

# Get to Know Me

## Tommy Meeks



■ **Who am I?** Tommy, 48, has been a courier for Federal Express for the past 19 years. He also is the general manager for the Forest City Gladiators, Rockford's semiprofessional football team, and the chairman and promoter of the Juneteenth Celebration. Tommy also hosts "It's Time For a Change," a local television program that airs at 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays on cable Channel 17. Tommy and his wife, Evelyn, live in Machesney Park. They have seven children.

■ **What is the Juneteenth Celebration?** Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery. On June 19, 1865, Major Gen. Gordon Granger informed residents of Galveston, Texas, the war was over and that the slaves were free. Note that this date is two years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, which became official Jan. 1, 1863. Rockford celebrates the event from 2 to 9 p.m. June 19 in the Getaway in Blackhawk Park. The public is invited to attend the event, which will feature speakers, poets, entertainment, dancing and food.

■ **Best thing about the Rock River Valley:** That we haven't reached our true potential yet. The best is yet to come.

■ **What do you know now that you wish you knew when you were 21?** To manage my money better. It would have helped me in the long run.

■ **Something few people know about you:** I was the first African-American All Conference quarterback in Rockford. (Auburn High School, 1973)

■ **Best advice you have ever received:** That family and raising your children to the best of your abilities are very important.

■ **Least-favorite task:** Yardwork.

■ **What Hollywood star would portray you in a movie?** Louis Gossett Jr.

■ **Something you've always wanted to do:** Interview Oprah Winfrey.

■ **Worst movie you have ever seen:** "A Clockwork Orange."

■ **If you had a chance to apologize to anyone, who would it be?** I would apologize to my children for my slow start at being a good father.

■ **Are you a morning or a night person?** Night.

■ **Summer fashion tip:** Don't buy cheap sandals.

■ **How do you kick back?** After scrambling all day long, I go home and relax with my wife and watch television.

— By Sarah Ketcher