

LHSAA Celebrates Black History: Robert Parish – A Kid from Shreveport to the Basketball Hall of Fame

BATON ROUGE—As we celebrate Black History Month, the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) is proud to honor the legacy of Robert Parish, a trailblazer whose journey from humble beginnings in Shreveport to the heights of the Basketball Hall of Fame serves as a testament to dedication, perseverance, and excellence.

Early Life and High School Career

Born on August 30, 1953, in Shreveport, Louisiana, Robert Parish developed his basketball skills on the courts of Union High School, which was later integrated into Woodlawn-Shreveport due to desegregation. His towering height and natural athletic ability quickly made him a standout player, earning him recognition not only across the state but also on the national stage. During his high school years, Parish displayed a work ethic and quiet determination that would become hallmarks of his career.

Collegiate Success at Centenary College

Parish stayed close to home for college, playing for Centenary College of Louisiana. Despite the program facing NCAA sanctions that prevented their statistics from being officially recognized, Parish's dominance on the court was undeniable. He averaged 21.6 points and 16.9 rebounds per game during his collegiate career, establishing himself as one of the most formidable centers in the nation.

NBA Career and Legacy

In 1976, Robert Parish was selected by the Golden State Warriors as the eighth overall pick in the NBA Draft. However, it was his trade to the Boston Celtics in 1980 that elevated his career to legendary status. Alongside Larry Bird and Kevin McHale, Parish formed one of the most formidable frontcourts in NBA history.

During his 21-season NBA career, Parish became known for his durability, earning the nickname "The Chief" for his stoic demeanor and consistency. He won four NBA championships, three with the Boston Celtics (1981, 1984, 1986) and one with the Chicago Bulls (1997). Parish retired as the all-time leader in games played (1,611), a record that still stands today.

LHSAA... Beyond the Game



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His contributions were recognized with induction into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2003, cementing his place among the greatest to ever play the game.

Perseverance in the Face of Adversity

As a Black man navigating America during the civil rights era and beyond, Robert Parish faced numerous challenges both on and off the court. Throughout his career, he encountered racial prejudice and systemic barriers that often sought to limit his opportunities. Despite these obstacles, Parish remained focused on his goals, using his quiet strength and unyielding work ethic to rise above discrimination and prove his worth. His ability to stay composed under pressure and let his performance speak for itself became a defining characteristic of his career. Parish's success not only challenged stereotypes but also paved the way for future generations of Black athletes.

Impact and Inspiration

Robert Parish's journey from the LHSAA courts of Shreveport to the pinnacle of professional basketball is a source of inspiration for student-athletes across Louisiana. His legacy serves as a reminder that with hard work, discipline, and dedication, greatness is achievable.

As we reflect on Black History Month, the LHSAA celebrates Robert Parish not only for his athletic achievements but also for the example he sets for future generations. His story is a beacon of hope and a testament to the power of perseverance, both on and off the court.

For more information on LHSAA's Black History Month features and other honorees, visit lhsaa.org and follow the LHSAA on social media @LHSAAsports.

LHSAA... Beyond the Game

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