

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the NATIONAL BASKETBALL RETIRED PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

# LEGENDS

MAGAZINE

20/21 Fall



WNBA FINALS 2021

*SKY'S THE LIMIT*

LEGEND AMONG  
LEGENDS

MICHELE  
ROBERTS

## WOMEN IN NIKE

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When you think of influential women in the sports landscape, Michele Roberts' name immediately comes to mind. Take an in-depth look at the journey of one of the most powerful women in NBA history.



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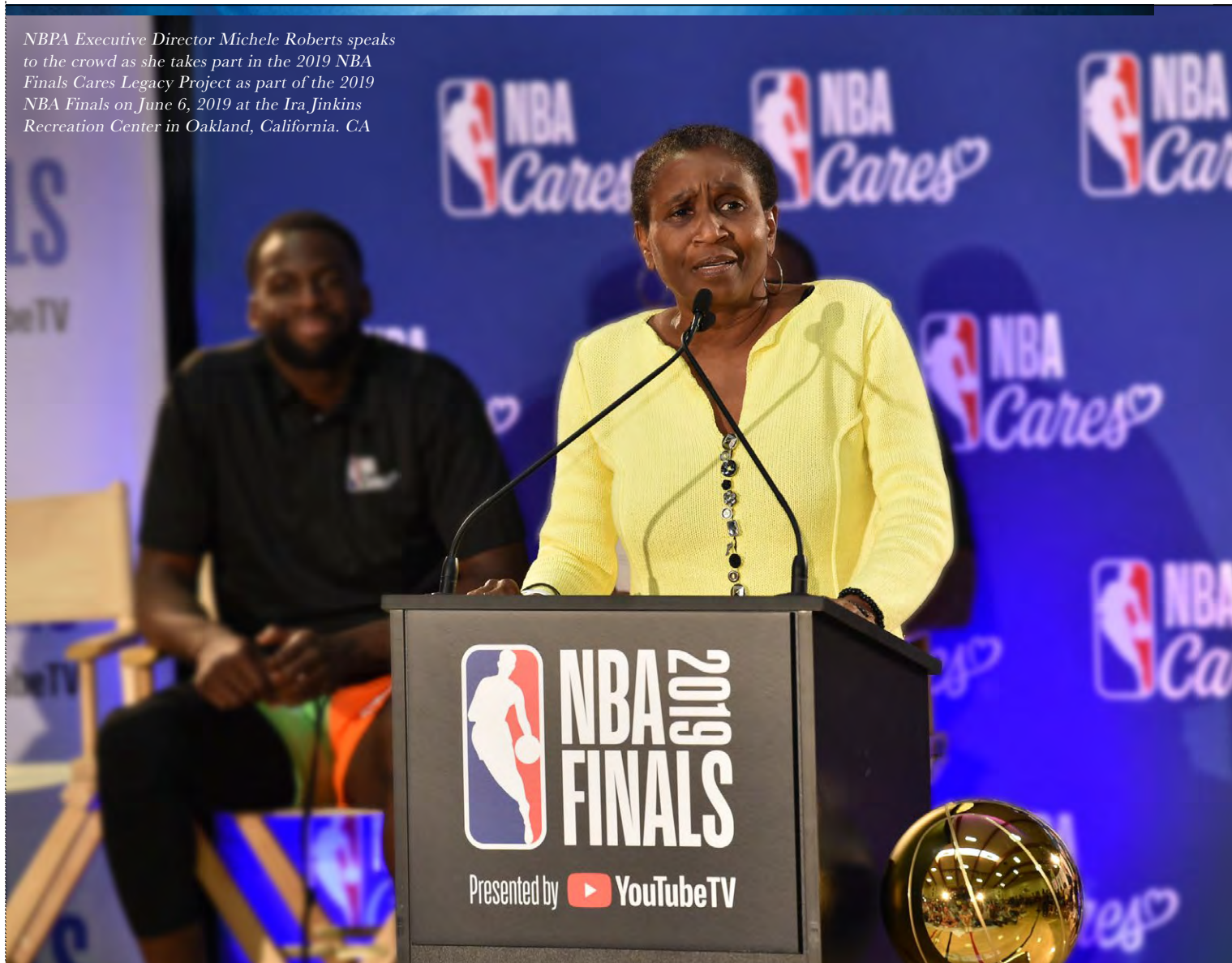
"USUALLY WHEN PEOPLE LOOK AT US, THEY SEE US AS BASKETBALL PLAYERS, BUT THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER."

SHERYL SWOOPES



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NBPA Executive Director Michele Roberts speaks to the crowd as she takes part in the 2019 NBA Finals Cares Legacy Project as part of the 2019 NBA Finals on June 6, 2019 at the Ira J. Jinks Recreation Center in Oakland, California. CA



## LEGEND AMONG LEGENDS

*MICHELE ROBERTS LEAVES A LASTING LEGACY OF 'PLAYERS FIRST'*

by VIKAS CHOKSHI

When you think of influential women in the sports landscape, Michele Roberts' name immediately comes to mind. Her tenure as the executive director of the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) is coming to a close, but she leaves a strong and lasting legacy. Let's take an in-depth look at the journey of one of the most powerful women in NBA history.

Roberts grew up in humble beginnings, born and raised in the projects in the South Bronx with four siblings. Roberts referred to her mom many times as someone that provided inspiration. Her mother practically raised her and her brothers on her own.

"Where I am today, is directly related to my mother," Roberts praised. "She made a decision, which I think all parents make, that her children

were going to fare better than she did financially and she believed that the key to all of that had to be education."

Roberts points to her mother's push for education and her hobby of attending local trials as the origin of her inspiration to practice law.

"My mom enjoyed going to watch criminal trials, court trials, even arraignments, partly because it was free and the projects were within

walking distance of the local court building,” she remembered. “I was a nerd so I found it more engaging to hang out with my mom than with other kids.”

One of those cases hit close to home for her, as her brothers’ friend was unjustly denied bail, in her eyes. As a result, her life’s passion was solidified.

“I immediately blamed the lawyer and my mom said when you don’t have money, you get whatever lawyer is appointed to represent you and that’s a public defender,” Roberts recollected. “So at a young age when people would ask me what do you want to be when you grow up, I would say I want to be a public defender, and I did it.”

After Roberts received her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, she began her legal career as a public defender in Washington D.C. After serving ten years at a private practice, Roberts heard about the opening at the NBPA.

She was supposed to be in a trial for three months and on the eve of the trial, she found herself with time to read an article about Billy Hunter being fired by the NBPA. Until then, she had never heard of the Players Association (PA), the job opening, or Hunter.

“The only familiarity I had with unions was representing union officials, and the only interaction I had with sports was basketball because I had season tickets to the Wizards,” Roberts said. “I didn’t have a clue what the business of sports looked like until I read that article. I thought, ‘Damn, that must be a really cool job, it’ll take them no time to find a replacement for this,’ and sort of tucked it away in the back of my mind.”

After a few months, Roberts realized the NBPA was still looking for Hunter’s successor. At that point, she decided to give it a shot. After a long interview process, she was elected to be the first female executive director of the National Basketball Players Association. Her longshot was nothing but net.



*James Jones and Head Coach David Blatt of the Cleveland Cavaliers along with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and Michele Roberts, Executive Director of the NBPA cuts the opening ribbon at the 2015 NBA Finals Cares Legacy Event as part of the 2015 NBA Finals on June 10, 2015 at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland in Cleveland, OH.*

Roberts had no experience in the sports business world before taking over the players association, and she became not only the first woman to hold that position, but the first woman to head a major professional sports union in North America. The pressure didn’t affect Roberts one bit. She’s embraced it head-on not only during the interview process but her entire career.

“What people don’t understand is that my life before the NBPA was A, male-dominated, and B, white male-dominated,” she stated matter-of-factly. “So professionally, I grew up often being the only woman in the room, the only African-American in the room, or both.”



*Michelle Roberts attends the Boys and Girls club court dedication as part the Basketball Without Borders program on July 30, 2015 at the Protea Boys and Girls Club in Soweto, South Africa.*



*James Jones and Head Coach David Blatt of the Cleveland Cavaliers along with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and Michele Roberts, Executive Director of the NBPA cuts the opening ribbon at the 2015 NBA Finals Cares Legacy Event as part of the 2015 NBA Finals on June 10, 2015 at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland in Cleveland, OH.*

Basketball was always a part of Roberts' life, as she grew up watching games on television with her two older brothers. However, she never envisioned herself doing anything other than being a lawyer in her lifetime, and definitely not running the Players Association. Now, eight years later, the NBPA is in a much better place than when she started.

Roberts doesn't mention the word "legacy" but gets excited when she talks about her work and is proud of several initiatives that were cultivated during her term. Before listing them, she gives credit to her entire staff and makes it a point to shout out Chris Paul.

"I was absolutely blessed with having Chris Paul as a president," Roberts explained. "People know he's a great player but I don't think fully and appreciate that he is magnificent person, fabulous dad, husband, son, brother, and as it turns out PA president, always there for me, always supportive, and very concerned about the welfare of his colleagues, whether they play on his team or not."

At the top of her list the guaranteed health care initiative for all players, active and retired, is what she is most proud of making happen and she happily explained why.

"The professional life for a player in the NBA is about three years and in that very limited period that is the span in which they'll probably

make the most money in their professional lives.

It means many of our guys end up playing outside the U.S. or doing other things but you've got three years to get that big contract and make those huge dollars and most people, they're gone after three years. Being able to say that if you do those three years one thing you don't have to worry about the rest of your life is healthcare was important to me.



*Mike Conley #11 of the Memphis Grizzlies, Michele Roberts and Jeanie Buss of the Los Angeles Lakers participate in MLK Sports Legacy Award and a tour of the National Civil Rights Museum on January 14, 2018.*

It was huge because it was something that the guys were going to have to essentially pay for. The league pays some portion but it was a commitment that the players were going to have to make individually and collectively and our ability to get the players to say, 'yeah that's what we wanted, we want every single member that has put in the work for that period of time to be able to enjoy healthcare benefits' was big."

The NBPA also has created several other programs over the last eight years to benefit its members including a transition program that helps players in the period of time from when they stop playing to being officially retired, a mental wellness program which is now in its fourth year, and their Top 100 and HBCU Top 50 camps.

Roberts has also spent a lot of time thinking about life after basketball for her players. That is why she helped start the aforementioned transition program and praised the National Basketball Retired Players Association for everything they are doing for retired players. She appreciates the working relationship both parties have with each other, and the fact that both sides understand the importance of the continuation of engaging players from their playing days into retirement and beyond.

She's also proud of the state-of-the-art facilities their headquarters in Midtown provides the players. A home away from home, fully equipped with a full basketball court, workout facilities, offices, play spaces, and a newly added podcast and recording studio.

"This is their home and available to them 24/7, 365 days a year and it allows us to have more opportunities to interact with them," she explained. "Think all of that has contributed to allowing the players to feel greater pride in their PA."

Admittedly, it wasn't all roses during her tenure and a couple of moments stick out to her as her most challenging.

Her first year on the job comes to mind. There was a bitter taste in the mouths of the players about the PA after her predecessor was fired.

"I walked into an environment where the players wanted to test me," she recounted. "I didn't walk in with credibility, and although they thought I was smart, they didn't know yet if I was going to be intelligent, honest, ethical, and put their interests first.

I wanted to meet as many players as I could, but I was greeted generally with suspicion. That's not fun, and it reminded me of when I was a public defender because the client doesn't

choose you, and my clients, before I started to gain a reputation, probably thought I was just some lawyer who couldn't get a 'real' job.

I had to professionally understand the whole concept of having to generate and earn trust, and confidence and respect, and it's not fun, but when you hit it, it's the best feeling in the world."

The search for Roberts' successor as head of the NBA union was announced last year, but the biggest challenges of her career ended any hopes of a painless sendoff. She remembers the night she got the call telling her the Thunder-Jazz game was stopped due to COVID-19.

"I got a phone call about Rudy [Gobert] in Utah and my stomach sank," she recalled. "Adam and I were on the same page that if a player gets sick, we're shutting down.

"And so that was tough hoping that everybody was going to be able to survive, figuring out who else had been infected, stopping the games, and then there were questions like what does that mean in terms of contracts, are players going to be able to get paid?"

But after coming up with the safety protocols and the players deciding to restart the season in the bubble, which was tough, to some extent she felt safer in that environment than if she was in New York. Just when the League had that issue figured out and started to move forward, and thought it couldn't get worse, it did. Jacob Blake was killed while the players were in the bubble. After similar previous incidents with George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, a bubbling volcano erupted.

"I'm not so naive to think that because we hit the streets with George Floyd and Breonna that all of a sudden bad cops were going to stop shooting people.

The guys stopped playing, which was fine, but then there had to be a decision about whether we would restart the season again. I almost wish we made a movie because that was the most fascinating thing I've ever seen. Over 200 players in a ballroom screaming, yelling, laughing, hugging, and cussing, but deciding collectively what we were going to do.

That was just an amazing experience, but it was also difficult to see these young men in so much pain and anger trying to figure out what was best for themselves personally, and for their families and for their communities.

We figured out how we could do it, but it was nothing that I would have been prepared for by law school, by my legal training, or anything. We would not have been able to get through it but for the players' intelligence, compassion,



Above: Michele Roberts participates in MLK Sports Legacy Award at the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee.

and willingness to listen to each other."

Roberts said she never wants to be in those types of situations again, but she came away from it feeling even more regard for the players.

A year later, Roberts' term as the union head is finally up, as she will hand off her duties to Tamika L. Tremaglio at year's end. Reflecting on it all, she felt she left her mark and more.

"There was very little contact with players apart from distributing licensing checks," Roberts said. "As a lawyer, you understand that the client is the king or queen, you exist to serve the best interest of a client and there's no equivocation about that.

I insisted the mantra for the PA was going to be 'players first'. The PA was going to be

understood by both its staff and everybody else as being singularly devoted to the best interests of the players."

She said that is how every Players Association should be positioned.

"I wanted people to think that Michele Roberts is a hard-ass player first advocate, and she will assess you based on the bona fides of what you're trying to do with or for her players," Roberts smiled. "If that's the perception that people have of the NBPA then I'm satisfied I did what I came here to do, and I think I did it."

Building a legacy is one thing, passing it on is another. As her time at the NBPA comes to a close, most people will agree, Roberts has achieved both.



NBA Commissioner, Adam Silver and LeBron James #23 of the Cleveland Cavaliers participate in NBA Cares/FIT Day of Service at 439 WEST 49th Street during the 2015 NBA All-Star on February 13, 2015 in New York, NY.

# THE "GREYHOUND" PULLS INTO SPRINGFIELD

*A FITTING ADDITION TO BOB DANDRIDGE'S LONG LIST OF CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS*

by MYAH TAYLOR

At an early age of nine, Bob Dandridge enjoyed putting a basketball in a hoop so much he became hooked. That childhood passion, aided by his towering height, led to a 13-year NBA career and culminated with his induction into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame as part of the Class of 2021.

By way of Richmond, Virginia, Dandridge began his professional journey with the Milwaukee Bucks who drafted him with the 45th pick in the 1969 NBA draft. The small forward, nicknamed "Greyhound," boasts two NBA championships – one with Milwaukee and one with Washington, his No. 10 jersey hangs in the rafters at Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee and is now immortalized in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Despite its frigid winters, Milwaukee has a special place in Dandridge's heart. It's where he grew up, professionally speaking, but it was in Washington that he came into his own and left "Chocolate City" with another NBA championship ring.

Playing alongside NBA legends Oscar Robertson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in Milwaukee, and later with another Hall of Fame duo in Wes Unseld and Elvin Hayes in Washington, Dandridge might not have been the marquee player on his teams or one of the league's biggest draws, but he was a key cog of his respective teams' march to those championships.

For the 73-year-old, the September induction into the Hall of Fame gave him relief, and the highlight of his induction was sharing it with his kids who can now fully appreciate their dad's achievements as adults. He said the Hall of Fame ceremony was for them and all the people who helped him accomplish things in life.

Fifteen or 20 years ago, Dandridge wouldn't have enjoyed his Hall of Fame induction as much as he does now. The opportunity to stand among players from all generations, including some who had no clue who he was, meant everything to the former Buck and Bullet.



*Bob Dandridge poses for a portrait with the Hall of Fame Trophy after the 2021 Basketball Hall of Fame Enshrinement Ceremony on September 11, 2021 at MassMutual in Springfield, MA.*



Bob Dandridge is being honored as the Washington Wizards celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the 1978 Bullets championship team at halftime of the game against the New York Knicks on March 25, 2018 at the Capital One Arena in Washington, DC.



The 1970-71 NBA Champion Milwaukee Bucks pose for a team portrait in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Seated from left, Bob Boozer, Greg Smith, Bob Dandridge, Oscar Robertson, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, John McGlocklin, Lucius Allen and Coach Larry Costello. Standing: Trainer Arnie Garber, Jeff Webb, Marvin Winkler, Dick Cunningham, Bob Greacen, McCoy McLemore, Assistant Coach Tom Nissalke.

"At one time, the standard was so high," Dandridge told Legends Magazine. "... I began to feel that I was worthy of induction into the Hall of Fame. Once you've seen the people who have gone in, you say, 'Well my career was just as outstanding.'"

So does his good health. He appreciated being able to walk up on to the stage and deliver a speech without any aid. Since grade school, basketball and communities around him have given Dandridge a shelter not afforded to everyone, and he is well aware of what a blessing that is.

"Even at 73, I consider this the prime of my life," Dandridge said. "It is amazing."

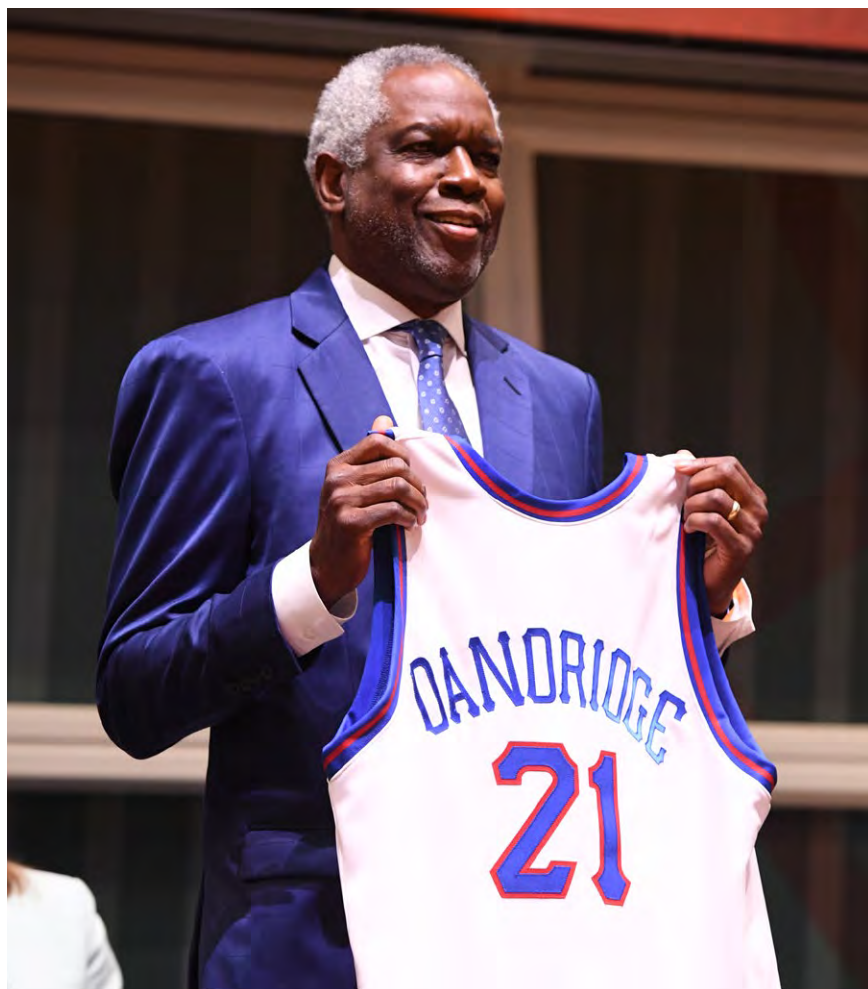
Growing up in Richmond, VA during the Jim Crow era, Dandridge attended all Black schools with all Black teachers. Racism was an issue, of course, but he enjoyed having educators, neighbors and institutions in his life that set him up for success. All people who invested in him.

Those early experiences still resonate loudly with him. When the former Hampton University assistant basketball coach thinks about the plight of Black Americans then and now, he figures Black youth today have more opportunities than people his age did and adds "I don't know if they get the nurturing in school systems and the guidance that we got even though they're in an integrated situation."

While with the Bullets, where he enjoyed his prime, Dandridge was allowed to become a go-to guy - a role unfamiliar to him while playing with Abdul-Jabbar and Robertson in Milwaukee. What was familiar to him during his time in D.C., though, was the area. Richmond was about 100 miles away and he enjoyed living on the east coast again.

"Washington was just an exciting town to be in, in the late '70s, especially for African Americans," Dandridge said.

Black people were on the come up during that era, excelling as contractors and attorneys. The nation's capital attracted the best and brightest from the Black community. Many of these great minds were Bullets season ticket holders.



*Bob Dandridge poses with jersey as he is announced as a honoree as part of the Class of 2021 on May 16, 2021 at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA.*

Washington looks much different now, and so do social attitudes surrounding sports. Some critics targeted Dandridge for not playing while hurt. Players from opposing teams also didn't fraternize before games, let alone befriend each other as is customary now

"That was an old school thing and that was the era I came up in," Dandridge said.

The father of three also thinks about how the game of basketball has changed since he ran up and down the hardwood. More fans fill stadiums and every team boasts several "high-flying, dunking guys." Hard-nose defense doesn't characterize matchups, and sports as a form of entertainment has solidified.

"Essentially, basketball has evolved along with the world," Dandridge said. "Technology and globalization have molded the game as it has everything else."

One of today's high-flying players, Giannis Antetokounmpo, led the Bucks to their first NBA championship in 50 years this past

summer – the franchise's first since Dandridge and his teammates last hoisted the trophy.

"Over the last 50 years, Milwaukee has had some great teams..., some Hall of Fame players," Dandridge said. "But there was always somebody coming out of the West ... Or they unfortunately were in the same division as Chicago during the Jordan era."

Since Dandridge left the league in 1981, he's been active in the basketball community through coaching, clinics and non-profit work. While serving as a member of the NBA Player's Union, Dandridge developed the Rookie Transition program.

The grandfather has also served as the executive director of the Bullets-Wizards Alumni Association since 2015. Members of the association participate in community work.

"I managed to stay connected to the NBA as opposed to having to get out in the corporate world and get in that rat race where they probably would have eaten me alive," Dandridge said.



*Dan Issel #44 of the Denver Nuggets defends the shot of Bob Dandridge #10 of the Washington Bullets during an NBA basketball game circa 1977 at the Capital Centre in Landover, Maryland. Issel played for the Nuggets from 1975-85.*



*Bob Dandridge #10 of the Milwaukee Bucks looks on against the Washington Bullets during an NBA basketball game circa 1981 at the Capital Centre in Landover, Maryland. Dandridge played for the Bucks from 1969-77 and 1981.*



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# LEGENDARY COACHES IN THE SIAC

FORMER PLAYERS PROVING TO BE INTEGRAL PART OF  
HBCU COACHING PIPELINE

by PETE CROATTO



Head coach Darrell Walker of the Arkansas Little Rock Trojans watches as a referee makes a call during the game between the Nevada Wolf Pack and the Arkansas Little Rock Trojans at Lawlor Events Center on November 16, 2018 in Reno, Nevada.

**K**enny Anderson, the former All-Star point guard for the New Jersey Nets, is in his fourth season coaching Fisk University's men's basketball team. "I want to help others," he says. "That's all that I took this job for. I love what I'm doing." Anderson is happy in Nashville in part because Gregory Moore was mystified at a New York Times article from 2015.

Soon after reading that article, a partnership—and a coaching pipeline for retired players—was created.

Marc Tracy's 2015 story, "Thanks a Million: Pro Athletes Share the Wealth with Their Colleges," detailed star athletes' charitable contributions to their alma maters—for example, \$3.1 million dollars to Michigan State, courtesy of Draymond Green—and that stoked Moore's annoyance.

Moore is the commissioner of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC), home of 15 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). He had no problem with athletes being charitable, but their donations represented "a rounding error" for these big-time schools. Three million dollars could transform an HBCU. That sort of donation was a new weight room, a new gym floor, and with plenty left over.

A vast social discrepancy was also revealed. "They weren't giving money to

schools that were most likely to hire them, most likely to educate them, and that needed the money,” Moore observes.

He shared his complaints with Michele Roberts, executive director of the National Basketball Players Association, whom he met at a sports lawyers conference. Instead of stalling him with vague promises, Roberts agreed. Moore’s points made sense. The Players Association could help. That was that.

“It ain’t rocket science,” Roberts says. “It’s not necessarily very expensive. It’s just takes putting pen to paper, planning it out, and getting it done.”

The arrangement between the NBPA and HBCUs—specifically the SIAC and the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC)—has been mutually beneficial. The association holds a Top 50 camp for HBCU players to get instruction from current NBA players and Legends. A virtual conference to highlight careers in sports is imminent. When the NBA All-Star Game was held in Atlanta in 2021, the NBPA got the league to showcase HBCUs as part of the festivities and to divert money their way. In total, Roberts estimates that the union has helped redirect “tens of millions of dollars” from the league and its sponsors toward those schools. The NBPA Foundation has also provided financial assistance.

There’s still a way to go. “It’s infrastructure,” Roberts says. “If you go to some of these Division I schools and see some of the athletic facilities that they have, it is unbelievable.” It’s hard for an 18-year-old kid, she says, to ignore that “but it’s on us to make the HBCUs more competitive. It’s our responsibility to divert the dollars that we can to HBCUs so they can compete” with Division I programs.

HBCUs have also garnered more attention due to social justice protests fueled by the police-related deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and countless other innocent African Americans, which have highlighted systemic racism in Black America. It also helped that several of 2020 newsmakers, including Vice President Kamala Harris, were HBCU grads.

“If you look at the trend around the country that’s what it’s all about,” Bonzi Wells, the former Blazer, said at his



Above: Michele Roberts participate in MLK Sports Legacy Award and a tour of the National Civil Rights Museum on January 14, 2018 at the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN.



Above: Bonzi Wells is named as LeMoyne-Owen College Men’s Basketball coach at a press conference on August 20, 2021. Below: Head Coach Lindsey Hunter of the Mississippi State Valley Delta Devils directs his team during a game against the Arkansas Razorbacks at Bud Walton Arena on November 25, 2020 in Fayetteville, AR.





Head coach Cynthia Cooper-Dyke of the USC Trojans looks on from in front of the bench before the game against the UCLA Bruins at Pauley Pavilion on December 30, 2013 in Los Angeles, CA.

## 2021-2022 LEGENDS HBCU SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**DAMON GERMAINE BRYAN JR**  
SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2022

**SANIYA KEETON**  
TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2023

**TYRELL MILLER-JOHNSON**  
CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2023

**ERIN FOSTER**  
SPELMAN COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2024

**JAYLA IMANI THORNTON**  
NORTH CAROLINA A&T  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2024

introductory press conference as the head coach of LeMoyn-Owen, according to HBCU Gameday. “The way that the world is changing, it’s HBCUs’ time. We’ve promoted these other colleges that are not HBCUs long enough. Now it’s time to get the revenue and all this other stuff directed to the HBCUs. We need to get all of the media attention. I’ll use any type of celebrity I have to get attention to the HBCUs.”

One of Moore’s goals was to get retired pros—whose on-court careers were “being used against them, as if they’re experience guarding Michael Jordan doesn’t count”—into HBCUs as coaches. The NBPA reached out to HBCU presidents about this in 2017. Before then, Roberts says, NBA alumni rarely gave coaching there serious thought.

“I don’t know how competitive they are in terms of compensation, but in terms of experience, you can’t beat it,” Roberts says. “These kids are good, and a couple of them are going to make it to the NBA. They’re good kids and coaching is coaching. Look, coaching an HBCU college athlete, I think, is superior to coaching some high school in the boondocks.”

HBCUs get an unbeatable public relations boost. Moore once asked then-president of Fisk University, Dr. Kevin Rome, if the school had received any publicity rivaling its hiring of Anderson. “Never,” Rome said. Retired players not only bring energy to the campus, Moore says, but “change

the kind of kid you can go after. Because if a coach has reached the highest level of their profession, I think it shows that these guys have an advantage in recruiting over their non-professional counterparts.”

Kids, Moore says, see someone like Lindsay Hunter or George Lynch as an aspirational figure who can take their game to the next level. X’s and o’s and coaching background take a back seat to credibility. Players also bring relationships. When Walker, a former teammate and close friend of Michael Jordan, coached at Clark Atlanta University, he hooked up his players with Jordan Brand gear.

National Basketball Retired Players Association President & CEO, and Morehouse College alum, Scott Rochelle notes that supporting HBCU’s and the hiring of NBA and WNBA Legends to fill coaching posts is an endeavor that is very near and dear to his heart. “As an HBCU graduate, this cause spoke personally to me,” Rochelle stated. “HBCU’s have long been an underserved segment of higher education, and to be able to assist in connecting Legends and the wealth of knowledge that they bring with these institutions is invaluable. It is our duty to support HBCU’s and what they represent.” That thinking led to the creation The Legends HBCU Scholarship and Legends Scholars program in 2020. The program, under the NBRPA’s Legends Care initiative is a way to honor the rich history of



Head coach Juwan Howard of the Michigan Wolverines looks on against the Florida State Seminoles in the first half of their Sweet Sixteen round game of the 2021 NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament on March 28, 2021 in Indianapolis, IN.



Head coach Jerry Stackhouse of the Vanderbilt Commodores instructs his players against the Florida Gators during the second half of their second round game in the SEC Men's Basketball Tournament at Bridgestone Arena on March 11, 2021 in Nashville, TN.



Assistant coach Mo Williams of the Cal State Northridge Matadors looks on during his team's game against the New Mexico Lobos at Dreamstyle Arena - The Pit on November 09, 2019 in Albuquerque, NM.



Commissioner Gregory Moore became the fourth full time Commissioner of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) on January 19, 2009



Penny Hardaway, head coach of the Memphis Tigers yells from the sideline against the Central Florida Knights during a game on February 1, 2021 at FedExForum in Memphis, TN. Memphis defeated Central Florida 96-69.

HBCUs and their alums while moving the legacy forward by supporting current HBCU undergraduates.

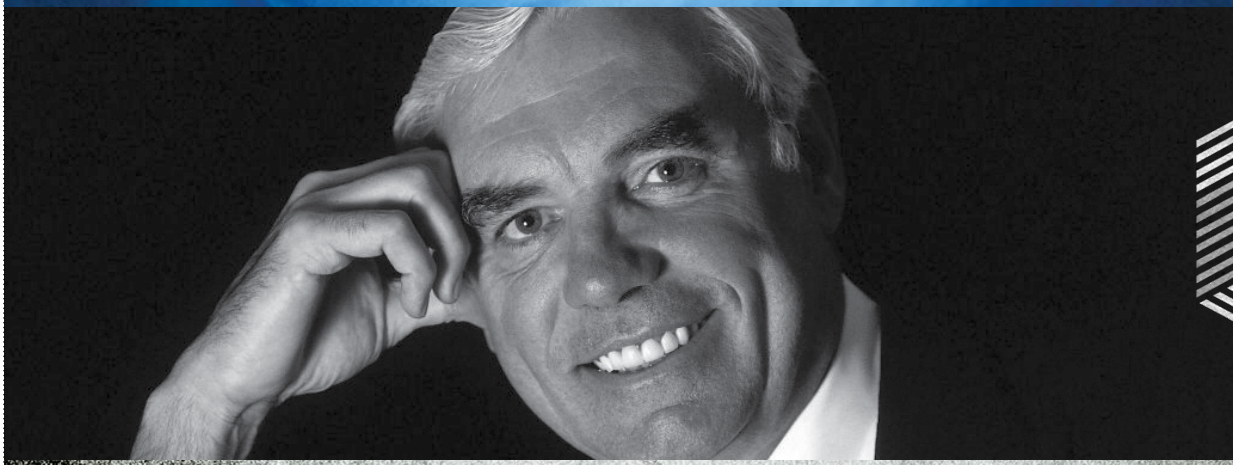
HBCUs now teem with former pro players, including Cynthia Cooper, Lynch, and Mo Williams. Moore believes the HBCUs and Roberts—who gives Moore all the credit—started a trend.

“Before this happened, you did not see Division 1 schools hiring former players,” he says. “It was a very rare occurrence. But when guys like Darrell Walker publicly said, ‘I had 21 interviews before I got an opportunity.’ When other players who got jobs at our schools, who played at Power 5 schools and generated a lot of money for them, when they began to publicly lament the lack of opportunities that were being given to them and how Black colleges filled the breach, then you began to see more Power 5 schools hire guys

like Juwan Howard and Penny Hardaway and Jerry Stackhouse.”

For retired players looking to coach, an HBCU provides a chance to impart knowledge and to acquire some as they embark on a new career.

“By me coaching here, it’s a great opportunity, because I’ve seen it in the basketball world,” Anderson says. “I’ve seen everything. You can’t disguise it. The big schools, the big conferences—it’s all about money. I understand that, but I have to give back. I’m teaching these young men about life, about basketball, about how I came up. It’s a great feeling that I can do that. But I have to do it the right way. You can’t tell somebody to do something and you’re doing it negatively. You can’t live that life. As a coach and as a mentor, I’ve got to be on the straight and narrow. This job is making me do that.”



## DAVE DEBUSSCHERE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

*CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2021-2022 RECIPIENTS  
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JARREN SNOW  
KEITH TOWER  
CHLOE TOWER  
EVAN WILKINS



# WOMEN IN NIKE

NIKE'S WIN PROGRAM POWERED BY WNBA LEGENDS

by Greydy Diaz



A second. That's how long it took Clare Hamill, Vice President of Innovation Integration at Nike, to say yes, two and half years ago, when asked if she would executive sponsor a program that wasn't entirely formulated and vowed to bring WNBA players to Nike. In 2019, the company launched Women In Nike (WIN) — a two year program designed to offer relevant and dynamic work experiences for retired or retiring WNBA players.

Hamill, a 40-year Nike executive, said the company's secret sauce is its people and to her, retired WNBA players are exactly who it needs.

"The WNBA profiles so well for Nike," said Hamill. I think it's everything about the lived experiences of these women, their professional experiences, the insights that they have as black women [and] as professional athletes. It's been everything and the women have all brought that here, they brought their voice[s], they brought

their leadership. You know they're making a difference."

It's first cohort consisted of 11 former players: Alicia Thompson, Ashley Paris, Jessica Davenport, Jessica Moore, Kara Braxton-Jackson, Kristen Rasmussen, Michelle Campbell, Monique Curry, Nyree Roberts, Shay Murphy, and Mistie Bass.

Two years after retiring from the league, Bass started off her time in Oregon as an Assistant

Product Line Manager (APLM), working on Nike Basketball Apparel. Assisting on the men's side of the business quickly turned into a massive yet rewarding responsibility of being trusted to run the women's basketball line.

Just like executing a new play her coach just drew up during a timeout, Bass had to learn new skills on the job. The 2014 WNBA champion immediately learned what Microsoft Excel was and to create a pitch deck. It was her knack for design, however, that made collaborating with the brand's designers on her team's vision and narrative - an experience she describes as "phenomenal."

There's no doubt in the 37-year-old's mind that basketball prepared her for a career at the Swoosh.

"You don't understand all of the transferable skills until you're literally doing it," Bass, the mother of 2 boys, said. "I really was able to bring that into corporate. ... Having persistence, having diligence, having patience with yourself, but still showing up consistently was a lot of the skill set that I brought. ... I was never a person who gave up. I was always going to figure out a way to get it done. And I have brought that into corporate and it has served me very, very well, because, you know people like those type of employees."

Bass went from working on just one of Nike's businesses when she started with the WIN program to three. Her most recent promotion to Product Line Manager in the Women's Lifestyle Capsules and Collections space has provided her the chance to lead Nike Air, Nike Circa, which celebrates 50 years of Nike history and the Serena Williams Design Crew.

One of Bass' proudest moments, outside of her job obligations, is teaming up with former WNBA players Monique Currie and Nyree Roberts to create "Wake Up With BEN," an acronym for Black Employees Network. It's a zoom call every other Monday morning that started with six people and, a year later, now regularly hosts 300-500 individuals from across the global company.

"It's a place for people to come before their work week to be motivated, to be inspired, to see other faces like themselves and to learn something to grow or maybe it's even just to commune with one another," said Bass.

When "Wake Up With BEN" brought in Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" host Trevor Noah and 10,000 Nike employees joined the morning call.

"It's been quoted to be one of the most important things that Nike has done in a very

"YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS UNTIL YOU'RE LITERALLY DOING IT. I REALLY WAS ABLE TO BRING THAT INTO CORPORATE."

MISTIE BASS





long time,” Bass said referring to the employee network.

“I have learned that my potential is limitless,” Bass shared. “And it’s kind of exciting to think that I could be bigger than I ever was as an athlete and that’s what I dreamt about doing when I was a kid, so [I] know that [my basketball career] was never an ending it was only a beginning.”

At the start of Bass’ rookie season with the Houston Comets in 2006, her veteran was Sheryl Swoopes, the first woman in sports history to get a signature shoe in 1995: the Nike

Air Swoopes. Swoopes took Bass under her wing that year and little did they both know their roles would reverse in years to come.

In October 2020, Swoopes joined Bass through the WIN program’s second cohort and she feels like Bass is returning the favor now.

“She says ‘rookie, C’mon. I got you,’” said Swoopes, an Associate Product Line Manager in Sports Graphics and Promotion at Nike. “[Misty] always had a huge heart. She’s always had a love and passion for people, and Misty is the one person, out of the first cohort and this



cohort, I look at ... and say, I want to be exactly what she is. ... She’s a hard worker and she’s never going to take no for an answer. You know she’s going to figure it out. She’s going to get it done and she’s been a really good mentor for me in something that’s totally, totally foreign to me.”

Swoopes first became a part of the Nike family as a 22-year-old athlete and now she’s relishing in being a part of it as an employee.

“Getting an opportunity to learn the business and ... really to see how Nike obviously caters to not only athletes but to consumers,” the 4-time WNBA champion shared. “My particular position and what I do on a daily basis, really keeps me close to sports, not just basketball but a lot of different sports and it’s a learning experience for me.”

Swoopes, who has spent the past year working remotely due to the pandemic, has welcomed the daily challenges and opportunities to grow.

“I have a really, really good team that I work with,” said the Hall of Famer. ... “They’re always willing to help me with things when I come across something [and] I’m like ‘oh my goodness what is this? How do I handle this?’”

Her work entails helping create and design apparel and bags across almost every sport, including the one she made a name for herself in — basketball. Surprisingly, she doesn’t have anything to do with shoes but gets asked why she isn’t on the footwear side of the business despite having her own signature shoe and being the first woman to have her shoe retroed.

Swoopes, the first player signed by the WNBA in 1996, believes it’s important to have retired WNBA players and Legends at Nike because they are talented, intelligent, and have competed at the highest level.

“Usually when people look at us, they see us as basketball players, but there’s so much more

"MY GOAL IS TO ALWAYS BE A GREAT TEAM PLAYER IN EVERY SPACE THAT I'M IN, TO LEARN THE BUSINESS, TO GROW THE BUSINESS AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE GROWTH OF NIKE."

JAMIE REDD



to who we are and what we have to offer," said Swoopes. ... And I think just giving us an opportunity to have a voice at a company like Nike ... doesn't go unnoticed."

Former Seattle Storm player Jamie Redd used to compete against Swoopes in the early 2000s but now they're on the same team as members of the WIN program's Cohort II.

Redd, 43, spent the last 18 years coaching, running her own basketball academy, teaching in schools, and even serving as a corrections officer before becoming an associate product line manager for Men's Fitness running training

apparel. Like Swoopes, she has been working remotely from her home in Seattle but is already thinking about her upcoming move to the Portland area.

"I landed in this space," Redd said. "I'm learning a lot. ... Product creation is a new space for me.

She's had to learn to not get too ahead of herself in her new career and instead embrace the process.

"I liken it to being an athlete," Redd said. "If you put in the work, you going to play ... but this is a different type of space so you got to be

patient and learning everything that there is to learn."

Redd has leaned on her Cohort II, which consists of 15 fellows, who all accepted roles in Product Management, Tech Development and Test Analyst throughout Footwear and Apparel, across Converse, Jordan and Nike, throughout the past year.

"There's been lots of laughs and fun," said Redd.

They've also been able to count on each other as they faced challenges of starting new careers.

"My goal is to always be a great team player in every space that I'm in, to learn the business, to grow the business and to contribute to the growth of Nike," said Redd.

Her own evolution is just as important to her. Redd loves the encouragement she gets from her colleagues and supervisors alike to not only excel in her role but to also challenge herself to think about where she sees herself adding value to next.

Like Redd, a year into her career, Swoopes is already planting seeds for her future. The 50-year-old could see herself making an impact on the brand side or sports marketing for women's basketball but ultimately, would like to be in a position that allows her to make a difference in women's lives, especially ones that look like her.

Finding the next Sheryl Swoopes and giving her a shoe at Nike, which is an idea that bounces around her head often, wouldn't just be full circle, it would be poetic.





# LEGENDS CARE

*Legends Care is the initiative of the NBRPA that positively impacts communities and youth through basketball. NBRPA Legends give back through clinics, mentoring, charitable outreach and other grassroots initiatives in the United States and abroad with the goal of educating, inspiring and keeping youth active, healthy and safe.*

## LEGENDS HBCU SCHOLARSHIP



The Legends HBCU Scholarship is a scholarship fund and scholars program for undergraduates attending HBCUs. Legends Scholars will receive a \$10,000 scholarship in recognition of their academic excellence and desire to positively impact the world.



## FULL COURT PRESS

Legend Care's cornerstone program - Full Court Press: Prep For Success - went virtual, giving children around the world the opportunity to learn basketball skills through drills demonstrated by WNBA Legend Sheryl Swoopes and NBA Legends Grant Hill, Shawn Marion, Dale Ellis, Fat Lever, Greg Oden and Caron Butler.



## LEGENDS GIRL CHAT

Legends Girl Chat is a virtual Legends Care program consisting of one-hour video conversations between middle school and high school girls and WNBA Legends. Partnering with the NBRPA on Legends Girl Chat is Girls Inc. Through this Legends Care partnership, all 78 affiliates of Girls Inc. are able to schedule a Legends Girl Chat to incorporate into their programming.



## LEGENDS HOME COURTS

Through the Legends Home Courts program, monetary grants are given to community groups for the renovation of outdoor basketball courts.

## BACK2BACK

BACK2BACK prepares elementary students for the upcoming school year by providing them with brand new backpacks filled with essential back to school supplies.

## THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY ASSIST

The Thanksgiving Community Assist is an annual Legends Care program through which families in need receive a Thanksgiving turkey and holiday cheer from the Legends of Basketball.



Jeremy Lin was announced as the newest UNICEF Ambassador. He will champion children's rights, help to create a more equitable world for every child, and be a voice for change.

Shaq and partners renovated two basketball courts at the Doolittle Complex in Las Vegas, NV.



## LEGENDS IN THE COMMUNITY



NBRPA Board Secretary Grant Hill partnered with FILA to build two brand new basketball courts in Detroit's Chandler Park.



Hall of Famers Yolanda Griffith, Spencer Haywood, Dikembe Mutombo and Ben Wallace took part in the NBRPA's Full Court Press Clinic during September's Hall of Fame Enshrinement Weekend.



A.C. Green distributed toys to children in Phoenix, AZ.



Preschoolers visit the Butler Garden in Racine, WI, a community garden named after NBRPA Board Member Caron Butler.



# SKY'S THE LIMIT

PARKER AND COMPANY BRING FIRST WNBA TITLE TO THE WINDY CITY



by JULIO MANTEIGA

As the game clock hit 0:00, the Sky's Candace Parker raced the length of the court, tears in her eyes, to reach her family and share a huge hug with them. This moment right here was what Parker, the Sky and their entire fanbase in Chicago had been waiting for – a WNBA Championship. It had finally come to fruition, Chicago's favorite daughter returned home, via free agency, after 13 seasons with the L.A. Sparks - a WNBA title, Finals MVP and two WNBA MVP awards in tow - and helped deliver the Sky their first WNBA title. For the franchise it could not have been any sweeter or scripted in any better way. Behind Parker's 16 points, 13 rebounds, five assist performance, and Allie Quigley's (also an Illinois native) 26-point scoring barrage – the Sky topped the Phoenix Mercury 80-74 in Game 4 of the WNBA Finals to claim the crown.



*The iconic Michigan Avenue lion sculptures will wear their Chicago Sky jerseys for the WNBA Finals prior to Game Three of the 2021 WNBA Finals.*

As was the theme for the season, the Sky did it the hard way. Chicago labored through a 16-16 season and entered the playoffs as the No. 6 seed – making them lowest seed to win the championship since the WNBA went to its current playoff format in 2016. Despite a .500 winning percentage, the Sky got themselves into the postseason and topped the Dallas Wings and Minnesota Lynx, respectively in single elimination games to reach the semifinals. The next obstacle on the road to the WNBA Finals would be 2021 WNBA MVP Jonquel Jones and the top-seeded Connecticut Sun, who won their final 14 regular season games, marking the longest season-ending winning streak in WNBA history, the fourth-longest winning streak overall, and posted the best single-season winning percentage in franchise history (.813). Chicago rode a historic performance from Courtney Vandersloot, who recorded

only the second triple-double in WNBA Playoff history (12 points, 10 rebounds and a WNBA Playoff record 18 assists) to lift the Sky to a 101-95 double-overtime win over Connecticut in Game 1. Despite dropping the second game in the series, they rebounded to take Games 3 and 4 behind a balanced attack from Kahleah Copper (26 points), and Allie Quigley (21 points) in Game 3 and Parker, who added 17 points, 9 rebounds and 7 assists in Game 4 to get the Sky to the WNBA Finals vs. the Mercury.

For the fifth-seeded Phoenix Mercury, their quest for a championship required a Brianna Turner free throw with less than a second to play to top the NY Liberty 83-82, in the first round and set up an emotional showdown between future Legends – Diana Taurasi and the Seattle Storm's Sue Bird in the second round. The two stars matched up, in what may have been Bird's final game, with Phoenix topping Seattle 85-80 in overtime. The road to the WNBA Finals now traveled through "Sin City" with the potent Las Vegas Aces in their way. Phoenix, led by perennial All-Star Taurasi, took the series in a deciding, winner-take-all Game 5, but needed every ounce of firepower in a super close 87-84 victory in the final game to advance to the championship. The series, which proved memorable for both teams included an other-worldly performance from Taurasi, who lit the nets on fire with a career playoff high of 37 points and a career high (regular season or playoffs) eight buckets from beyond the arc in Game 2. In Game 5, the Mercury rode the shoulders of star center, Brittney Griner, who pumped in 28 points along with Taurasi's 24 points (14 of them coming in 4th quarter) to finish off the Aces and set up a much-anticipated matchup vs. Candace Parker and the Chicago Sky.

The Sky took Game 1 of the WNBA Finals over a fatigued Mercury squad 91-77, but Phoenix bounced right back with a closely fought 91-86 OT victory in Game 2 as the tied series headed for the Midwest. Games 3 and 4 would be held on the Sky's floor at Wintrust Arena and in front of a raucous, full-throated sold-out crowd that was ready to do their part.

In Game 3, the Sky put their stellar defense on display in a resounding 86-50 rout of the Mercury, while holding Phoenix to a WNBA Finals record low 25.8% FG on 16-62 shooting. In addition to a dominant defensive effort, the Sky were powered by guard Kaleah Copper's 22 points. Copper, in these playoffs most certainly earned what may be one of the greatest nicknames in sports history – Kaleah "Freaking" Copper and has set the Twitter-verse on fire when the hashtag #KFC trended in these playoffs. Not only did the Sky play what some termed their best game of the season in Game 3, but they did it in front of a boisterous, star-studded crowd that included Chicago Bears starting quarterback Justin Fields, hip hop artist Chance The Rapper, NBA commissioner



*The Chicago Sky pose for a portrait with the WNBA Championship Trophy after winning Game Four of the 2021 WNBA Finals on October 17, 2021 at the Wintrust Arena in Chicago, IL.*



*Sue Bird #10 of the Seattle Storm and Diana Taurasi #3 of the Phoenix Mercury swap jerseys after the game during the 2021 WNBA Playoffs on September 26, 2021.*



*Dee Brown and Lexie Brown #7 of the Chicago Sky pose with the WNBA Championship Trophy after winning the 2021 WNBA Finals.*



*Courtney Vandersloot #22 of the Chicago Sky falls as she passes between Bria Hartley #14 and Brittney Griner #42 of the Phoenix Mercury during Game Three of the 2021 WNBA Finals.*



Adam Silver, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, DePaul women's head coach Doug Bruno and NBA and WNBA Legends – Shawn Marion, Tamika Catchings, Ticha Penicheiro, Dee Brown, Kim Williams, Lloyd Walton, Angelina Williams, and Mistie Bass.

For Game 4, the roaring crowd returned and the Sky could taste the championship, but they still had to go through a tough Mercury team and their superstar trio of Diana Taurasi, Skyler Diggins-Smith and Brittney Griner to accomplish their goal. The Sky trailed much of the game and the specter of having to return to Phoenix for Game 5 if they lost, loomed over the arena and the team. The Sky kept the

game within reach and with just under 2 minutes left, Parker hit a 3-pointer to tie it 72-72. That was immediately followed by two consecutive Stefanie Dolson layups fed by Courtney Vandersloot and the Sky never looked back. In a fitting setting, Vandersloot, the longest tenured Sky player, had the final points at the free-throw line with 10.4 seconds left to finish with 10 points and 15 assists and seal Chicago's first championship in franchise history.

The confetti rained down on the court, tears of joy streamed down the faces of the Sky players, fans exalted in celebration as Queen's "We Are the Champions" blared and WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert presented the championship

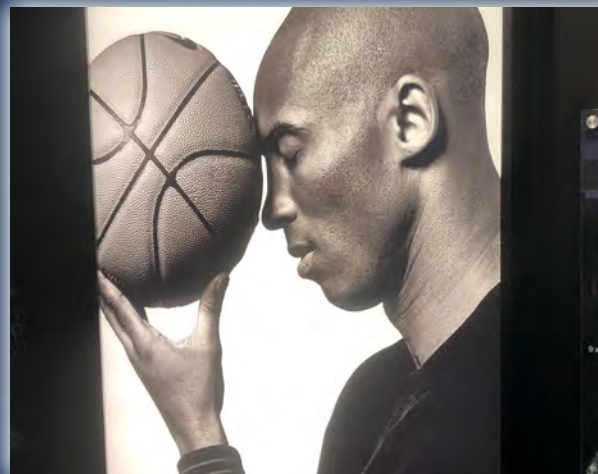
trophy and declared Kaleah Copper Finals MVP. This day and the 2021 WNBA season belonged to the Chicago Sky. In the process, Candace Parker cemented her already long-established legacy, and made Sky head coach James Wade just the third Black coach to win a WNBA title, following Michael Cooper with the Los Angeles Sparks in 2001 and 2002, and Corey Gaines with Phoenix in 2009. He noted it was his dream to lead a team like this and died he ever.

Legends Magazine extends its congratulations to both the Chicago Sky and the Phoenix Mercury for their incredible seasons and thanks them for putting on a memorable Finals that we won't soon forget.



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# TRILL'S TAKE:

TOP 75 NBA PLAYERS OF ALL TIME

by **TRILL WITHERS**

## TOP 1-25 NBA PLAYERS OF ALL TIME

- 1 MICHAEL JORDAN
- 2 KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR
- 3 LEBRON JAMES
- 4 TIM DUNCAN
- 5 WILT CHAMBERLAIN
- 6 BILL RUSSELL
- 7 MAGIC JOHNSON
- 8 LARRY BIRD
- 9 HAKEEM OLAJUWON
- 10 SHAQUILLE O'NEAL
- 11 KOBE BRYANT
- 12 KEVIN DURANT
- 13 STEPH CURRY
- 14 KAWHI LEONARD
- 15 JULIUS ERVING
- 16 MOSES MALONE
- 17 OSCAR ROBERTSON
- 18 GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO
- 19 JERRY WEST
- 20 DAVID ROBINSON
- 21 KEVIN GARNETT
- 22 ELGIN BAYLOR
- 23 RICK BARRY
- 24 SCOTTIE PIPPEN
- 25 DIRK NOWITZKI

2021 marks the 75th anniversary of the NBA, so it only feels right to take a look back at some of the best players we've been fortunate enough to have watched. Of course, a number of things went in to making such a list: awards & accolades, individual achievements as well as team success, the peak heights of one's career and the length of one's prime, advanced statistics vs. the data that was prevalent and relied upon at the time, etc.

It's impossible to compare the BAA (Basketball Association of America) of 1946 to the NBA that we know today, so it only feels fair to consider the relative dominance that a player had during whatever era he did play. Any omissions only go to show how many talented players we've had thus far. Until the next 75!



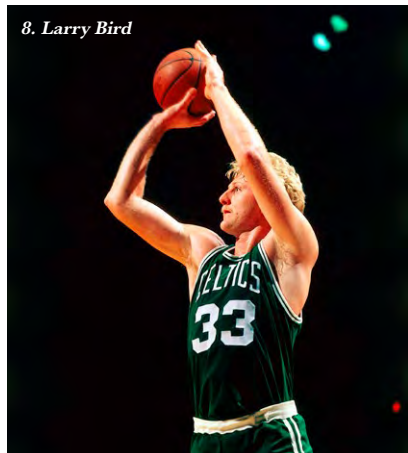
1. Michael Jordan



4. Tim Duncan



2. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar



8. Larry Bird



10. Shaquille O'Neal

# TRILL'S TAKE: TOP 75 NBA PLAYERS OF ALL TIME

## TOP 26-50 NBA PLAYERS OF ALL TIME

- 26 DWYANE WADE
- 27 WILLIS REED
- 28 ISIAH THOMAS
- 29 CHARLES BARKLEY
- 30 KARL MALONE
- 31 CHRIS PAUL
- 32 JOHN STOCKTON
- 33 GARY PAYTON
- 34 ALLEN IVERSON
- 35 STEVE NASH
- 36 JASON KIDD
- 37 CLYDE DREXLER
- 38 GEORGE MIKAN
- 39 PATRICK EWING
- 40 NIKOLA JOKIC
- 41 DENNIS RODMAN
- 42 ANTHONY DAVIS
- 43 BOB PETTIT
- 44 JAMES HARDEN
- 45 RUSSELL WESTBROOK
- 46 CLYDE FRAZIER
- 47 GEORGE GERVIN
- 48 RAY ALLEN
- 49 JOHN HAVLICEK
- 50 DOMINIQUE WILKINS

48. Ray Allen



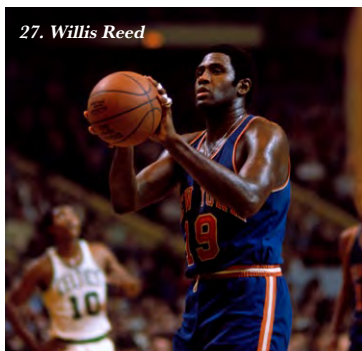
30. Karl Malone

39. Patrick Ewing



50. Dominique Wilkins

27. Willis Reed



# TRILL'S TAKE: *TOP 75 NBA PLAYERS OF ALL TIME*

57. Walt Frazier



54. Derrick Rose



67. Elvin Hayes



71. Yao Ming



60. Tracy McGrady



## TOP 51-75

NBA PLAYERS  
OF ALL TIME

- 51 DWIGHT HOWARD
- 52 PAUL PIERCE
- 53 DIKEMBE MUTOMBO
- 54 DERRICK ROSE
- 55 GRANT HILL
- 56 BOB MCADOO
- 57 WALT FRAZIER
- 58 CARMELO ANTHONY
- 59 BEN WALLACE
- 60 TRACY MCGRADY
- 61 DAMIAN LILLARD
- 62 REGGIE MILLER
- 63 WES UNSELD
- 64 KEVIN MCHALE
- 65 PENNY HARDAWAY
- 66 DAVE COWENS
- 67 ELVIN HAYES
- 68 LUKA DONCIC
- 69 HAL GREER
- 70 TINY ARCHIBALD
- 71 YAO MING
- 72 JOEL EMBIID
- 73 BOB COUSY
- 74 CHRIS WEBBER
- 75 DOLPH SCHAYES

TIPPING OFF THE LEAGUE'S 75TH YEAR

## 2021-2022 NBA SEASON PREVIEW

by **BLAKE BAUMGARTNER**

**B**ounce, bounce, bounce, swish. It's that time of year again hoopers - when the sound of bouncing basketballs, sneaker squeaks, referee whistles and the roar of the crowd will fill arenas across the Association, and we could not be more excited for the return of the NBA. Not only will the best hoops in the world return, with some intriguing storylines, but this marks the 75th season for the NBA and with so many Legends being in the spotlight around the Diamond Anniversary, we decided to take a look at what the 2021-22 NBA season may have in store for us.

## EASTERN CONFERENCE

**MILWAUKEE BUCKS**

Three months after dispatching the Suns in six games in the 2021 NBA Finals in July – the franchise's first championship in 50 years – the Bucks being their title defense. While Giannis Antetokounmpo (28.1 PPG in 2020-21), a two-time league MVP and reigning Finals MVP, Khris Middleton (20.4 PPG) and Jrue Holiday (17.7 PPG) remain the team's core, heart and soul, returnees Donte DiVincenzo and Bobby Portis are two major cogs from last year to watch. Newcomers Grayson Allen and George Hill were two of the team's key additions this offseason and figure to have prominent roles in Milwaukee's bid to repeat as champs.

**BROOKLYN NETS:**

Kevin Durant (26.9 PPG), Kyrie Irving (26.9 PPG), James Harden (24.6 PPG) and the rest of the Nets have had lots of time to collectively think about their second-round loss to the eventual champion - Bucks. Health will be paramount for the Nets this season as they look to fulfill the potential that came with the arrival of Durant and Irving a couple seasons ago. Brooklyn's additions of Patty Mills (Spurs), LaMarcus Aldridge and Paul Millsap (Nuggets) to join their big three and Blake Griffin have strengthened an already deep team as they look to make the leap to the Finals.

**PHILADELPHIA 76ERS:**

Under Doc Rivers, Philadelphia had the top record in the East last season behind Joel Embiid (28.5 PPG and 10.6 RPG) and forward Ben Simmons, but bowed out in the conference semifinals. What the team does with Simmons (14.3 PPG, 7.2 RPG, 6.9 APG) hovers over everything and is the immediate pressing matter as the season begins and they look to rebound after being upset at home in Game 7 by the Hawks. Embiid was in the MVP conversation for much of last season and Tobias Harris (19.5 PPG, 6.8 RPG) and Seth Curry return as key components of the starting lineup. Andre Drummond (14.9 PPG, 12 RPG with Cavaliers and Lakers) signed with the team in the offseason and will add more size in the post.

**INDIANA PACERS:**

Rick Carlisle comes back to the Pacers for a second stint as head coach after leading the franchise to 181 wins over four seasons (2003-07). Indiana missed the postseason for the first time since 2014-15 and will be looking to get back on track. Three players averaged at least 20 points a game last year – Malcolm Brogdon (21.2 PPG), Caris LeVert (20.7 PPG) and Domantas Sabonis. Sabonis averaged a double-double (20.3 PPG, 12 RPG) and Myles Turner (12.6 PPG, 6.5 RPG) and T.J. Warren (15.5 PPG) will aid him in the frontcourt.

**MIAMI HEAT:**

The Heat, a year removed from losing in the NBA Finals in the bubble to the Lakers, aren't satisfied with taking a small step back last year. Kyle Lowry (17.2 PPG, 7.3 APG with Raptors) and P.J. Tucker (Bucks) joined the Heat in the offseason as Jimmy Butler (21.5 PPG, 7.1 APG, Bam Adebayo (18.7 PPG, 9.0 RPG) and Duncan Robinson (13.1 PPG) get added help. Miami should be battling all year long with Atlanta for Southeast Division supremacy.

**BOSTON CELTICS:**

Brad Stevens has moved upstairs to the front office for the Celtics, with longtime league assistant Ime Udoka taking the top job on the bench. Jayson Tatum (26.4 PPG, 7.4 RPG), Jaylen Brown (24.7 PPG) and Marcus Smart (13.1 PPG) lead the group tasked with bringing Boston back to prominence. Al Horford (14.2 PPG, 6.7 RPG), who returned to the Celtics after spending time with both Philadelphia and Oklahoma City the last few seasons and Dennis Schröder (15.4 PPG, 5.8 APG with Lakers) add depth to the backcourt on the fabled parquet floor in Beantown.

**NEW YORK KNICKS:**

New York City native Kemba Walker returns home to bring some excitement to Madison Square Garden and the Knicks. Buoyed by first-year head coach Tom Thibodeau, the team won a postseason game for the first time since 2012-13, and the trio of Walker (19.3 PPG with Celtics), Julius Randle (24.1 PPG, 10.2 RPG, 6.9 APG) and free agent Evan Fournier (17.1 PPG with Magic and Celtics) will be asked to carry the load while R.J. Barrett sees his role expanded as he enters his third season.

**ATLANTA HAWKS:**

Trae Young (25.3 PPG, 9.4 APG) broke out in the postseason with his efforts against the Knicks, 76ers and the Bucks during the Hawks' unexpected run to the Eastern Conference Finals. Young's workload will need to be supplemented by Clint Capela (15.2 PPG, 14.3 RPG), Bogdan Bogdanovic (16.4 PPG), John Collins (17.6 PPG), Cam Reddish and DeAndre Hunter if they hope to sustain that momentum under Nate McMillan, who was named interim coach midway through last season and got the full-time job after the turnaround he helped engineer.

**CHICAGO BULLS:**

Reason to be optimistic is high in Chicago for the first time in a while as Billy Donovan enters his second season. Lonzo Ball (14.6 PPG, 5.7 APG with Pelicans), DeMar DeRozan (21.6 PPG, 6.9 APG with Spurs) and Alex Caruso (Lakers) join Zach LaVine and Nikola Vucevic with the Bulls as free agents in the offseason. LaVine (27.4 PPG), Vucevic and DeRozan are all established scorers and will give Chicago much needed options on the offensive end, with Vucevic (23.4 PPG, 11.7 RPG) hoping to continue his double-double machine ways.

**CHARLOTTE HORNETS:**

LaMelo Ball, the 2020-21 Rookie of the Year, Gordon Hayward, Terry Rozier and Miles Bridges lead group that hasn't made the postseason since the 2015-16 season. Hayward (19.6 PPG) is a well-established scorer while Ball (15.7 PPG, 5.9 RPG, 6.1 APG) is as versatile as they come on the floor for head coach James Borrego. James Bouknight, the team's 2021 first-round pick, comes from Connecticut, and should give another player capable of replacing some of the production created from the departure of both Devonte' Graham (Pelicans) and Malik Monk (Lakers).

**REST OF THE EAST:**

Toronto, Detroit, Cleveland, Orlando and Washington are all in different stages of the rebuild process. Top-five picks Cade Cunningham (No. 1, Pistons) and Jalen Suggs (No. 5, Magic) may go head-to-head in the Rookie of the Year race as they look to lead their respective franchises back to prominence.

## WESTERN CONFERENCE

**LOS ANGELES LAKERS:**

Triple-double magnet Russell Westbrook joins forces with LeBron James and Anthony Davis after being acquired from the Wizards. Westbrook (22.2 PPG, 11.5 RPG, 11.7 APG) is on his fourth team in four years but is back home in L.A., and that should bode well for Tinsel Town. Health will be key as both James (25 PPG, 7.7 RPG, 7.8 APG) and Davis (21.8 PPG, 7.9 RPG) missed ample time last season because of injuries. Carmelo Anthony (Trail Blazers) joins good friend James and will provide good, veteran production off the bench for Frank Vogel's team. Dwight Howard returns after a year away with Philadelphia to provide some insurance in the paint.

**LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS:**

The franchise's first-ever trip to the Western Conference Finals, losing to the Suns in six games, provides a starting point for second-year coach Tyrone Lue. Now it's up to franchise cornerstones Kawhi Leonard (24.8 PPG, 6.5 RPG, 5.2 APG) and Paul George (23.3 PPG, 6.6 RPG, 5.2 APG) to help finish it. Leonard, who re-upped with the team in free agency, underwent knee surgery to fix a partial torn ACL – which will limit his debut this season. Terance Mann, coming off a solid postseason will look to build off it in Leonard's absence.

**PHOENIX SUNS:**

Monty Williams led the team to its first postseason trip since 2009-10 while winning 51 games – the second-most in the West. Acquired in a trade with the Thunder prior to last season, Chris Paul (16.4 PPG, 8.9 APG) proved to be the missing ingredient for a team that made its first NBA Finals appearance since 1993 last season. Devin Booker (25.6 PPG) continues his rise as one of the best guards in the league. The loss in the Finals will provide motivation for Paul, Booker, DeAndre Ayton (14.4 PPG, 10.5 RPG), Mikal Bridges (13.5 PPG) and the rest of the team.



### UTAH JAZZ:

At 52-20, the Jazz had the league's best record in the regular season before losing to the Clippers in the second round. All-Stars Donovan Mitchell (26.4 PPG) and Rudy Gobert (14.3 PPG, 13.5 RPG) will headline matters for coach Quin Snyder once again. Mike Conley (16.2 PPG, 6 APG) improved on all of his major numbers in his second season in Utah. Gobert won his third Defensive Player of the Year Award in 2020-21 while Jordan Clarkson (18.4 PPG) won the Sixth Man of the Year Award.



### PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS:

The Chauncey Billups era begins in Portland with optimistic vibes. Portland's dynamic backcourt of Damian Lillard (28.8 PPG, 7.5 APG) and C.J. McCollum (23.1 PPG, 4.7 APG) is still intact. Ben McLemore (Rockets and Lakers), Larry Nance, Jr. (Cavaliers), Tony Snell (Hawks) and Cody Zeller (Hornets) were all brought in during the offseason. The Trail Blazers have reached the postseason eight straight seasons and will look to jump to the top of the West's elite squads.

### GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS:

The Warriors snuck into the play-in tournament last season despite a rash of injuries. Stephen Curry (32 PPG) returned to his MVP-type form last season by leading the league in scoring for the second time in his career. Curry's fellow Splash Brother, Klay Thompson, is back after missing the last two seasons with injuries, including a torn ACL prior to last year. Draymond Green remains a steady and versatile presence, on and off the court, while James Wiseman (11.5 PPG, 5.8 RPG), the No. 2 pick in the 2020 Draft and Jonathan Kuminga, the No. 7 pick in the 2021 Draft, provide youth to an experienced group. Andre Iguodala returned to the team in free agency and will bring his veteran savvy to team looking to regain its glory.



### DENVER NUGGETS:

Reigning league MVP Nikola Jokic (26.4 PPG, 10.8 RPG, 8.3 APG) shined throughout the 2020-21 season as the Nuggets made the postseason for a third straight season. Jamal Murray (21.2 PPG) will work his way back from a torn ACL that sidelined him since last April and Michael Porter, Jr. (19 PPG, 7.3 RPG) continues his rapid development. The Nuggets will have Aaron Gordon, acquired from the Magic last season and recently signed to a contract extension, in the fold for a full season after averaging 12.4 points and 5.7 rebounds.

### DALLAS MAVERICKS:

New coach Jason Kidd gets a heck of a toy to play with in the dynamic and versatile Luka Doncic. Doncic (27.7 PPG, 8 RPG, 8.6 APG) should be in the thick of the MVP race all season. Kristaps Porzingis (20.1 PPG, 8.9 RPG) provides a formidable pick-and-pop player alongside Doncic, averaging 20 points a game in each of the last three seasons. In the offseason, the team resigned Tim Hardaway, Jr. (16.6 PPG) and Willie Cauley-Stein.



### REST OF THE WEST:

Young stars Zion Williamson (27 PPG, 7.2 RPG with Pelicans), Ja Morant (19.1 PPG, 7.4 APG with Grizzlies), Karl-Anthony Towns (24.8 PPG, 10.6 RPG with Timberwolves) and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (23.7 PPG, 5.9 APG with Thunder) will lead their respective teams and hope to build on their spectacular young careers and take the next steps towards the ultimate goal – an NBA championship.

So, lace them up, get you popcorn ready and let's tip this season off. Which team will surprise, can Milwaukee defend its first championship in 50 years, can the ever-powerful Lakers return to their "Showtime" glory, which rookie and future Legend will have a breakout campaign, which Legends will make the list for the Top 75 Players All-Time? Only time will tell, but boy will it be fun watching this season.



Legends Studios, presented by the NBRPA, is the #1 podcast destination for basketball fans who want to hear from NBA and WNBA Legends.

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## NEWLY DESIGNED BRAND ENHANCEMENT ELEMENTS INCLUDE REDESIGNED LOGO, ANIMATED CONTENT AND MERCHANDISE DESIGNS

The National Basketball Retired Players Association, in celebration of its 30th anniversary, is teaming up with sports marketing collective HEARTLENT Group to re-fresh the organization's visual identity. As part of the partnership, the creative team at HEARTLENT Group, led by managing partner and head of creative Elliot Gerard, is creating new enhancements for the organization, including a new primary logo.

HEARTLENT is also collaborating to design digital content promoting the NBRPA's Legends Media & Entertainment platforms, including a series of custom animations showcasing previously untold stories about basketball luminaries like Charles Barkley and Alonzo Mourning.

Legends Media & Entertainment (LME), is the multifaceted storytelling platform that is home to Legends Magazine, Legends Live digital series, and the Legends Lounge w/ Trill Withers and Hoop du Jour w/ Peter Vecsey podcasts, that bring the wide-reaching stories of many of the NBA and WNBA's biggest stars to life. Additionally, HEARTLENT will create unique designs for the NBRPA's Legends Care initiative, which is the charitable arm of the organization offering programs and services that positively impact youth and communities both locally and globally. This includes a limited-edition Legends Care t-shirt that is available now until November 1 to Legends Care Tip-Off Campaign donors at [legendsofbasketball.com/TipOff](http://legendsofbasketball.com/TipOff).

"HEARTLENT Group is the perfect partner to evolve and elevate our brand positioning due to the team's extensive experience in the NBA as well as their genuine love for the game and top creative talent," said Scott Rochelle, NBRPA President & CEO. "With the growth of Legends Media & Entertainment, the timing is ideal to re-fresh our visual identity and we are pleased to be joining forces with HEARTLENT Group on this endeavor."

The new logo design incorporates both the history of the NBRPA as well as fresh design elements to display both the physical and cultural aspects of the sport. Utilizing graffiti artwork, the basketball inside the logo includes meaningful imagery like hand-

prints to signify the players who have left their mark on the game, retro sneakers to symbolize the history and culture of basketball, x's and o's to stand for what players have accomplished on the court, and much more. A nod to the organization's three decades of service, the logo also features a three-pointed crown.

"This new re-design of our logo is a fantastic representation of the historical and cultural aspects of the sport of basketball," said Caron Butler, NBA Legend and NBRPA Board Director. "The design incorporates images that have been prevalent throughout the lives of the brotherhood and sisterhood that make up the NBRPA and highlights the growth and impact of our organization and the Legends brand over the last thirty years."

"Our entire team at HEARTLENT Group is thrilled to be working with the NBRPA to showcase the storied organization in a new way while maintaining the utmost respect for its history and the legends of the sport it represents," said Gerard. "Celebrating athletes is at the core of what HEARTLENT does and we feel honored to take on this important creative work with the NBRPA."

To follow along with LME content from the NBRPA, find us on social media.

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NBA Legends at brunch and the Legends Lounge on Monday, Aug. 9, 2021 in Las Vegas.



Legends at Jewel Nightclub on August 9, 2021 in Las Vegas, NV.

## LEGEND SIGHTINGS

LEGENDS SUMMER GETAWAY  
AND GOLF EXPERIENCE 2021

The 2021 Legends Summer Getaway and Golf Experience was a brand new, inaugural event hosted by the National Basketball Retired Players Association. This three-day event provided an exclusive retreat for NBRPA members to reunite, relax and reminisce in the Legends Lounge, receive health screenings in partnership with the NBPA, attend NBA Summer League games, party at JEWEL Nightclub and ALIBI Ultra Lounge, practice golf swings at Topgolf, hit the links at the beautiful Cascata Golf Course, and unwind at the ARIA Resort & Casino in beautiful Las Vegas.



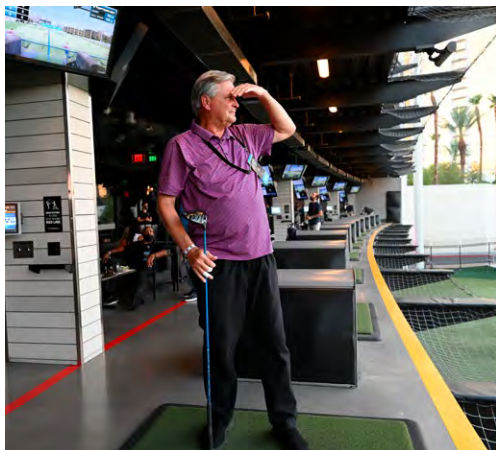
WNBA Legends at Jewel Nightclub at the Aria Resort & Casino on Monday, Aug. 9, 2021 in Las Vegas.





*Legends at Cascata Golf Course on August 9, 2021 in Las Vegas.*





*Legends at Topgolf on August 8, 2021 in Las Vegas.*



# LEGEND SIGHTINGS

HALL OF FAME ENSHRINEMENT WEEKEND 2021



The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2021 was enshrined on September 11, 2021 in Springfield, Massachusetts. Legends of basketball gathered on the eve of the Enshrinement Ceremony for an exclusive Players Party at Novelle Mohegan Sun. On Saturday, the inductees walked the red carpet and were officially enshrined as the newest class of inductees, further cementing their place in the basketball history books. The weekend concluded with a Full Court Press clinic on the Jerry Colangelo Court of Dreams at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, where local youth received basketball instruction in drills overseen by famed Jr. NBA clinician Frank Lopez and were then treated to a life skills conversation from Hall of Famers Ben Wallace, Dikembe Mutombo, Spencer Haywood, and Yolanda Griffith.







# PHOENIX CHAPTER GOLF TOURNAMENT

On Sunday September 19, 2021 the NBRPA Phoenix Chapter co-branded the Shelly Hamlin Pro Am Golf Tournament, along with a host of former LPGA players and instructors. The Phoenix Chapter has sponsored this event the last two years and it continues to benefit youth in the surrounding communities. LPGA players participating included Jan Stephenson, Heather Risk and Alison Finney to name a few. NBRPA Phoenix Chapter members participating included Chapter President Fat Lever, Adrian Strong-Williams, Bob Elliott, Mark West and Jeff Malone, along with Kenny Gattison. Desert Financial Credit Union was the title sponsor and Laptops 4 Learning, was one of the benefactors of the tournament proceeds. The Phoenix Chapter

and Laptops 4 Learning have distributed over 400 laptops to students and families in the local communities, who otherwise wouldn't have access to a laptop. In the upcoming weeks they will be distributing 200 laptops to the Chandler School District and 15 laptops to the George Gervin Academy. Thank you to member Tom Van Arsdale, for supplying copies of his book "Journey Man" as well as Rick Darnell and the Los Angeles Chapter for supplying Comisario Tequila branded hats and t-shirts as gift bag items. Special thanks to the Phoenix Chapter for providing the resources and teamwork, that continues to assist the youth and families in Phoenix and the surrounding areas.







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