

Longtime sportswriter Blackie Sherrod is perhaps the best known sports figure to have played high school sports at Belton H.S. Sherrod became famous as the sports editor of the Dallas Times Herald in the 1960's and 1970's and in 2001 still wrote a column for the Dallas Morning News. Sherrod is the best known sports writer in the history of Texas and has been named several times as the Texas and national sportswriter of the year.

William Forrest Sherrod, the only child of Marvin and Leola Sherrod, was born in Belton on Nov. 9, 1919. His father was a barber and his mother was a music teacher. Forrest was an outstanding 3-sport athlete (and sports writer for the Belton Tiger) during his years at Belton High School. Though his major sport was football, he was also a starter as a senior on the 1937 Tiger basketball team that won an 8-county "district" tournament before losing to Temple in the regional. He also ran track and won first place in the District in the 880-yd dash in his senior year and finished second in the same event as a junior. Forrest Sherrod was the starting quarterback as a junior for the 1935 Tiger football team and led Belton's first undefeated team to an 8-0 record in the regular season and the first District championship in 11 years before a 6-0 Bi-District loss to Lockhart. The Tigers shut out their opponents in 6 of the 8 regular season games as the opposition averaged only 2.5 ppg.

The crucial game that decided the 1935 District championship was the 7-0 victory over Cameron. The only touchdown of the game was scored by Sherrod in a memorable play he described in his 1975 book, Blackie Sherrod: Scattershooting. After the Tigers had marched down the field running the ball and reached the five yard line late in the fourth quarter, Sherrod, incredibly, called a pass play requiring a back with a broken hand (Rayborn Vannoy) to throw him a pass "over the middle" that could have been easily intercepted. The play was successful and Belton won the game and the District championship----but Sherrod concedes to this day that it was a foolish call and could have easily made him the "goat" of the football season. The next season the senior Sherrod quarterbacked the 1936 Tigers to a 7-1-1 record (the tied game was with Cameron, the District champion) and second place in the district. Sherrod and two other Belton backs (Richard Vannoy and Bill Mulhollan) made All-District as the Belton offense dominated District play scoring 171 points to 19 for opponents. Sherrod's "biggest game" was the 48-0 District victory over Thrall in which he scored four touchdowns in the first half.

Sherrod attended Baylor University for one year (1937-38) before transferring to Howard Payne where he played one season (1938) of college football as a wingback but, by his own admission, he "wasn't big nor gifted enough" to continue playing. During that one year of college football he was nicknamed "Blackie" by an assistant coach and the name "stuck." Sherrod graduated from Howard Payne in May of 1941 with a B.A. in English and joined the U.S. Navy shortly after the beginning of World War II. He spent most of the war as a "torpedo plane gunner in the Pacific," flying 22 missions and winning three medals. After the war, Blackie Sherrod worked first as a sportswriter with the Temple Telegram in 1946 and then for 10 years (1947-1957) with the

Ft. Worth Press and 26 years (1958-1984) with the Dallas Times Herald (where he was sports editor and columnist). For the past seven years he has been a columnist with the Dallas Morning News. By 2001 Blackie Sherrod had been a sportswriter for almost 54 years and had received every award in the field. He was named Texas Sportswriter of the Year 17 times; National Headliners Club National Sportswriter of the Year; Red Smith National Sportswriter of the Year; and is a member of the National Sportswriter Hall of Fame. He was awarded an honorary Ph.D. by Howard Payne University in 1997 and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in the early 1970's. Sherrod has co-authored books with Darrell Royal and Freddie Steinmark and has published collections of his article/columns in Blackie Sherrod: Scattershooting (1975) and The Blackie Sherrod Collection (1988). In 2009 Blackie Sherrod, 89, lived in Dallas with his wife, Joyce. He has two grown stepchildren, Rebecca Pearce of San Antonio and Kimberly Wilson of Dallas.