

BCAM ANNOUNCES NEXT WAVE OF RETRO MR. BASKETBALL WINNERS. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 31, 2016, East Lansing, MI –Seven years ago, BCAM - the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan - launched a decade long program designed to identify and honor the state’s greatest high school basketball players for the years 1920 through 1980.

Members of the Association’s Retro Mr. Basketball committee assembled between sessions of the MHSAA Boys Basketball championships this past Saturday to select the six latest recipients of the award. With their selections, a total of 43 seniors from years past have now been identified for their achievements on the court.

“Styled after the annual Mr. Basketball Award, the Retro Award looks back at the rich history of high school basketball in Michigan to recognize the top seniors in years past,” said BCAM president Tom Hursey. “In 2010, we launched the Retro Mr. Basketball project as a tribute to those guys that played between the years 1920 and 1980. This state has turned out hundreds of incredible athletes, but many have been forgotten. Like the current award, the selection committee focuses on the high school careers of those athletes, then votes to name a Mr. Basketball. This year, we honor those seniors for the years that end in six – 1926, 1936, 1946, 1956, 1966 and 1976.”

So many of the “all-time greatest” lists we see today fail to recognize names prior to 1965,” said Ron Pesch, historian for the Michigan High School Athletic Association. “We’ve been playing basketball in Michigan since the late 1890s. With research, the goal of the committee is to identify the greats from years past, compile biographical information, narrow the list to a ballot of candidates, then name a winner for each season.”

The names of this year’s selections will be added to plaques that surround the Retro Mr. Basketball trophy created by BCAM.

Past winners of BCAM's Retro Mr. Basketball award:

(College attended shown in parenthesis)

1980 Tim McCormick, Clarkston (Michigan)

1975 Bruce Flowers, Berkley (Notre Dame)

1974 Tony Smith, Saginaw (Nevada-Las Vegas)

1973 Tom LaGarde, Detroit Catholic Central (North Carolina)

1972 Larry Fogle, Detroit Cooley (Canisius)

1971 Michael "Campy" Russell, Pontiac Central (Michigan)

1970 Rick Drewitz, Garden City West (Kentucky)

1965 L.C. Bowen, Benton Harbor (Bradley)

1964 Willie Betts, River Rouge (Bradley)

1963 Craig Dill, Saginaw Arthur Hill (Michigan)

1962 Ernie Thompson, Saginaw (Bradley)

1961 Reggie Harding, Detroit Eastern

1960 Peter Gent, Bangor (Michigan State)

1955 M.C. Burton, Jr., Muskegon Heights (Michigan)

1954 Pete Tillotson, Ludington (Michigan)

1953 Ron Kramer, East Detroit (Michigan)

1952 Frank Tanana, Sr., Detroit St. Andrew

1951 Webster Kirksey, Saginaw (Eastern Michigan)

1950 Charlie Primas, Detroit Miller (Wayne State)

1945 Bob Swanson, Lansing Sexton (Michigan)

1944 Dick Rifenburg, Saginaw Arthur Hill (Michigan)

1943 Don Boven, Kalamazoo Central (Western Michigan)

1942 Larry Savage, Saginaw (Northwestern)

1941 Don Osterman, Detroit St. Theresa (Villanova)

1940 Ralph Gibert, Flint Northern (Michigan)

1935 John Zwier, Holland Christian

1934 Earl Brown, Jr., Benton Harbor (Notre Dame)

1933 Lincoln Dodson Truss, Flint Northern

1932 Lowell Matteson, Portage

1931 Edward Huttenga, Grand Haven (Western Michigan)

1930 John Tooker, Kalamazoo St. Augustine (Michigan)

1925 Joe Truskowski, Detroit Northeastern (Michigan)

1924 Bennie Oosterbaan, Muskegon (Michigan)

1923 Henry Schrumf, Niles (Western Michigan)

1922 Royal Cherry, Grand Rapids Union (Michigan)

1921 George Haggarty, Ypsilanti (Michigan)

1920 Harry Kipke, Lansing Central (Michigan)

2016 SELECTIONS FOR BCAM'S RETRO MR. BASKETBALL AWARD:

(The winner of the award is listed below at the top of the page in ALL CAPS. Finalists are listed alphabetically.)

1976

STUART HOUSE, DETROIT DENBY

A pre-season All-American according to *Street and Smith*, and a *Parade* magazine first team All-American at year-end, the 6-foot-11 House impressed coaches and fans with his footwork, mobility and ability to hook with either hand. With good range up to 18 feet, House averaged 29.6 points, 18 rebounds and seven blocked shots as a senior. Later played collegiately at Washington State.

OTHER FINALISTS

Jim Ellinghausen, Plymouth Salem – Tremendous shooting touch for a big player. Averaged 30 points with a wide assortment of long and close-range shots. “He performs well with his face to the basket,” according to Hal Schram of the *Detroit Free Press*. Scored 1,312 points over three seasons, leading Salem to a 63-8 record during that span. Later played at Ohio State.

Tony Fuller, Detroit St. Martin dePorres – Considered by many to be the best Class D player in the state. The 6-4 senior came away with 20-point, 13-rebound averages against top competition this season. He pumped in 29 points against Birmingham Brother Rice and 25 against Detroit Northwestern, both Class A schools. He started as a sophomore at Detroit Servite, where his brother, George, was an All-Stater before transferring to dePorres for his junior year. Later attended Pepperdine.

Bryan LaChapelle – Crystal Falls – Lone repeater on the Associated Press All-State Class D team. Also All-State in football. Scored 1,250 career points

Wilbert McCormick, Detroit Northeastern – Led Northeastern to a PSL, district and regional title. Averaged 22.8 points, nine rebounds and nine assists. “He could have scored a lot more,” said his coach Robert Smith, “but he knew his job was to direct our offense.” Played for University of Detroit.

Dave Niles, Garden City West – Broke Rick Drewitz’s career scoring mark with 1,163 points. Despite being recruited by Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and others, he announced his desire to stay in state. Played at his college ball at University of Detroit.

1966

RUDY TOMJANOVICH, HAMTRAMCK

Named as a first team All-State selection by the *Free Press*, Associated Press and a Dream Team selection by the *Detroit News*, the 6-foot-8, 198 pound Tomjanovich is still considered the greatest player in Hamtramck history. Received offers from 250 schools. Set a school record with a 54-point performance as a senior and scored 443 points in 16 regular season games.

OTHER FINALISTS

Bob Gale, Trout Creek – Fourth player in Upper Peninsula history to score 600 or more points during the regular season, when he tallied 611 – for a 33.9 average – to spearhead his team to an 18-0 regular season mark. Finished with 848 and a 31.4 average as Trout Creek fell to Covert in the Class D title game. Scored 60 points against Mercer, WI as a senior and finished his high school career with 2,086 points.

Earle Higgins, Ann Arbor - Considered by Ann Arbor coach Ed Klum as the most complete player he ever coached. “Cool outside shooter. He has great moves and he’s mobile and coordinated,” said the *Detroit Free Press* at All-State time. Scored 588 points in 23 games and grabbed 387 rebounds while leading the Pioneers to the Class A state title game.

Harvey Marlatt, Alpena – Marlatt led Alpena to a school best 16-1 regular season record and a 20-2 mark as the team advanced to the state quarterfinals. Scored 1,066 points in his three-year varsity career, and topped the school’s single season scoring mark, previously held by Howard French, with 457 points. Marlatt later played at Eastern Michigan University, then in the NBA for the Detroit Pistons.

Frank Price, River Rouge – Finished with 518 points as a senior en-route to shattering Willie Betts’ career all-time scoring mark with 1,104 points in 66 contests (35 fewer games than Betts). Pulled down nearly 300 rebounds and totaled over 25 assists during his time at Rouge.

Don Reid, Flint St Mary – First in Flint to score over 600 points in a season as a junior (601 - finally topped by Flint Southwestern’s Charlie Bell in 1997). Reid was a three-time All-State selection. Finished his career as “the most prolific scorer in Flint history,” scoring 2,121 points.

1956

MEL PETERSON, STEPHENSON

A resident of Michigan of less than a year, the 6-4 Peterson re-wrote Upper Peninsula record books, scoring 570 points, including five games of over 40. "Mel does everything well," said Ishpeming coach, C.C. Watson. "A terrific rebounder at both ends of the court, he has exceptional timing, shoots well from both outside and at close range and holds excellent college potential."

OTHER FINALISTS

Bob Bolton, Battle Creek Lakeview – Nicknamed "Sticks" because of his 6-9 height, Bolton was "the most sought after schoolboy basketball player Michigan has produced in recent years." Scored 488 points – an incredible 30.5 average – in Twin Valley League play, Bolton shattered the league's previous record of 287. Unsurprisingly, he also dominated the boards. An outstanding student, Bolton scored 50 points in a Class B quarterfinal game against Kalamazoo State High – still a MHSAA record for the final rounds of the annual boys' basketball tournament.

Jim Reynolds, Benton Harbor – "Was the guiding force behind Benton Harbor's great team," wrote Hal Schram of the *Free Press*. "A pivot star all the way – shooting, rebounding and as a defensive standout – Reynolds averaged 21.4 points through 15 games."

Herb Wood, River Rouge – Standing 5-6 and less than 140 pounds "when soaking wet," Wood "sets up the Rouge offense, dazzles the opposition with his dribbling...always finishes among the game's top scorers." Helped the Panthers to back-to-back titles in Class B in 1955 and 1956.

Bob Zimmerman, Jackson – Broke the school record with 276 points during the season. "Best all-around guard I have seen in 28 years at Jackson," said Al Cotton, *Jackson Citizen Patriot* sports editor.

1946

JACK FORESTIERI, BENTON HARBOR

Named to the first team All-State squad for a second year in a row, Forestieri was called "player of the year" in 1946 by the *Detroit Free Press*. The 6-0 guard was also named first team All-State by the *Detroit Times* in 1946. Forestieri wowed fans and media alike during the 1945 tournament, where he was called "the best player in the tournament" by a United Press International stringer. After dominating Southwestern Conference foe Holland twice during the 1946 regular season, much to the surprise of many, the Tigers were defeated by the Dutchmen, the eventual Class A state champ.

OTHER FINALISTS

Bob Beller, Detroit St. Charles - An All-State honorable mention in 1945, Beller graduated to first team honors in 1946, where he was proclaimed the top ballplayer in Detroit by the *Free Press*. A clever ball handler, Beller scored 194 points over 14 contests.

Gene Glick, Saginaw Arthur Hill – Leading scorer of the Saginaw Valley League, Arthur Hill survived a double overtime thriller with Flint Northern in the opening round of the Class A tournament behind 17 points from Glick, including the game winner in the second overtime. The game's high scorer with 15 points in a 43-40 loss to Holland in the Class A state finals, Glick later was an MVP football player at Michigan State.

Elwyn "Sonny" Heyn, Bridgman – A star on Bridgman's 1945 and 1946 Class D State Championship teams, Heyn earned the school's most valuable athlete award as a senior and "could play on any high school team in the state and make it a better ball club." Heyn scored 39 points during a regular season contest versus New Troy. Led Bridgman with 19 points over Weidman in the 1946 semi-finals. Later attended Western Michigan University.

Jim Oakes, Manistee – The lanky letterman "turned in a brilliant performance this season as a constant high scorer. As pivot man, Oakes led the scoring for the team with 200 points, and turned in a good defensive game as center." Posted a season high 26 points against Cadillac, 22 points against Frankfort, and 14 points in a 27-24 loss to Traverse City in the tournament.

1936

CHARLES PINK, DETROIT NORTHWESTERN

Only player on the *Detroit Free Press* All-State team to repeat from the year previous, Pink was a nearly unanimous selection to the squad. Led the city in scoring. His leadership of Northwestern's well-balanced team proved a big factor as the Colts established one of the best records in the state. Would later captain the basketball team at the University of Michigan.

OTHER FINALISTS

Max Dalrymple, Port Huron – A star football and baseball player, as a basketball player Dalrymple established himself as one of the finest athletes to ever come out of Port Huron. Played center most of the season, but was considered a top-notch all-around player. Captained coach Brick Fowler's 1935-36 team and was chosen the Outstanding Player in the Flint Regional tourney, which Port Huron won by beating the host team 21-14. Played four seasons of basketball at Michigan State College.

James "Country" Davis, Detroit Miller – Believed to be the first African American named to an All-State team when he was chosen by the *Detroit Free Press* on their second team squad, Davis was an important cog in his team's drive to the east side basketball championship. A guard, his height helped him become one of the city league's leading scorers.

Andrew Sabota, Flint Northern – Set the Saginaw Valley Conference scoring record in 1936 when Northern finished with an unbeaten season and won the state Class A basketball championship. A unanimous selection to the All-Valley first team one year after helping the Vikings reach the finals of the 1935 state tournament. Later played several seasons of minor league baseball across the midwest.

Milo Sukup, Muskegon Heights – An outstanding all-around athlete at Muskegon Heights High School from 1933-37, Milo Sukup earned All-State honors in basketball and football. Sukup also excelled in track, holding the school's record in the 100-yard dash at 10.2 seconds, and in baseball, as an infielder for the Tigers. His athletic exploits were recognized with 12 varsity letters. Played football and basketball at the University of Michigan before launching a long career as a high school coach.

1926

ROGER GROVE, STURGIS

First team all-tournament selection in 1926, Grove was named to the second team a year earlier. "The best floor guard seen in action at the college in some time," stated a *Lansing State Journal* writer selecting an All-Tournament team following the annual high school basketball tournament, "this cool headed youngster who dribbles with such deliberation and breaks with dazzling speed is the team captain. He knows basketball from back board to back board." An All-American at Michigan State College in 1930 in both football and basketball, Grove later played football for the Green Bay Packers.

OTHER FINALISTS

Norm Daniels, Detroit Southeastern – "One of the best shots in the league, either under the basket or out on the floor," according to the *Detroit News*. "While he was a marked player in every game, he managed to evade his opponents to drop them in with consistent regularity," said the *Detroit Times*. Later was basketball captain at the University of Michigan then became a longtime coach at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT.

Tharel Kanitz, Milan – "Big and fast, a speedy dribble and the best long shot artist in the tournament in either class, he was a unanimous choice," stated the *Lansing State Journal* when naming their All-Tournament team. "He would probably make any high school basketball team in the state regardless of class." Later played basketball at the University of Michigan, where he won three letters, then taught and coached at Traverse City Central Junior High.

Arnold Smith, Detroit Southwestern – The outstanding player in the Detroit City league, Smith was the league's top scorer, and considered one of the best high school shooters in the country at guard. "He is always digging up the ball and getting rid of it fast once it is in his possession," stated the *Detroit Times*.

Donald Tait, Newberry – The only player on Newberry's state championship team that stood under 6-foot, "this boy was the best back guard in the tournament. Weighing close to 180 pounds, he could do all the wrestling necessary under the basket fighting for the ball off the board and in addition has an uncanny way of shooting passes up the floor that meant baskets in a split-second. His timing was one of the prettiest pieces of work seen in the entire tournament."