

## Ralph Hill

Ralph Hill was born on December 26th 1908. He grew up here in the Henley community. He participated in track his senior year. He ran at the Klamath County Fairgrounds because the high school didn't have a track.

He trained by running Strukel Mountain. He didn't win in any big time honors then because Ralph was way a head of his time. In 1930 Ralph Hill was at the University of Oregon. He surprised the track world by setting a new American mile record of 4:12.4 seconds in a dual meet against Washington. By 1932 though, he had moved up to the 5,000 meters and took the AAU title in 14:55.7. He then broke the American record in the same year with a 14:30 time. As a virtual unknown he took on the masters of distance running, "the Finns". Hill matched strides with the great Lauri Lehtinen and Lauri Virtanen though out the 1932 Olympic 5,000 meter, and although Virtanen was dropped in the closing laps. Hill waged a great battle with Lehtinen in the home straight. In desperation of the struggle, the Fin changed course twice as the finish approached and impeded Hill. Judges deliberated for an hour before announcing that the gold would go to Leheinen and the silver to Ralph Hill. They were both given the same time. Hill declined to register a protest, saying he didn't think Leheinen's actions were intentional. It still stands as one of the most sportmanship moments in Olympic history.

Ralph Hill is a member of the University of Oregon Hall of Fame.

He was honored to be named to the All Time United States Olympic Track Team as a 5,000 meter athlete.

After earning a degree in business administration, he

returned to Henley and spent his life farming.

He and Dan O'Brien were honored with the naming of our football field- Hill/O'Brien Field in September of 1992.

He died October 17th 1994 at the age of 85.

Having met the criteria for nomination and in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments, it is my honor to induct into the Henley High School Athletic Hall of Fame as an "ATHLETE" RALPH HILL