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Service attendant Horace Wooten, on the job at East Valley Division 15, is a top competitor in track and field.

East Valley Division Service Attendant trains to win in Senior Olympics

- 71-year-old Horace Wooten goes for the gold in track and field competitions

By Laura Kloth
myMetro.net

(March 20, 2009) If Rocky Balboa were a little bit older and working as a service attendant at East Valley Division 15, he might be mistaken for Horace Wooten. The similarities are obvious between the boxer and Wooten, a 71-year-old Metro employee who is training to win a gold medal in the Senior Olympics in Pasadena.

Once a sprinter and cross-country runner at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles, Wooten began training again in 2008 to compete in track and field events.

"I tried to run in June in Pasadena at a meet but I pulled my Achilles tendon and so they scratched me. I went to San Diego in September and pulled another muscle and they scratched me," he said with a quiet chuckle.

Then in February, Wooten participated in the Senior Olympics in Palm Desert and brought home silver medals for the 100- and 200-meter events, and the bronze for the 50- meter run.

"We went through a lot of rain trying to get there but when the meet started, it was beautiful, clouds and sunshine," he said. "It was just like high school. We got on our starting blocks and runners took their mark and they shot the gun and we took off."

Wooten's medals caught the attention of his supervisor, Salvador Llamas, maintenance manager at Division 15.



Wooten puts in hefty 40-hour weeks servicing and cleaning buses at East Valley Division 15.

"I told him 'Wow, this is awesome. This is amazing. You have the energy to do that after being here for 40 hours cleaning and servicing buses?' I just saw the pride in his eyes and I knew I had to mention it and try to get him some recognition for that, and share the story," Llamas said.

"There are people that do tremendous things and a lot of times they go above and beyond for Metro because they take a lot of pride in their work," he said.

Wooten trains twice a week at Palmdale High School and plans to compete in the Pasadena Senior Olympics in June. He has posted flyers around work to get co-workers to join him and benefit from the exercise as he has. As a bonus, Wooten says, his workouts have improved his blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

"If they could see me do it, I'm sure they'll get out there and try it too," he said.

His ultimate goal is to make it to the National Senior Olympics in San Francisco perhaps by 2010. But right now he said his focus is on Pasadena. "I'm going to bring home the gold this time," he adds.