Robinson, Eddie,

byname of EDWARD GAY ROBINSON (b. Feb. 13, 1919, Jackson, La., U.S.), African-American collegiate football coach who in 1985 became the winningest coach in the history of the game. He spent his entire head-coaching career at Grambling State University in Grambling, La. On Oct. 7, 1995, he became the first coach to claim 400 victories, guiding Grambling to a 42-6 win over Mississippi Valley State.

Robinson attended Leland College (Baker, La.), where he played quarterback and led the team to a combined 18-1 record over the 1939 and 1940 seasons. During his final two years at Leland he also served as an assistant coach. He earned his bachelor's degree in 1941 and received a master's degree from the University of Iowa in 1954.

In 1941 Grambling (then known as Louisiana Negro Normal and Industrial Institute) hired Robinson to coach football and basketball and teach physical education. In his first season he had no assistants and no budget for replacing equipment. He handled virtually everything himself, from mowing the field to taping players' ankles to writing accounts of the games for the local newspaper. The first season his team posted a record of 3-5. The next season, however, he guided the team to a perfect 8-0 record.

Robinson's Grambling Tigers went on to have two more perfect seasons, capture 17 conference titles, and win several National Negro Championships. More than 200 of his players went on to compete in the National Football League, including NFL Hall of Fame members Willie Davis, Willie Brown, and Buck Buchanan.

Robinson earned his 324th career victory, setting the record for wins, on Oct. 5, 1985, with a 27-7 defeat of Prairie View A&M in Dallas, Texas. At the end of the 1997 season, he retired with a lifetime record of 408-165-15.