

HARRY EDWARDS

Harry Edwards was born in St. Louis but grew up in East Saint Louis, Illinois. After an outstanding athletic career at East St. Louis High, he graduated in 1960 and was awarded an athletic scholarship to San Jose State University from which he graduated in 1964 with high honors. He subsequently was awarded a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and a University Fellowship to Cornell University where he completed a M.A. and a Ph.D. in sociology. He was professor of Sociology at the University of California at Berkeley from 1970-2000.

The combination of his experiences as an athlete and his training in the discipline of sociology led Dr. Edwards to the conclusion that by the late 1960s America had become complacent, even cynical about the issue of race in sports. He ultimately advocated a Black athlete boycott of the 1968 Olympics among other protest efforts to dramatize the racial inequities and barriers confronting Blacks in sport and society.

Years later, Dr. Edwards became a consultant on issues of diversity for all three major sports. He was hired by the Commissioner of Major League Baseball in 1987 to help with efforts to increase front office representation of minorities and women in baseball. He also was with the Golden State Warriors of the NBA from 1987 through 1995, specializing in player personnel counseling and programs. The programs and methods he developed for dealing with issues and challenges facing professional football player personnel were adopted by the entire NFL in 1992. The NFL also adopted the Minority Coaches Internship and Outreach Program that he developed with Coach Bill Walsh at the San Francisco Forty Niners in 1986.

Over his career, Dr. Edwards has persisted in efforts to compel the sports establishment to confront and to effectively address issues pertaining to diversity and equal opportunity within its ranks, particularly with regard to increasing the numbers of minority coaches and administrators on college campuses and in professional sports. Edwards, a scholar-activist who became spokesperson for what amounted to a revolution in sports, is now considered the leading authority on developments at the interface of race, sport, and society and a pioneer in the development of the sociology of sport as a an academic discipline in America.

Harry has been a consultant with producers of sports related programs for numerous television and film productions in the United States and abroad. He has received dozens of awards and honors, including several honorary doctorate degrees. He has written scores of articles and four books: The Struggle That Must Be, Sociology of Sports, Black Students, and The Revolt of the Black Athlete.