

HOLLYWOOD  
HIGH

## Black Spartans (1907-1948)

### Curators

Carli V. Lowe, University Archivist  
Kate Steffens, Special Collections Librarian

### Artist

Yeab Kebede ('22, Digital Media Arts)

### Graphic Designer

En Yu Ma ('22, Graphic Design)

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## Exhibit Curators Statement

"Black Spartans (1907-1948)" represents ongoing research in SJSU Special Collections & Archives identifying documentation of Black experiences throughout SJSU history. This exhibit is the first of several installments.

Much of the information we have comes from the Spartan Daily student newspaper and the La Torre yearbooks. With too few exceptions, Black Spartans' stories are not told in their own words but from the perspectives of their majority white classmates. This is reflected in the language and focus of the articles. We invite you to read critically.

The Black Spartans featured in this exhibit pursued their educational goals while contending with institutionalized racism and other major crises of the 20th century: two World Wars, the influenza pandemic of 1918, and polio. Locally, "the deed to virtually every home in San Jose" included restrictions against Black and Asian residents known as "restrictive covenants" (Spartan Daily, February 16, 1948, page 2). On campus, blackface and minstrel shows were a regular part of student events.

"Black Spartans (1907-1948)" is an invitation to the community to join us in surfacing these stories, ensuring these histories are preserved and presented in a way that honors these students' lives. Contact us at [special.collections@sjsu.edu](mailto:special.collections@sjsu.edu) to participate.

Carli V. Lowe - University Archivist  
Kate Steffens - Special Collections Librarian

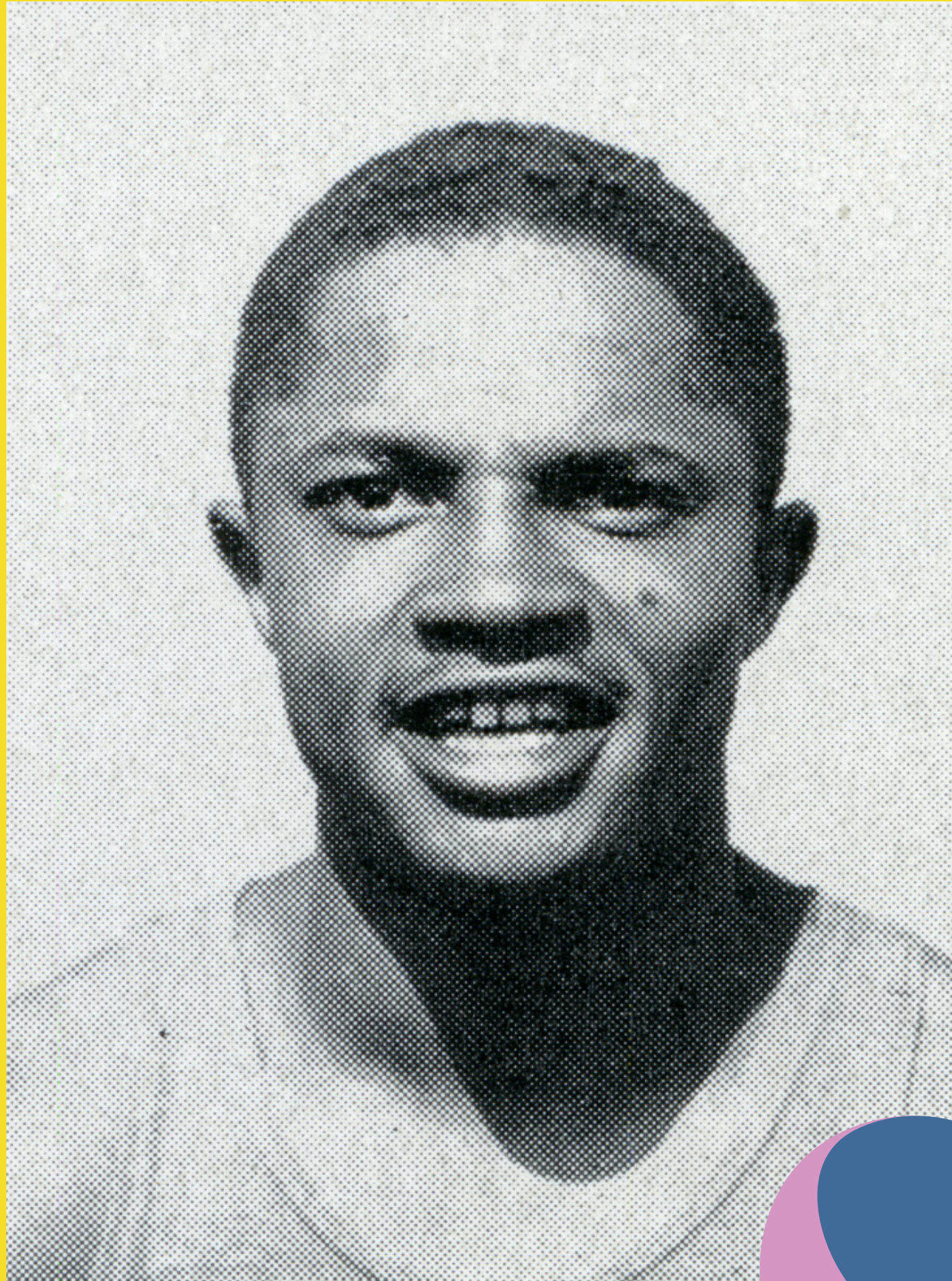
## Artist Statement

The "Black Spartans (1907-1948)" exhibition is a homage to Black culture and history at San José State University and the Bay Area at large. Until recently, the significance of Black bodies in Bay Area history (as well as U.S. history) was overlooked. Unless it was associated with the struggles of civil rights leaders, athletes, or celebrity-personas, the story of a graduate from a state school wasn't valued because we weren't part of the mainstream culture. As a Black Spartan myself, I was deeply connected to these individuals that started out just like me. I saw a reflection of myself and my community throughout the process of making these mixed media portraits and came to realize how important it is to know your history because it becomes a catalyst for knowing who you are.

My work explores the intricacy of identity and the role culture, tradition, and history play. These portraits are embodiments of our Black Spartans, they are visual representations of the colorful and captivating lives they led. Through this work, I hope to influence other artists and individuals to take part in researching and finding out the infinite layers of what it means to be Black. Our history is beyond our struggle. We are the blueprint.

Yeab Kebede  
'22 Digital Media Arts





Originally from Los Angeles, **Ralph Kaufman** attended Hollywood High School before entering San Jose State College in 1941. Kaufman was active in track, and in the Spring 1942 semester, he traveled with the track team to San Diego for conference championships. In 1943, Kaufman left SJSC to join the Armed Forces, and announced his intention to return to school in 1946.



# Tracksters Barely Miss American Record

## Smith And Zupan Fall Short By Tenth Of Second As Sprint Run Twice Following A Poor Start

Bill Smith and Mike Zupan, two of Coach Bud Winter's outstanding track men, came within one-tenth of the all-time American record in the 75-yard dash as they covered the distance in 7.5 seconds, in the opening event of the first day of the Inter-Squad meet.

This record was set back in 1926 and has been equaled once since then in 1928.

Zupan hung up the time first as he won the 75-yard dash in which several of the starters were left in their holes. Because of the exceedingly poor start, the race was run over again five minutes later and this time it was Bill Smith who broke the tape in 7.5 seconds, followed by Ralph Kaufman and Elbert Levens.

The winner's time was caught on two watches which agreed exactly and leaves little doubt as to the accuracy of the timing. Most remarkable things about the race are that the track was slow, it was the first race of the fall season, and that it was exceedingly cold.

Smith turned out to be the only double winner of the day when he took the high jump with a leap of 6 feet 2 inches, which he made with a good two inches to spare. Second place went to O. B. Hughes, and Thelmo Knowles took third.

One of the finest races of the day was the duel between Hughes and Kaufman in the 300-yard dash which Kaufman won by three yards in the fast time of 32.7 seconds. The race was run around one turn, and Hughes, who started in the outside lane, couldn't get far enough ahead of Kaufman to cut in to the pole, and had to run an extra three yards. Had it been on a straight-away, the race would have been close. Levens again placed third.

Omar Cowles won the 70-yard high hurdles in nine seconds flat, followed by Bud Vergee and Stan Bowen. In the 160 lows the order was changed, and Vergee won in 18 seconds flat with Cowles in second and Bowen again third.

## Spartan Daily

December 12, 1941

Ralph Kaufman wins the 300-yard dash by three yards in what is dubbed "one of the finest races of the day."



# SPARTAN RHYNE MAY BE SLOWED BY LEG INJURY

By NIELS NIELSEN

Two of the greatest college track teams in the nation clash when the Fresno State Bulldogs meet the San Jose State Spartans in a dual meet this afternoon on Spartan Field at 4 o'clock.

Both teams have fine records. San Jose hasn't lost a dual meet this season, while Fresno has only lost to the University of Southern California Trojans. In the large meets in which both teams have appeared, San Jose has come out on top. The Spartans finished ahead of the Bulldogs in the San Francisco Olympic club indoor meet and again Saturday in the PAA championships where they scored 24 5/6 points to Fresno's 19 5/6.

However, eliminating the hop, step and jump which was won by Willie Steele (and which is not included in an ordinary meet), the two teams would have been tied.

## RHYNE INJURED

Coach Winter's hopes for a win took a serious slump when Bill Rhyne pulled a leg muscle during practice Thursday. Rhyne didn't run in the PAA and still has quite a limp. Originally he was counted on for quite a few points, competing as he does in the 220 yard dash, 440 yard run, 220 yard low hurdles and the relay. How many of these events he will be able to enter and how well he will do in those he does enter is one of the big question marks of the meet.

## FRESNO MILERS TOPS

Fresno is conceded first and second in the mile and two mile, where Art Cazares and Bobby Madrid rank among the top runners in the country; while San Jose has a monopoly in the broad jump, formed by Bill Smith, Willie Steele and Chitoshi Akizuki.

The rest of the events are pretty well open, with the exception of the sprints in which Fresno has one man, Al Jackson, who should grab a place in both the century and furlough.

## COACHES' JUGGLING

It will be interesting to see the results of the second-guessing of Coaches Winter and Flint Hanner. Hanner will run quartermiler Joe Shropshire in the 440 and 880, and will enter Madrid in the half mile as well as the mile and two mile.

Winter plans to hold Guido Teresi out of the mile so that he can save everything for the two-mile grind and perhaps give Madrid a battle. Winter will run miler Bob Ingram in the 880; quarter-miler Thelmo Knowles in the 440, sprinter Ralph Kaufman in the shot put, and entering Elwood Clark who has been out with a bad shoulder in the javelin.

On the policy of the coaches juggling their entries, Coach Winter remarked, "We're both guessing and if either of us don't guess right, it may be just too bad."

# Spartan Daily

May 5, 1942

After one of his team members injures his leg, Coach Bud Winter places Ralph Kaufman in the shot put competition in a meet against Fresno State.

## Ralph Kaufman Track Team's Loss, And Army's Gain

Ralph Kaufman, one of the best men on this year's issue of the track team, is to leave for the armed forces February 28, it was announced today. Kaufman will be greatly missed at the Olympic club indoor meet.

Kaufman, who recently shifted to the 440 yard run, showed a great deal of promise in his events.

## Spartan Daily

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February 19, 1943

After a 2-year college career at San Jose State, Ralph Kaufman announces his intention to leave school to serve in World War II.



# VOWING TRACKMEN RETURN TO STATE

By DICK FRY

So they says to me, "what d'ya want, Bud, blood?" and I says, "yeh."

The moral of this story could well be, and is, never give track coach L. C. (Bud) Winter an option on your life. Possessor of one of the finest track teams on the West Coast way back in 1942, Winter couldn't quite see letting so fine an organization get lost without something of a fight so he invited the service-bound athletes to dine at his home one night shortly before Uncle gave them the call. During the course of the evening, Bud, never one to give a good track man

a fighting chance as far as independence goes, suggested that the boys give him the hand on returning to State after the war. And so it was that with the taking of a blood vow and the designation of a secret handshake, Bud unlocked the door and allowed his galaxy of stars to pursue their ways.

Today, some of his boys are back and many of the others are on their way. Slowly but surely the Spartan track team is beginning to take on a healthy color and the happy days of victories over Stanford and Fresno State are again just around the corner.

Contrary to the opinion of many of the top military authorities of the country, Winter says war doesn't condition legs. In fact, he reports that his boys, although many of them performed considerably while in service, are having more trouble getting into shape than ever before. With the first meet of the season coming up April 10, this factor is causing the Spartan mentor to lose more than a little sleep. Usually the cinder men have about six weeks in which to train for their first encounter but with all the returning vets staying out of school until the Spring quarter this year, the training period was cut short.

Among some of the mainstays returning are Bill Rhyne, the Maritime service one man track team, Thelno Knowles, winner of the half mile in several European meets, Vern Cooley, CCAA vaulting champ and the man who ruined the pole vaulting competition in a British meet by breaking the only pole in the islands and Larry O'Connor, consistent point-winner for the locals during the 1942 season in the shot, discus and javelin. Eustace Rojda, Spartan two mile ace and second place winner in the 1942 Turkey Trot also re-entered this quarter.

Those who have reported in to Winter with intentions of returning to school in the Fall include hurdler, Bud Veregge, shot-putter, Frank Minine, distance man, Bob Ingram, sprinter, Ralph Kaufman, and javelin hurler Elwood Clark.

Bill Smith and Willie Steele, two very outstanding performers of the '42 season have written that they will not be able to return to State. Smith is married and working in Southern California and Steele is attending San Diego State.

Winter intends to work his squad up until the eve of their triangular meet with Salinas JC, and the Alameda Naval Air Station next Wednesday.

## Spartan Daily

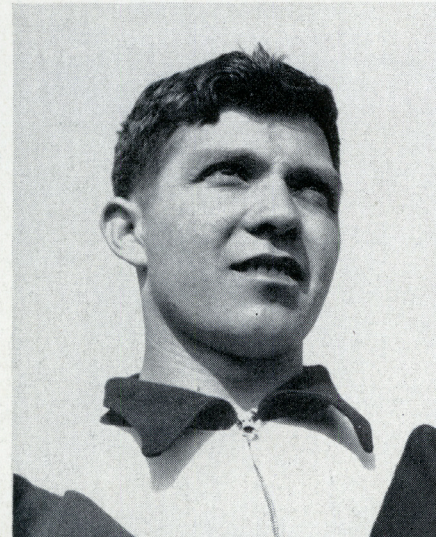
April 8, 1946

Coach Bud Winter holds a dinner for the members of his track team headed for military service. Ralph Kaufman is one the athletes who expresses his intention to return to San Jose State after the war.





LLOYD (BUD) WINTER  
Coach



HANK RUIZ  
Captain



FRANK THOMAS  
Manager



Irving Smith  
Ben Bramble  
Charles Townsend  
Eustace Rojas  
Dick Knox

Omar Cowles  
Theino Knowles  
Jim Schraub  
Vern Cooley  
Stan Bowen

Elwood Clarke  
Guido Teresi  
Larry O'Connor  
Ralph Kaufman  
Frank Thomas

Karl Hummel  
Frank Minini  
Bud Veregee  
Dick Campion  
Don Ashby

### TRACK

The 1942 edition of the San Jose State College track team under the guidance of Lloyd C. "Bud" Winter, in his first year of coaching at San Jose, gained the reputation of being the greatest track and field squad ever assembled at Sparta. Undefeated in a full season of dual meets, San Jose went

## La Torre Yearbook

1942

Ralph Kaufman is pictured as a member of the track team.



