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## *Gene Mingo*



Gene Mingo was the first black field goal kicker in professional football. He was a very versatile player, covering several positions including halfback, kicker and punt returner.

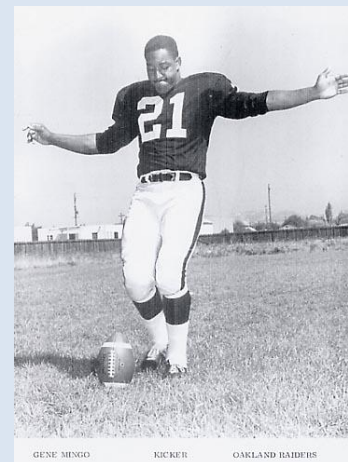
In 1960, he had the first punt return for a touchdown for the Denver Broncos in the American Football League, winning the very first American League game as the Broncos defeated the Boston Patriots. Mingo also scored the first points at Mile High Stadium with an 18 yard field goal. In the 1961 season opener at War Memorial Stadium (at the time named Bear Stadium) against the Buffalo Bills, Mingo threw two touchdown passes from the halfback position to help the Broncos win 22-10. This included a 50 yard pass to Lionel Taylor in the first quarter and a 52 yard pass to Taylor in the third. Mingo kicked the PATs after

each score. He led the American Football League in scoring as a rookie in 1960 with 123 points and in 1962 with 137 points. He also played for the Oakland Raiders and the Miami Dolphins.

After football, Gene had two painful back surgeries and turned to cocaine to alleviate his pain. His low point came when in a paranoid delusion; he discharged his gun hitting his wife in the back with a bullet. She survived and they remain married.

Following a long and difficult battle, Gene was able to defeat his drug problem and became a drug counselor. With a strong desire to help people, Gene began doing private counseling for relapsed addicts and their families. He is an amazing motivational speaker.

Gene remains instantly recognizable around the Denver area not only for his football career, but also for the many people with addictions that he had helped over the years.



Canada:  
RR#5, 13332 Tenth Line,  
Georgetown, ON L7G4S8 Canada  
Phone: 954-330-6362 Fax: 905-873-8334

United States:  
49 N. Federal Hwy. #264  
Pompano Beach, FL 33062 U.S.A.  
Phone: 954-330-6362 Fax: 954-353-1962