Training & Safety Division.

Thomas is the son of George & Nettie Thomas and is the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) young of ten (10) children. He is married to the lovely Sheila W. Thomas, who was a Division Chief in her own right for Miami-Dade Police Department having served for 30 years. Sheila was the first black female in the department's more than 180 years to be promoted to the rank of chief. They are the proud parents of three adult children: Patrice, Langston and Maya.

**"It's not that important what you achieve in sports as an individual, but what you do with those achievements as a person in general to help make this world a better place for all."**