

## PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

### George Poage

*Olympian, Teacher*

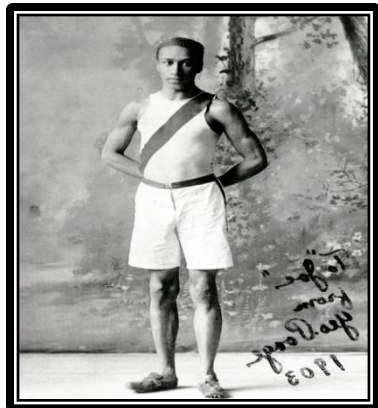
*"Man has had many significant achievements over the course of the mankind. I hope my small little achievement can be remembered as something great by the centuries to come"*

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#### Background Information

Born: November 6, 1880

Death: April 11, 1962



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Poage was born in Missouri and was then raised in La Crosse, Wisconsin. While in high school, Poage was a successful runner. He was as successful academically as he was in sports. He graduated high school in 1899 second in his class and was also La Crosse High School's first Black graduate. After his achievements in school, he decided to attend the University of Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

#### Poage's Resistance

Poage was the first black athlete for the University Wisconsin. He was an effective and consistent athlete who specialized in short sprints and hurdle races. In 1903 Poage graduated with an undergraduate degree in History. Although he later returned to the University of Wisconsin to continue his studies and track career. He became the Big 10 conferences' first African American champion in the 440-yard dash and 220-yard hurdle races.

In 1904 Poage qualified for the Olympics, held in St. Louis, Missouri. The event was segregated and had separate facilities for Black athletes, leading many Black athletes to boycott the games. Poage decided to compete and became the first Black athlete to win a medal at the Olympics. At the conclusion of the races, Poage placed third in both the 440-yard dash and 220-yard hurdle races. After his career as a runner, he entered the education field as a teacher. Poage went on to work for the US postal service for thirty years.

#### Achievements

Poage was inducted into the Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998. He also has been honored with a park named after him in La Crosse, Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup> Poage left behind a legacy of determination in the face of racial discrimination that athletes still continue today.

<sup>1</sup> Klein, A. (2010, October 20) *George Coleman Poage (1880-1962)*. Retrieved from <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/poage-george-coleman-1880-1962/>

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia contributors. (2020, August 30). *George Poage*. Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Poage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Poage)

## Essential Questions

1. Why were Poage's actions important to history?
2. How was his competing in the Olympic games an act of resistance?
3. What are two adjectives you would use to describe Poage? How can you learn to face adversity in your own daily life from his example?
4. ***"Man has had many significant achievements over the course of the mankind. I hope my small little achievement can be remembered as something great by the centuries to come"***
  - a. What are small things you can do today that will make a difference in the future?