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After 50 years in coaching, Romeo Crennel enters retirement

By MATT YOUNG TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

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A graduate of Fort Knox High School, Romeo Crennel has spent 50 years as a football coach including stints as head coach of Cleveland, Kansas City and Houston in the NFL.

JOSHUA GUNTER/ Tribune News Service

Romeo Crennel is retiring after spending 50 years in coaching, including the past eight with the Houston Texans.

Crennel, who turns 75 later this month, joined the Texans as defensive coordinator under Bill O'Brien in 2014 and was elevated to assistant head coach in 2017. When O'Brien was fired four games into the 2020 season, Crennel took over as interim head coach, making him the oldest person in NFL history to serve as a head coach. Crennel spent last season as the team's senior advisor for football performance.

A graduate of Fort Knox High School, Crennel previously served four seasons as head coach of the Cleveland Browns and one full season as head coach of the Kansas City Chiefs.

Crennel's career started as a graduate assistant at Western Kentucky in 1970 where he was promoted to defensive line coach after one season. He went on to work as a college assistant at Texas Tech, Ole Miss and Georgia Tech before getting his first NFL job as an assistant with the New York Giants in 1981.

"Football has been my entire life and it's been a dream come true to coach for 50 years," Crennel said in a statement released by the Texans.

Crennel owns five Super Bowl rings, two as an assistant for the New York Giants and three as the defensive coordinator for the New England Patriots. He also served as an assistant coach for the New York Jets.

“I’ll miss everything about coaching and teaching, but the thing I’ll miss the most is being around the guys every day. My goal was to put every player and coach in the best position to succeed and I consider every guy I coached or worked with a part of my family. “I would also want to thank my wife Rosemary and my three daughters, Lisa, Tiffany and Kristine, for all of their support over the years. Because of their love and selflessness, I have been able to live out my dream. I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to spend more time with my grandchildren while staying around the game of football.”

Texans Cal McNair said Crennel retires as one of the most respected figures in NFL history.

“His incredible résumé and contributions to the game of football will be difficult to duplicate,” McNair said. “Romeo poured everything he had into his players and led his teams with hard work, diligence and integrity. He has impacted and influenced so many players, coaches and staff members over the last five decades and we’re honored he spent the last eight seasons with us. Our organization is better because of Romeo Crennel in so many ways.”