

# Glenn Cunningham

by Guy Belleranti

When his legs were severely burned in a schoolhouse fire, doctors told Glenn Cunningham he would never walk again. His brother Floyd had died in the fire and Glenn was lucky to even be alive. However, Glenn refused to accept the doctor's pronouncement. For months, his parents took turns massaging his legs and he forced himself to walk. Glenn Cunningham found it difficult to walk.



His arduous and painful journey began at twelve, when he won a race. He started running in competitive track and field teams. Then, as a senior in high school, he was named the state champion.

But Glenn Cunningham's story didn't end at Kansas. Here he went to the University of Kansas, where he won multiple titles and setting records. He was named the state champion, and Brutus Hamilton, was named the state's strongest miler ever to that time.

Cunningham became America's top middle distance runner over the next decade. The Kansas Flyer, the Iron Horse of Kansas and the Kansas Ironman were a few of the nicknames people gave him. He became a member of the 1932 U.S. Olympic track team. In 1933, he won the Sullivan Award as the nation's top amateur athlete. In 1936 he was in the Olympics again, winning a silver medal in the 1500-meter run. And throughout the 30's he set both new national and world records in events such as the 1500 meters and the mile.

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ally, in 1921 at age 12, he determined to pursue a career in high school track and field. He was named the state champion in the mile. He went on to attend the University of Kansas, where he won multiple NCAA track and field titles. He was named the state's strongest miler ever to that time.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Glenn Cunningham also captured the hearts of many. He had overcome extreme physical adversity. He was also modest, practiced good sportsmanship and neither drank nor smoked. Fans and sports writers alike loved him. Even though it was an era when many smoked, it is said fans would put out their cigarettes when Cunningham raced out of respect for him. After graduating from the University of Kansas Cunningham moved on to earn a Masters degree in Physical Education from the University of Iowa. And after the 1936 Olympics he continued competing in Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) track events even though he was now married and a new father. He also started working toward his PHD. In 1938 he set a new world record for the mile and a new record in the indoor mile. He was inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1974.

Cunningham had a possible gold medal. His dream wasn't to be. He worked several years for the Navy, establishing a new physical fitness test. After this he and his wife opened a gym that helped underprivileged children.

Years later, Glenn was inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1974. He was also inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1974.

track and field athlete in its first 100 years.

When Glenn Cunningham died in 1988 he left behind a legacy of accomplishment. And Kansas University continues to honor this man every year when it presents its annual Glenn Cunningham Award to the track athlete who best demonstrates triumph over adversity.

-Originally purchased by EdGate Total Reader in 2006 for use in a Lexile-based reading assessment program

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Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# Glenn Cunningham

1) How does paragraph one succeed in catching readers' attention instantly?

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2) What factors, as \_\_\_\_\_ win people's hearts?

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3) Narrate an instance from your own experience which demonstrates "triumph of determination over adversity".

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Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# Glenn Cunningham

4) a. Write the meanings of the words given below and frame sentences using these.

arduous - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

miraculous - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. A person who \_\_\_\_\_ do we call a person who doesn't drive \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) The central message of the text is \_\_\_\_\_ the attitude and strong opinion that we draw from the text.

\_\_\_\_\_

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Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# Glenn Cunningham

1) How does paragraph one succeed in catching readers' attention instantly?

**The author starts by saying that Glenn Cunningham was badly injured in a fire and doctors said he won't be able to walk again let alone become an athlete. The second half of the paragraph talks about how Glenn refused to give in, and thanks to his strong determination and his parents' unwavering support, he p**

**juxtaposition  
enthusiasm in**

**killfully used  
rest and**

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2) What factors, as

**First of all, pe  
the hardest ti  
modesty at al  
refrained from**

**win people's hearts?  
helped him survive  
e. He practiced  
ing, but also he**

3) Narrate an instance from your own experience which demonstrates "triumph of determination over adversity".

**Answers may vary.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# Glenn Cunningham

4) a. Write the meanings of the words given below and frame sentences using these.

arduous - It means something hard to accomplish.

It took Tom years of arduous training to reach this position.

miraculous - It means something very surprising and difficult to

believe. Ms. Eliza's recovery from her illness was miraculous.

b. A person who \_\_\_\_\_ do we call a person who doesn't drive \_\_\_\_\_

Teetotaler

5) The central message of the text is \_\_\_\_\_ the attitude and strong \_\_\_\_\_ will, you can develop \_\_\_\_\_ e that we draw from the text.

Answers may

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