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"Deacon" Jones Passes Away

David "Deacon" Jones, the original sackmaster, has died.

The Hall of Fame defensive end credited with terming the word sack for how he knocked down quarterbacks, was 74. The Washington Redskins said that Jones died of natural causes at his home in Southern California on Monday night.

"Deacon Jones was one of the greatest players in NFL history. Off the field, he was a true giant," said Redskins general manager Bruce Allen, whose father, George, coached Jones with the Los Angeles Rams. "His passion and spirit will continue to inspire those who knew him. He was a cherished member of the Allen family and I will always consider him my big brother."

Because sacks didn't become an official statistic until 1982, Jones' total is uncertain. His impact as a premier pass rusher and team leader is not.

Jones was the leader of the Rams' Fearsome Foursome unit from 1961-71 and then played for San Diego for two seasons before finishing his career with the Redskins in 1974. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1980 and made the league's 75th anniversary all-time squad.

"Deacon Jones has been the most inspirational person in my football career," said former teammate and fellow Hall of Famer Jack Youngblood.

Jones made the Pro Bowl every year from 1964-70 and played in eight overall. He combined with fellow Hall of Famer Merlin Olsen, Rosey Grier and Lamar Lundy on a defensive line that at times was unblockable.

Olsen died in March 2010 at age 69 and Lundy died in February 2007 at 71. Grier, who is 80, is the only surviving member of the Fearsome Foursome

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