

*A LOOK BACK AT THE LIFE OF*

# **HAP MORAN**

*BY MICHAEL EISEN*

Photographs Courtesy of Michael Moran

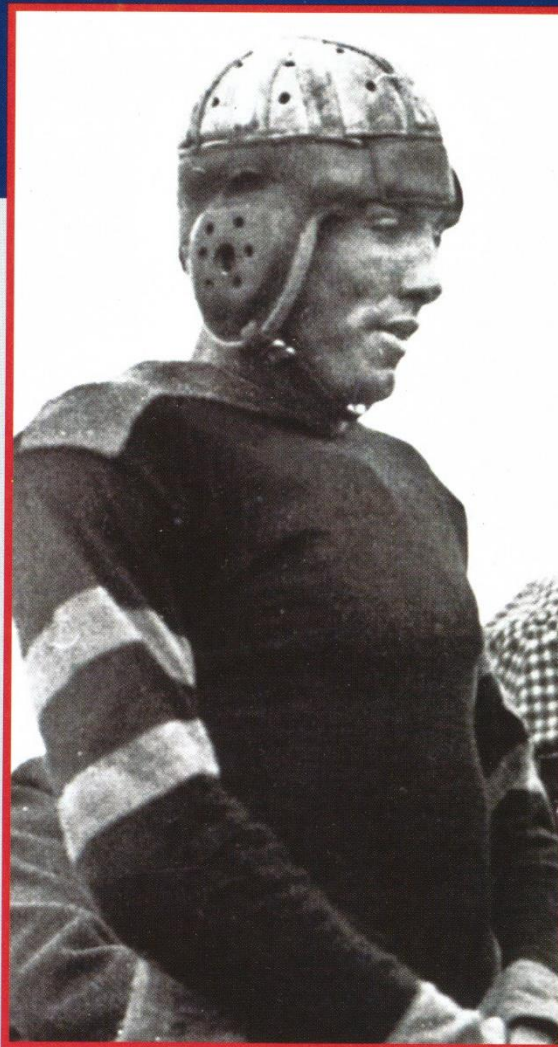
When Tiki Barber ran for a Giants-record 95-yard touchdown in the 2005 season finale in Oakland, he altered an entry in the franchise's record book that hadn't changed in 75 years.

On Nov. 23, 1930, a running back named Hap Moran ran for 91 yards in a game against the Green Bay Packers in the Polo Grounds. Moran didn't score — he was tackled at the one-yard line. His run is believed to have been the longest in the NFL until the Packers' Andy Urum scampered 97 yards versus the Chicago Cardinals on Oct. 8, 1939.

Moran's run was the longest-held mark in the Giants' record book until Barber eclipsed it last New Year's Eve.

Almost exactly nine years earlier — on Dec. 30, 1994 — Hap Moran passed away at the age of 93. His son, Michael, 59, preserves the memory of his father's career and relishes an activity his father was reluctant to engage in — talking about his time in the NFL.

"He did talk about his run, though," said Michael Moran, the senior pastor at the First Congregational Church in New Milford, Conn. "He had played in 1928 with



Johnny (Blood) McNally and the Pottsville Maroons. His favorite thing about the run was that he passed McNally twice going down the field. I never saw pictures of it, but I guess it was kind of like he was back and forth. Because eventually he did get pulled down."

Moran's record run did not begin with a standard handoff. Instead, Moran was back to punt the ball.

"It was a fake punt, so there was some-

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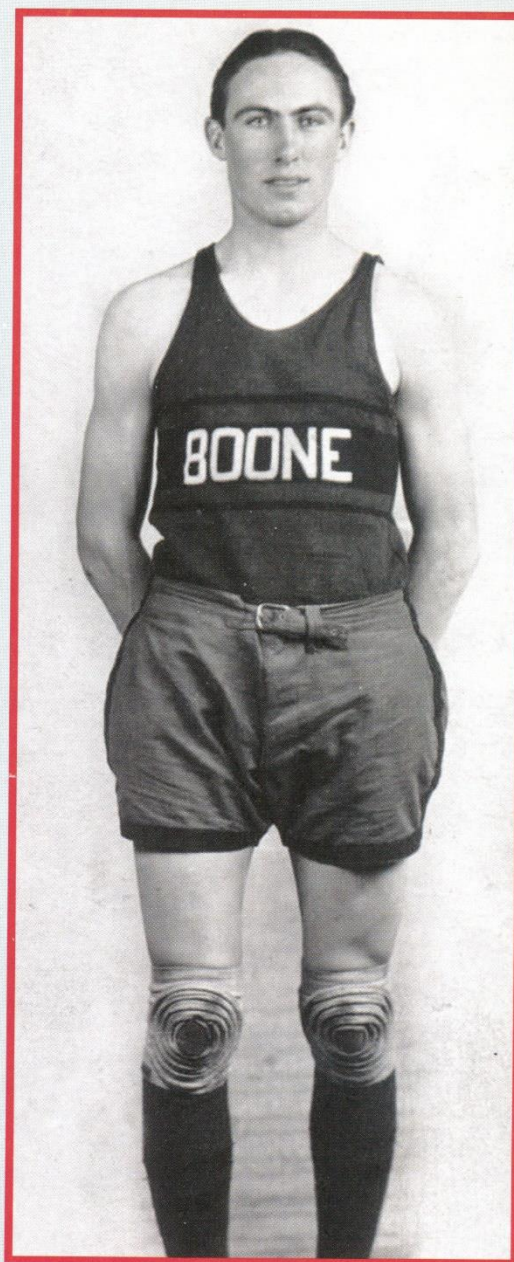


body deep," said Michael Moran, who was born 14 years after his father's last game "I do have a 1932 movie of the Giants playing the Spartans, and they kind of shifted into punt formation. It wasn't like special teams or anything. So when they saw the shift they (the Packers) probably started running back down the field.

"He was a placekicker. I think he was second in the league in field goals one of those years. So he was a general utility kicker. He could really punt the ball, though. When we were kids there was a park next to the apartment house where I grew up in New York City, and whenever my father would come over there everybody was screaming at him to kick the ball out of the park onto the roof."

Hap Moran sat down for an interview with a video crew from the Giants in 1992, when he was 91 years old. He was asked to describe his record run.

"We had held Green Bay at the three-yard line at the north end of the Polo Grounds," said Moran, who noted that he was paid between \$125 and \$150 a game. "We went back in kick formation on second down. I was doing the kicking that day. I saw the back coming in real fast. When I went around him, it looked like I had a clear field. On the way down I passed a couple of guys — Johnny Blood — remember that name? I don't know how I was running — criss-cross maybe — but I was running. Someone hit me from behind at about the



10-yard line and then I scrawled ahead."

Moran was brought down inside the five, but the Giants subsequently scored and won the game, 13-6.

"That was the fortunate part," Moran said. "That was the winning touchdown.

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Green Bay was the kingpin in those days."

Hap Moran was proud he held the record for the Giants' longest run for so many years.

"I know he did," his son said. "I'm not even sure he knew about it for a while. But at one point we got a media guide and it was in there. I know he had a 1947 or '48 media guide in his stuff. But the fact that it stayed in there, yeah, I think it was a point of pride for him."

The Giants' longest run wasn't the only record Moran owned at one time. On Oct. 15, 1933, he had 114 receiving yards in a game against the Eagles, which then set the league standard. Moran also led the Giants in scoring in 1931 with 35 points (four

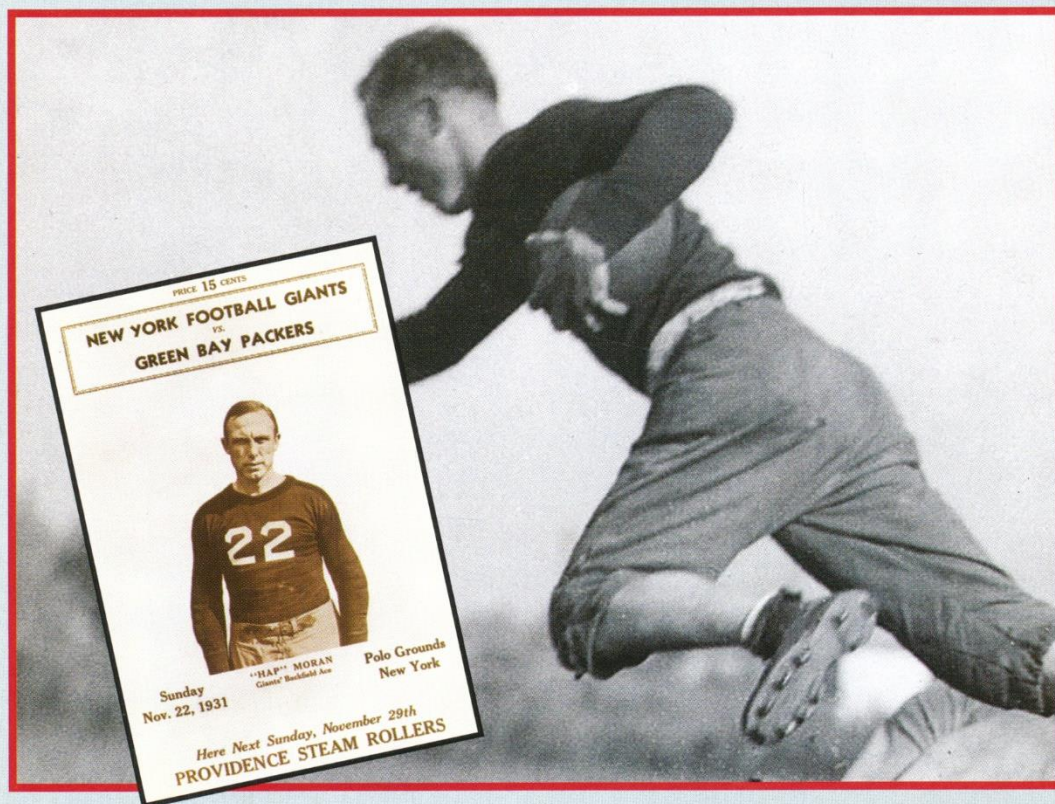
touchdowns, eight extra points and a field goal).

Michael Moran was asked if his father was proud of his career.

"I think he was proud he had a job," Moran said. "When I saw that movie, 'Cinderella Man,' you realized how people's fortunes changed overnight in the Depression, and I think the fact that he had this job and he lived - all of the players lived in a hotel, pretty much together. That was more what I heard about, not about specific games."

Francis Dayle "Hap" Moran was born on July 31, 1901 in Belle Plain, Iowa. Although he eventually made his name in football, in high school he was better known for basket-

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ball. His team from Boone won the state championship and the right to represent Iowa at the Interscholastic Tournament at the University of Chicago. There he set a record for the longest shot in the history of the tournament (they stopped the game and measured) and was named as a High School All-American by Amos Alonzo Stagg. After one year at Grinnell College in Iowa he was recruited by Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh primarily for basketball. But he was injured in a football game and returned to Grinnell, where he scored on kickoff returns of 85 yards against Coe and 85 yards versus Minnesota in 1925. Those runs were highlighted in a letter of recommendation from his college coach to the Frankford Yellow Jackets, for whom he began his NFL career in 1926. Moran was the second-highest scorer for a Yellow Jackets team that won the NFL title that season.

The following year, Moran split his time between Frankford and the Chicago

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Cardinals. In 1928, he played 10 games for the Pottsville Maroons before joining the Giants for one game. He stayed with the Giants through the 1933 season, playing 65 games for them.

Moran was a back who could run, pass and catch. Film from his era shows a fast, energetic player who seemed to relish contact. If a defender was closing in, Moran was just as apt to lower his shoulder and take him on as he was to try to step around him.

A newspaper story from 1926 described Moran thusly...

"A player by the name of Moran, the star of the entire game, was unstoppable, through the line, around the ends, averting the opposing players, and making the longest runs of the game. He seemed like he was right at home, and was different from what went before...like a star let down from the planet Mars with plays that the poor fish of the earth knew nothing about. We are certainly pleased to tell our many readers of the wonderful addition this player has made to the team and the spirit he put in the rest of the players."

In his final season, 1933, the Giants lost the first NFL Championship Game to



the Chicago Bears, 23-21. And Moran was still a favorite of sportswriters.

A newspaper account at that time read, "Mr. (Tim, Wellington's father) Mara has Hap Moran, who once upon a time played with Carnegie Tech. Hap is thirty-two years old and is now in his sixth season with the Giants. Back in Boone, Iowa, in the winter he is a train dispatcher. Hap has been around a long time and is pretty well battered, but they tie him together for a few plays every Sunday and he usually catches a pass or two."

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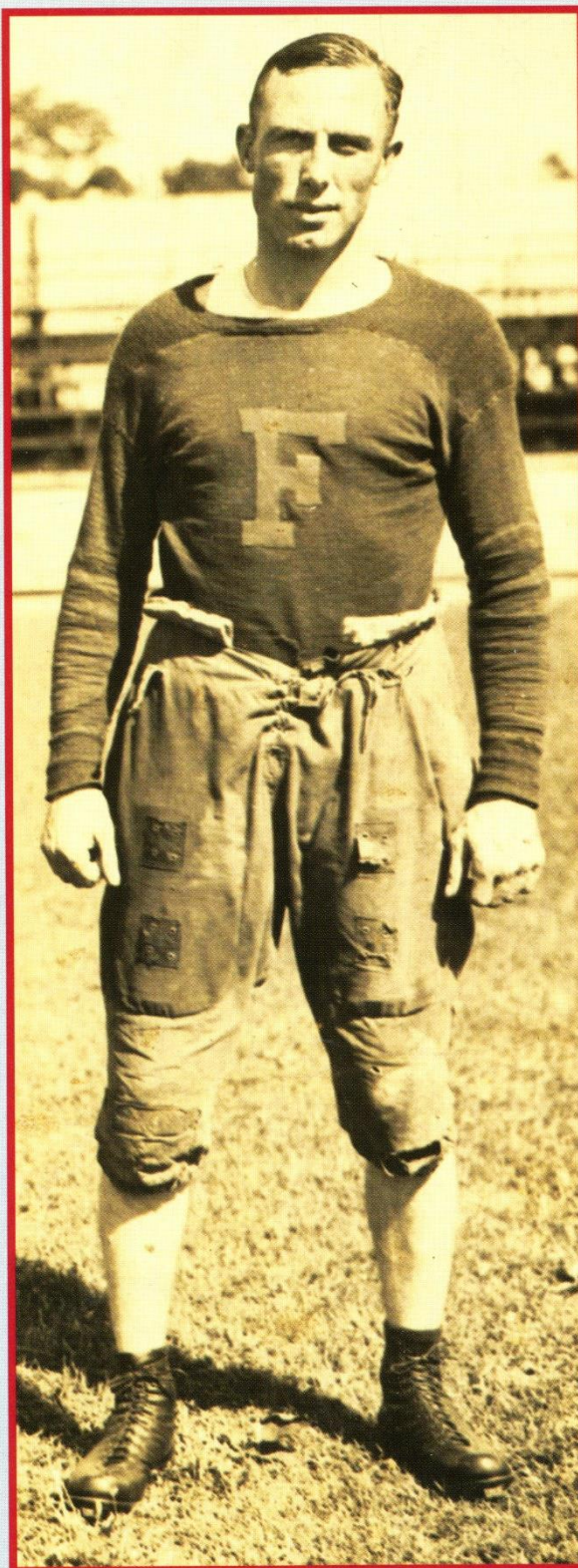


Hap Moran worked just as hard after his football career as he did when he suited up. Actually, he put on his pads for several more years in semi-pro leagues.

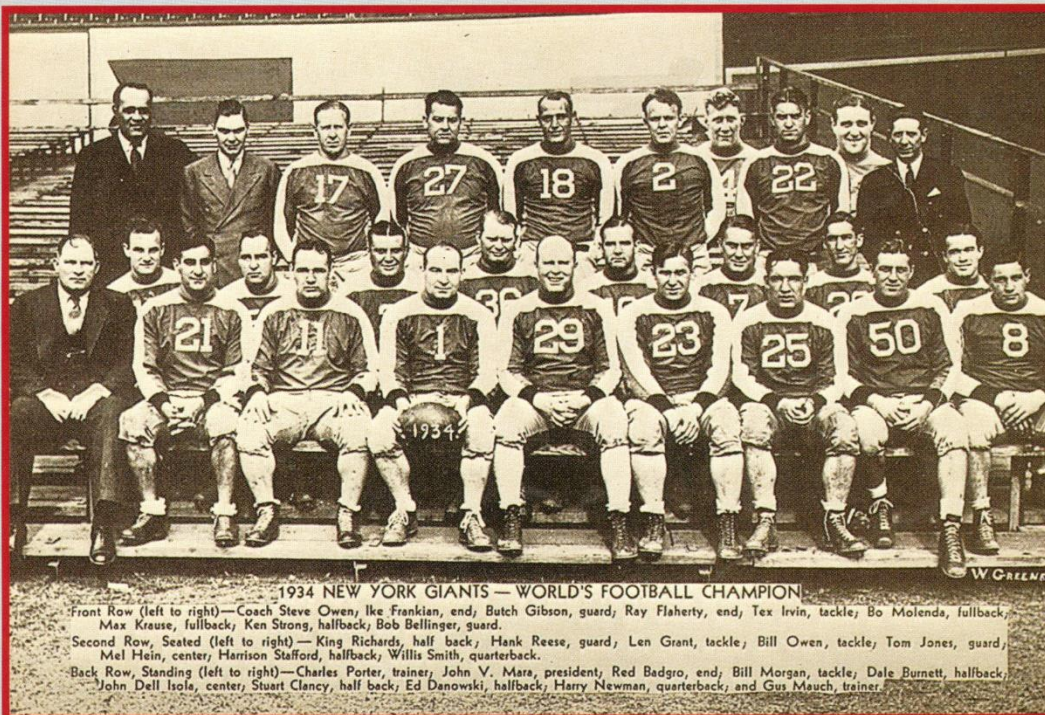
"He was with Mr. Mara in the fuel-oil business a little bit and then he went with Shell," Michael Moran said. "Then he got a job with the federal government as a buyer and then he was an executive with AT&T - it was then called Western Electric. He worked downtown, on Broadway, right across the street from where the World Trade Center was built. He'd buy almost all of the telephone poles for the Bell System. Guys would come in - this was the era of the three-martini lunch - and he'd go out, they would take him out to restaurants and they'd do deals. Occasionally when I was in high school I'd get invited out to dinner with these guys. By the time I got done with the cocktails - and I was so full of cheese by that point - I couldn't eat.

"It was funny. Their reputation as big eaters was something. And of all the things he saved from his Giants trips were menus."

Moran was forced to retire in 1966 when he reached AT&T's mandatory retirement age of 65. "He was (angry) about it, too, because he had a little bit more to go for a much







larger pension," Michael Moran said.

After retirement, Hap and his wife, Lucille, often traveled.

"They were in a rent-controlled apartment in New York City that they'd been in since 1937," Michael said. "They paid \$351 a month in Sunnyside, Queens. It was beautiful - all landscaped and everything. So their living expenses were minimal. They could just lock the door and leave. They did a lot of traveling. They would rent a condo in Puerto Rico for a month or two. They had relatives scattered all over the country. So they basically traveled."

Hap's competitive juices never stopped shaking.

"He was very tough," Michael said. "My father had a 210 bowling average when he

was 70. He'd play anything with a ball, including golf. He had some kind of natural concentration and coordination about him. He came upon a woman being assaulted once - I think the story was he was in an elevator and he got smashed in the cheek with the lead pipe and they broke his cheek. But he wasn't the one getting carried out of the elevator. The other guy was.

"His early life on the railroads made him very strong. And the way he would discipline us (Michael and older brother Mark) as kids, he would just grab you by the arm. That was it. That was all it took. He had a grip of steel."

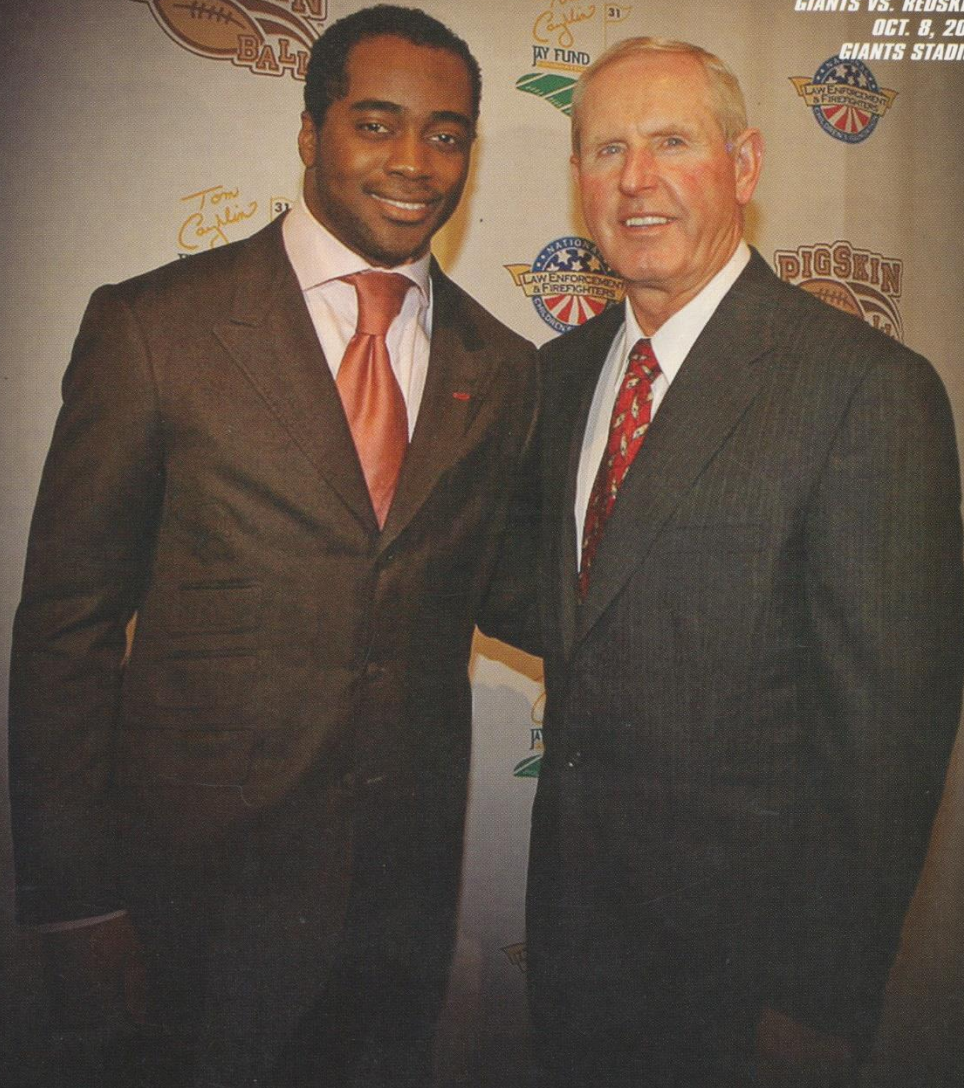
Just like the one he had on the Giants' longest run record until Tiki Barber sprinted past the Oakland Raiders and him.



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