

A HISTORIC
Unweilding

EARL F. LLOYD

Statue




SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2021

CHARLES HOUSTON RECREATION CENTER
ALEXANDRIA, VA



Dedicated to the
Earl Francis Lloyd
Family



Unveiling
Earl F. Lloyd Statue
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CHARLITA D. LLOYD

15 Pineridge Court
Crossville, TN 38558-6532
931.707.8369

April 28, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

It would be my families pleasure to donate an eight foot bronze statue of Earl Francis Lloyd to the Alexandria African-American Hall of Fame in Alexandria, Virginia. The magnificent artwork was created by renowned master sculptor Brian Hanlon, the official sculptor for the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

The sculptor, Brian Hanlon created two of the statues. One stands in the Earl Francis Lloyd Lobby of West Virginia State University in Institute, West Virginia. The second statue, which is identical of the first, was given to our family to donate. We have chosen to donate the fabulous statue to Earl's beloved Alexandria's African American Hall of Fame of Virginia, how appropriate!

The priceless statue must stand upon an 8' x 4' x 2' granite base to support the 8' sculpture. We are donating the statue to the fine organization mentioned above.

Earl was born April 3, 1928 in Alexandria, Virginia to the late Daisy and Theodore Lloyd. He was the younger of two brothers, Ernest and Ted. Earl attended Parker-Gray High School, where he was a champion basketball player. He would go on to have a stellar basketball career at West Virgin State College where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education. Earl was drafted twice in 1950, first into the NBA and then into United States Army from 1950-52. Upon returning from the Army he continued his NBA career.

Earl Lloyd's accomplishments include:

- First African-American to play in an NBA game: October 31, 1950 with the Washington Capitals
- First African-American to win an NBA Championship: 1958 Syracuse Nationals
- First African-American Assistant Coach in the NBA; 1968 Detroit Pistons
- First African-American Bench Head Coach in the NBA; 1971 Detroit Pistons
- Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame: Class of 2003

Earl Lloyd is a true NBA basketball pioneer. This monument will inspire and educate visitors regarding his history of breaking the color barrier in the NBA and his importance to the game of basketball and to his community.

Sincerely,

Charlita D. Lloyd

DONALD S. BEYER JR.
8TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
(CHAIRMAN)

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
(CHAIR, SPACE AND AERONAUTICS SUBCOMMITTEE)

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515
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DISTRICT OFFICE:
1901 N. MOORE STREET
SUITE 1108
ARLINGTON, VA 22209

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4608

April 3, 2021

Mayor Justin M. Wilson
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Wilson,

I write to honor the statue unveiling of Earl Francis Lloyd. I join Alexandria in commemorating the life and achievements of Mr. Lloyd, a native Alexandrian who exemplified excellence.

On October 31st, 1950 Mr. Lloyd was the first African American to ever play in the National Basketball Association, pioneering the effort for an integrated league. Despite the challenges he faced in his personal and professional life, Mr. Lloyd was able to succeed while displaying compassion, leadership, and determination. Later in his life, Mr. Lloyd further established African Americans within the NBA by becoming the first African American assistant coach with the Detroit Pistons in 1968. He was a champion in the NBA with the 1955 Syracuse Nationals, and a champion within our community.

During these times of great change, may we continue to recognize the achievements of those who came before us. May the legacy of Earl Francis Lloyd live on in our community for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Don Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



UNITED STATES SENATOR
WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 3, 2021

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all who are gathered for the unveiling of the Earl Francis Lloyd statue.

Earl Lloyd was an extraordinary Virginian who broke down racial barriers during segregation and paved the way for all who came after him. His basketball career was truly historic. He was a two time All-American at West Virginia State University and an important part of their team during their 1947-1948 undefeated season. Earl was the first Black player to play in an NBA game on October 31, 1950 for the Washington Capitols and later went on to win an NBA championship with the Syracuse Nationals. After retiring as a player, he continued his contributions to the game as he became the first Black assistant coach in NBA history for the Detroit Pistons, and in subsequent years, he served as the head coach and a scout for the organization. He accomplished all of this and so much more with integrity and professionalism. His road was far from easy, but he persevered and enabled others to follow.

On this important occasion, I join the City of Alexandria and my fellow Virginians in recognizing Earl Lloyd's accomplishments and his important place in our history.

Sincerely,

MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
Virginia



March 1, 2021

Alexandria African American Hall of Fame
Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Members of the Charles Houston Recreation Center:

It gives me great pleasure to extend greetings as you gather for the virtual unveiling ceremony honoring the placement of a statue of the late National Basketball Association (NBA) legend, Earl Francis Lloyd.

Earl had a monumental life and career. He was a native Alexandrian and became the first African American to play in an NBA game on October 31, 1950, with the Washington Capitols of the Basketball Association of America. As a trailblazer, Earl's NBA legacy and lifetime contributions have left an immense impression on the history of sports.

I am pleased to congratulate the City of Alexandria on the statue. Best wishes for a successful and enjoyable event.

Sincerely,

Tim Kaine



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Ralph S. Northam
Governor

April 3, 2021

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I would like to congratulate the City of Alexandria on the emplacement of a statue in honor of the late NBA legend, Earl Francis Lloyd.

I hope everyone has a wonderful time commemorating the life and legacy of Earl Francis Lloyd. I want to thank Mayor Justin M. Wilson, the Alexandria City Council, and the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame for their leadership in supporting initiatives that recognize and celebrate the contributions of Africans Americans from Alexandria. Your hard work, planning, and collaboration is greatly appreciated. I also want to acknowledge Mrs. Charlita Lloyd for donating the statue of her late husband to the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame. I appreciate your willingness to gift the city this extraordinary statue. I am positive that Virginians across our Commonwealth are grateful for your consideration and for you allowing us to celebrate your late husband.

As we continue to recognize African American leaders who broke racial barriers to become the first in their respected professions, we realize how far our Commonwealth has come and how much more we must do to honor those whose actions helped implement positive change. Virginians do not have to look far to find greatness – to find a man drafted by the Washington Capitols, ultimately becoming one of three African American players to enter the National Basketball Association (NBA), but the first to play on the court.

Through the support of his family and teachers, Earl Francis Lloyd found the strength to face challenges head-on. He, along with several African American athletes, played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement and in advancing equality. He was brave, resilient, and determined to make a space for himself in a sport that he loved to play. I commend him for laying a path for other athletes, as well as giving back to his community after retiring from basketball. It is my hope that this event inspires all of us to move forward in creating more just, equitable, and inclusive institutions and that we never forget the path that Earl forged.

This statue marks an important step in preserving and celebrating Earl Francis Lloyd’s contributions and success. Again, I wish the City of Alexandria a wonderful unveiling ceremony.

Sincerely,

Ralph S. Northam

Patrick Henry Building • 1111 East Broad Street • Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-2211 • TTY (800) 828-1120
www.governor.virginia.gov



CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution of Virginia in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

EARL FRANCIS LLOYD

WHEREAS, Earl Francis Lloyd was born on April 3, 1928, in Alexandria, Virginia, to Theodore Lloyd, Sr. and Daisy Lloyd; and

WHEREAS, Lloyd attended a segregated school, Parker-Grey High School, and was named to the All-South Atlantic Conference three times and the All-State Virginia Interscholastic Conference twice; and

WHEREAS, he broke barriers as the first African American player to play a game in the National Basketball Association (NBA); and

WHEREAS, nicknamed “The Big Cat,” Lloyd was one of three Black players to enter the NBA in 1950; and

WHEREAS, he, along with several African American athletes, played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement and in advancing equality; and

WHEREAS, we are honored to recognize Earl Francis Lloyd as a native Virginian; and

WHEREAS, as we continue to recognize African American leaders who broke racial barriers to become the first in their respected professions, we realize how far our Commonwealth has come and how much more we must do to honor those whose actions helped implement positive change; and

WHEREAS, Earl Francis Lloyd founded a path for other athletes and continually gave back to his community; and

WHEREAS, this statue marks an important step in persevering and celebrating Earl Francis Lloyd’s contributions and success;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ralph S. Northam, do hereby recognize **EARL FRANCIS LLOYD** and his dedicated service in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.


Governor
Secretary of the Commonwealth



City of Alexandria, Virginia
 301 King Street, Suite 2300
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314



Office: 703.746.4500
 Fax: 703.838.6433
 justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov

Justin M. Wilson
 Mayor

April 3, 2021

Alexandria African American Hall of Fame
 c/o Mr. Julian Haley, Chairman, and
 Mr. Robert Dawkins, Project Director, Researcher & Writer

Re: Unveiling of Statue of Earl Francis Lloyd

In today's unveiling of this statue of NBA great and Alexandrian Earl Lloyd, we honor not only his life and legacy, we also honor how he stood up to institutional inequality and barriers to pursue his goals.

A son of Alexandria, he was raised in the Berg, attended Alexandria schools, and went on to become the first African American to play in the National Basketball Association in 1950.

For the next two decades of his brilliant career, although far from his home and beginnings, he represented our city well both on and off the court, breaking barriers and setting standards all the way.

May his example be long remembered and honored by all who see this monument.

Very sincerely,

Justin M. Wilson
 Mayor

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Earl Francis Lloyd, a son of Alexandria, who went on to become an International hero, was born on this day April 3, 1928, raised in the Berg and at 1020 Montgomery Street as the youngest of three sons to Theodore Benjamin Lloyd and Daisy Mitchell Lloyd; and

WHEREAS, Earl graduated from Parker-Gray High School in 1946 before going to West Virginia State College, where he led his 1948 basketball team to an undefeated season and was named a Black College All American; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, Earl was drafted by the Washington Capitols of the NBA and on October 31, 1950 he became the first African American to play in an NBA game. Later that year, Earl was drafted into the military; and

WHEREAS, in 1955, Earl and teammate Jim Tucker helped lead the Syracuse Nationals to the NBA Championship and became the first African Americans to accomplish this feat; later in 1971, Earl broke another color barrier when he was named the first NBA African American Bench Coach with the Detroit Pistons; and

WHEREAS, Earl was inducted into seven Halls of Fame including the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 2003 and The Alexandria African American Hall of Fame in 2013 where in his concluding remarks, he paid homage to his Parker-Gray High School and Alexandria upbringing when he said "You don't come from Alexandria, Virginia, to Springfield, Massachusetts, without some hands on you"; and

WHEREAS, on February 25, 2015, Earl Francis Lloyd died at his home in Crossville, Tennessee. He is survived by his wife Charlita, sons Kevin, Kenneth and David, grandchildren and extended family; and

WHEREAS, today the City of Alexandria memorializes the life and many contributions of Earl Lloyd, as we unveil this 8-foot sculpture initiated by Bryan Poore the Head Men's basketball coach at West Virginia State University and crafted by Brian Hanlon, the sculptor for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame, and donated by the Lloyd family to the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JUSTIN M. WILSON, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and on behalf of the Alexandria City Council, and with the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame, do hereby on April 3rd, 2021, enshrine and emplace this bronze sculpture of:

"EARL FRANCIS LLOYD"

In the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame in the City of Alexandria, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens, and in so doing, it is hoped that all who enter this site are moved by the life of Earl Lloyd, his example, champion spirit, and grace.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Alexandria to be affixed this 3rd day of April, 2021.

MAYOR JUSTIN M. WILSON
 On behalf of the City Council
 of Alexandria, Virginia

ATTEST:

Gloria A. Sifton, CMC City Clerk





THE AUDACITY TO DREAM

*Robert N. Dawkins, Founder
Alexandria African American Hall of Fame
Project Director*

“I Have a Dream.” “Dare to Dream.” “The American Dream.” Synonyms for “dream” include: wish, hope, goal, ambition, and desire. Dreaming implies something that is outside of reality. For too many African Americans, a dream of freedom has always been out of reach. There is an opinion among some that once the “dream” of an African-American President was realized, that the United States reached a post-racial moment – that race didn’t matter anymore. But Barack Obama didn’t even have the freedom to wear a tan suit in the summertime.

There are many freedoms today that African Americans did not have access to prior to the Civil Rights Era – the freedom to sit anywhere at a lunch counter, to ride a bus in any seat, to attend any school that suited our educational needs. Earl Lloyd was born in 1928 – in the middle of Jim Crow in Alexandria, Virginia. He and his family lived in sub-standard housing in the “Berg.” In his school years, he and his peers experienced extreme and intense segregation. Under “separate but equal” laws, he learned from second-hand textbooks, and played sports in a makeshift gymnasium. He and students who looked like him were barred from facilities such as the library, swimming pool, bowling alley, and roller-skating rink. He had access to none of those freedoms as a young man. Armed with an obstinate will to succeed, Earl overcame the obstacles in his path again and again, collecting accolades, which culminated in a place in the National Basketball Association Hall of Fame in 2003.

It could be said that Earl had the audacity to dream. But dreaming is not new to African Americans. It is sometimes the only escape we can access to rise above our circumstances. It is dreaming that woke Earl up in the morning. It was dreaming that carried him day after day from the sub-standard housing where he lived to the separate, and certainly unequal, schools he attended. Dreaming can carry an individual through life. But it was a unique combination of dreams and action that carried Earl as far as he went.

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Action propelled Earl to attend West Virginia State College, where he was a two-time All-America selection, and where he helped lead his school to an undefeated 30-0 season in 1947-48. Action assisted when he was selected in the ninth round of the 1950 NBA Draft by the Washington Capitols. Action was the reason Earl was the first African-American to play in an NBA game on October 31, 1950. The act of realizing those dreams in the face of insurmountable opposition, and facing that opposition every day – in the store, on the street, on his team, in the media – was how Earl succeeded. The act of tuning out all the messages that said he was not enough, that he was less than, that he was not human, would stagger most men. But for Earl Lloyd, it was the path he was given, and he would see it to the end. This combination of imagination, action, resilience, and courage is not one we see often. It takes a special person to be the first at anything. To be the first African American, playing a relatively new, exclusively white, sport at the national level, in the 1950s, requires levels of dedication and perseverance that many of us do not possess.

We can trace a line from Earl Lloyd and his life of determination to today’s domination of the NBA by African-American players. Earl dreamt, and acted, and overcame, so we could be amazed by Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, and LeBron James. They will continue to tread the path for those behind them. African Americans have done so in every sport, and in every profession. From law to space travel, we continue to pursue economic, educational and employment equity.

As we reflect on Earls *incredible journey* we ask him how did it feel to be the first African American to play in the NBA. “I do not play it up or down, I just hope I conducted myself where I made it easier for others, and I think I did.”

“Happy Birthday Earl”
Welcome Home

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A Historical Legacy

As chairman of the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame, I have had the benefit of learning and experiencing African American History in Alexandria, VA. Once again, another historical opportunity is upon us and the city today – an eight foot bronze statue of Alexandria’s own Earl Francis Lloyd.

It is because of Earl’s love for Alexandria, that Charlita Lloyd, his widow, donated the bronze statue to the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame, on April 28th, 2020 to be placed in the Charles Houston Recreation Center, the former site of Parker-Gray High School where Earl attended and played basketball. The Alexandria African American Hall of Fame then donated the statue to the city of Alexandria.

I have only had the opportunity of meeting Mr. Earl Francis Lloyd briefly on two occasions. But during those brief occasions, I had the opportunity of witnessing what I have been hearing others say about Mr. Lloyd and the kind of man and person he was.

Through the countless conversations with numerous people, I have experienced many stories from his wife, Charlita, the Lloyd family, and all who provided pre-recordings for the virtual statue unveiling program. A number of friends reiterated how he was not only a good basketball player but a kind, humble and caring human being, who was about laying the footprints for others who followed.

When speaking of or remembering Earl Francis Lloyd, legacy is not enough to convey the breadth and scope of what he shared with us and what he leaves behind. His groundbreaking career was anchored in a higher calling. His choices were purposeful and honest. With a career full of firsts, he forged a path for those to come after him. He spent his entire career uplifting humanity. I am forever grateful for his legacy and for the way he answered his calling.

The statue is a strong historical legacy that will add to the rich African American History and benefit visitors, the community and future generations to come.

Julian “Butch” Haley, Jr.

Chairman Alexandria African American Hall of Fame

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How the Earl Lloyd statue came to be

Brian Poore

West Virginia State University Coach

The NCAA basketball Final Four is the culmination of what is known as March Madness and the NCAA Division I basketball tournament crowns the National Champion. It is also the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) national convention full of coaches of all levels from all over the world. It is a time for coaches to gather, connect, learn, see the new gear and equipment and celebrate the year of college basketball.

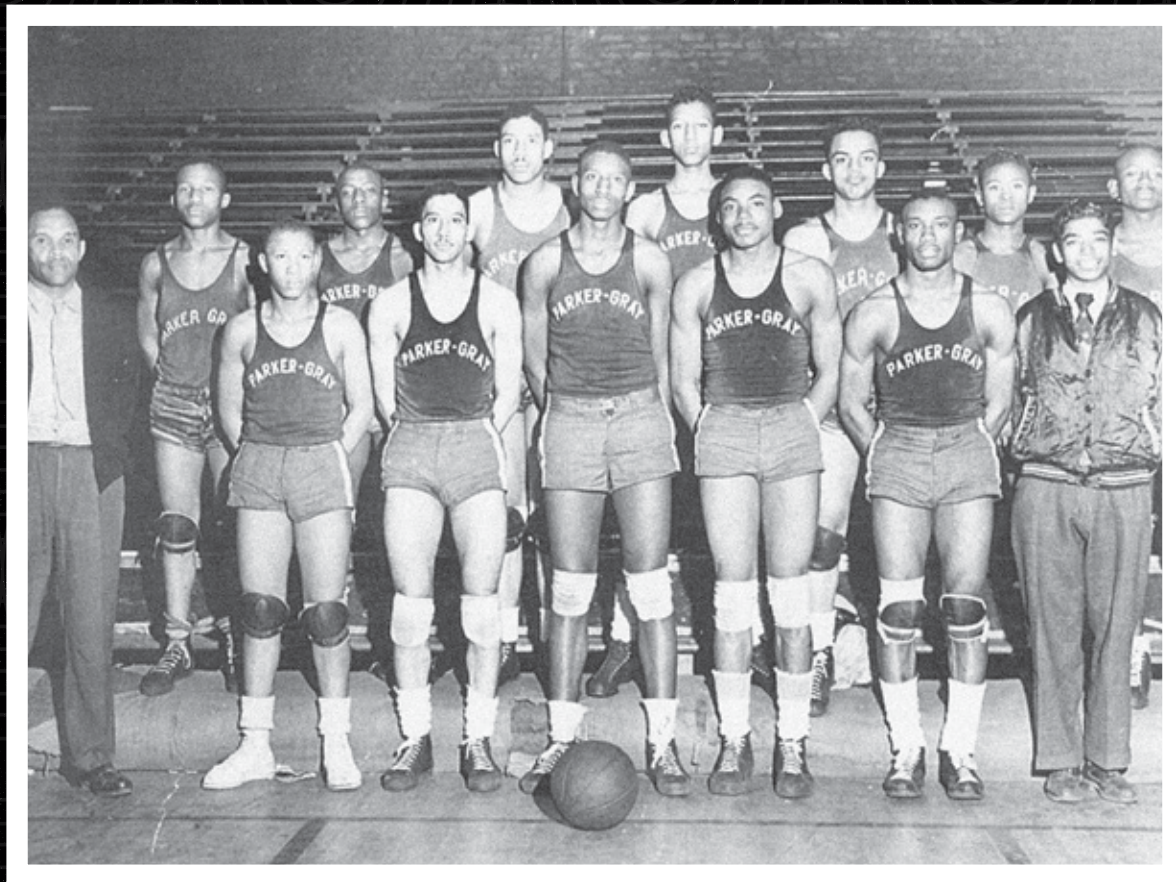
In 2012 the Final Four was held in the wonderful city of New Orleans, Louisiana. I had not been attending the Final Four for several years as my wife, Jennifer, and I had two young children that keeps you from doing non-essential travel. However, this year was different, it was New Orleans!! My wife had never been there and she requested that we go so she could experience Bourbon Street and all the food, music and culture the area offers. So we booked our trip and headed to the Big Easy!!

One of the big attractions is the expo with all the various vendors that has anything from sneakers to awards to travel assistance to technology that could possibly be used to give basketball coaches and their program an advantage. As soon as I picked up my credentials and walked into the vast Ernest N. Morial Convention Center on Canal Street a large statue of Shaquille O’Neal caught my eye from across the expo. West Virginia State University had already procured the funds for a new basketball arena to be built in the next couple of years and my mission was to honor my dear friend and the first African American to ever play in a NBA basketball game, Mr. Earl Lloyd.

I immediately went to see what this Shaq statue was all about and how could I get one done of Earl Lloyd for our lobby. I walked up to the booth and stood staring up at the Shaq statue like a kid window shopping during Christmas. Oh how I wanted one of Mr. Lloyd. I was startled a bit when a man walked up and said, “Hello, how can I help you?” I learned the man was Brian Hanlon, the official sculptor for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. I said, “How much would one of those cost?” pointing at the Shaq statue. He simply replied “oh I don’t know, who do you want one of?” When I said Earl Lloyd, he quickly snapped his head and looked at me with pure enjoyment and said, “Do you mean THE Earl Lloyd?” I was shocked because very few people know Earl Lloyd’s story and certainly not a caucasian sculptor. I said, “Yes the Earl Lloyd who was the first African-American to play in a NBA basketball game, he played his college career at West Virginia State University and I am the coach there.” Brian calmly and confidently said, “Well, I am the guy who is going to do it for you and we will figure out the price later.”

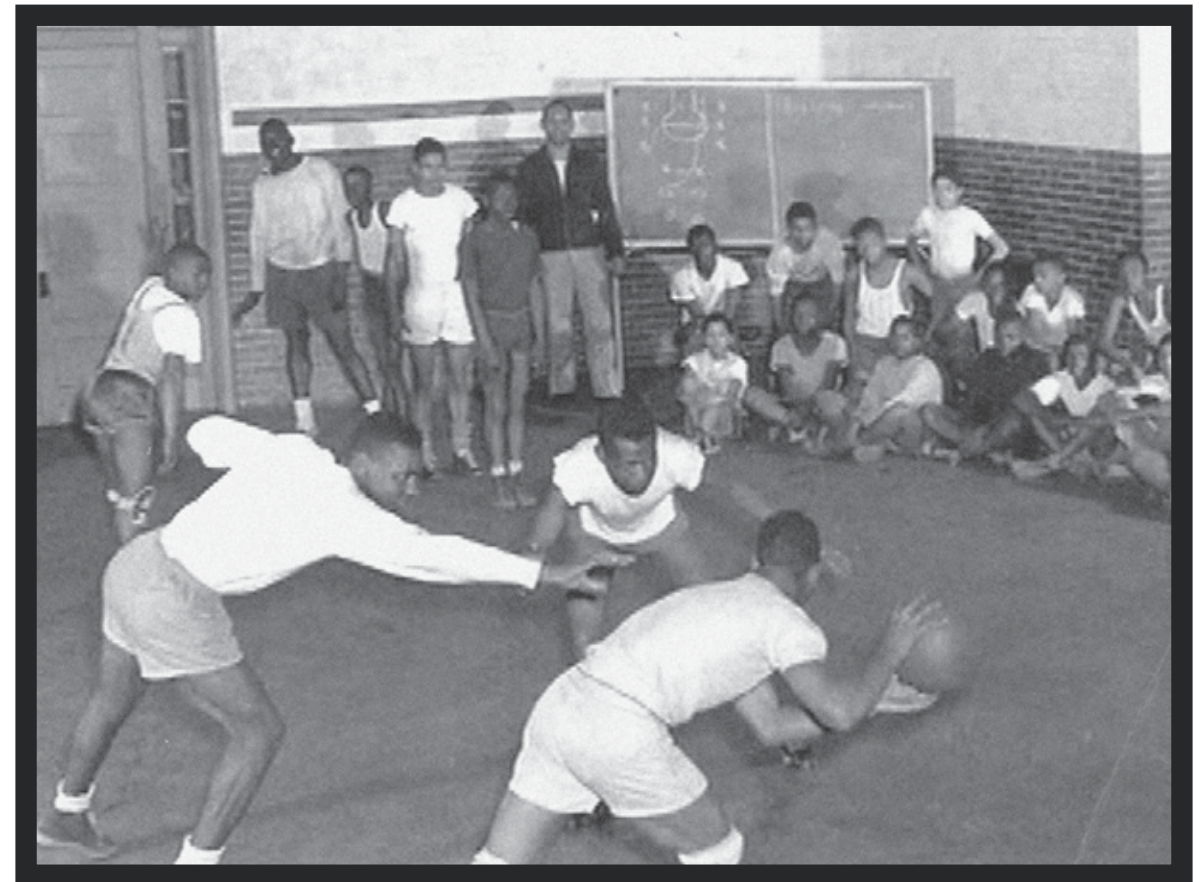
He then went on to tell me of how he met Mr. Lloyd at the first Final Four he had ever attended and as Mr. Lloyd always did, he warmly welcomed Brian to his world and sat with him at the games and dinners. So by the end of the weekend, Brian had the same feeling about the trailblazing pioneer we all do who met Mr. Lloyd, LOVE!! Later that year Brian invited me to the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame induction where he introduced me to the gracious, Manny Jackson, who provided the funding to make my dream come true!!

This all happened because my wife wanted to see New Orleans!!!



DREAM TEAM

Despite the inadequate facilities and resources, the 1946 Parker-Gray boys' basketball team, became known as the "DREAM TEAM", after they defeated a select All-Star team from Washington D.C.'s Inter-High high school league. The segregated inter-high high school league was considered one of the hotbeds for boys' basketball during that time.



“Here we’re sitting in Alexandria, eight miles from Washington, capital of the nation, and we had nothing.”

“My senior year in high school, we enjoyed a lot of success, and it was even more of an accomplishment when we saw what we had to deal with. We didn’t have a gymnasium, a baseball field, a track-absolutely nothing. Here we’re sitting in Alexandria, eight miles from Washington, capital of the nation, and we had nothing.”

Earl Lloyd

BLUEFIELD STATE COLLEGE
Bluefield, W. Va.

H. L. Dickason
President

March 23, 1949

E. W. Browne
Registrar

Dr. John W. Davis, President
West Virginia State College
Institute, West Virginia

Dear President Davis:

I attended the fourth annual basketball tournament of the C. I. A. A. as Vice President of the Northern District. I am not to certain as to all of my duties as an officer of that organization, but of this I am certain that whatever may be of good report as an activity of the organization should be written down, moreover, it supports a philosophy that nothing is good except it be shared.

The occasion which accounted for my presence in Washington has given me, I believe, something worthwhile to relate. What I saw and heard at the C. I. A. A. basketball tournament was far more significant to me than the numerical victory which carried West Virginia's State Basketball Team to a second consecutive C. I. A. A. basketball championship. In that vast audience I heard only words of praise for West Virginia's fine sportsmanship, and magnificent performance. To be sure there were praises for other teams, but all eyes were focused upon West Virginia's team.

One read the aims and purposes of West Virginia State College as it appeared in the C. I. A. A.'s basketball program, and ten basketball players, and a quiet silent looking coach exemplified before the eyes of the nation every aim and purpose of West Virginia State College. Every department of the College from Art through Home Economics had made its contribution, and a skillful coach piloted his and the endeavors of others to a glorious end. One need not speculate as to what those fine young men, and their coach did for race relations on their recent western tour. In the whole process of the development of young people our praise for their achievements as well as those who lead them must be equal to our admonishments when they perform poorly. Those young men, and the excellence of their performance have alerted me to a new concept that there is really no place for mediocrity in any department or the total program of a college.

I do not know your coach too well. What I saw of him, and what was said of him on the occasion of his being chosen "Coach of the Year" deserves great praise. The things which I observed was his kindly attitude toward his young men, and the meticulous care and supervision exercised over them on and off the court of basketball. I doubt seriously if the coach or players knew of my presence in the hotel in which they to were stopping. My presence in the hotel was unimportant except to relate seeing the best traditions of West Virginia State College through men lived and acted the part of cultured gentlemen. Before my leaving the hotel the management had this to say to me of the coach, and his boys--"We have had members of the other race here, and mixed groups from the North to come for visits and study, but none as well-behaved as these. Thus, ten men and a coaching staff have set for their own College a new high standard by demonstrating, away from home, education at its best.

Very truly yours,

/s/E. W. Browne



Earl Lloyd (#22) poses with his
1948 championship teammates
and Coach Mark Cardwell.

M. G. BURNSIDE
4th District, West Virginia

Committee;
Expenditures in The
Executive Departments

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

March 23, 1949

Dear Dr. Davis:

It was with a great deal of pleasure that I read in the Sunday Washington Post that your basketball team has successfully defended its CIAA basketball championship. I believe your boys have the distinction of being the only championship team in West Virginia college circles this year. Please express my congratulations to the coach and all the boys who helped make this fine victory possible. We here in Washington are very proud of them.

With warmest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

/s/M. G. Burnside

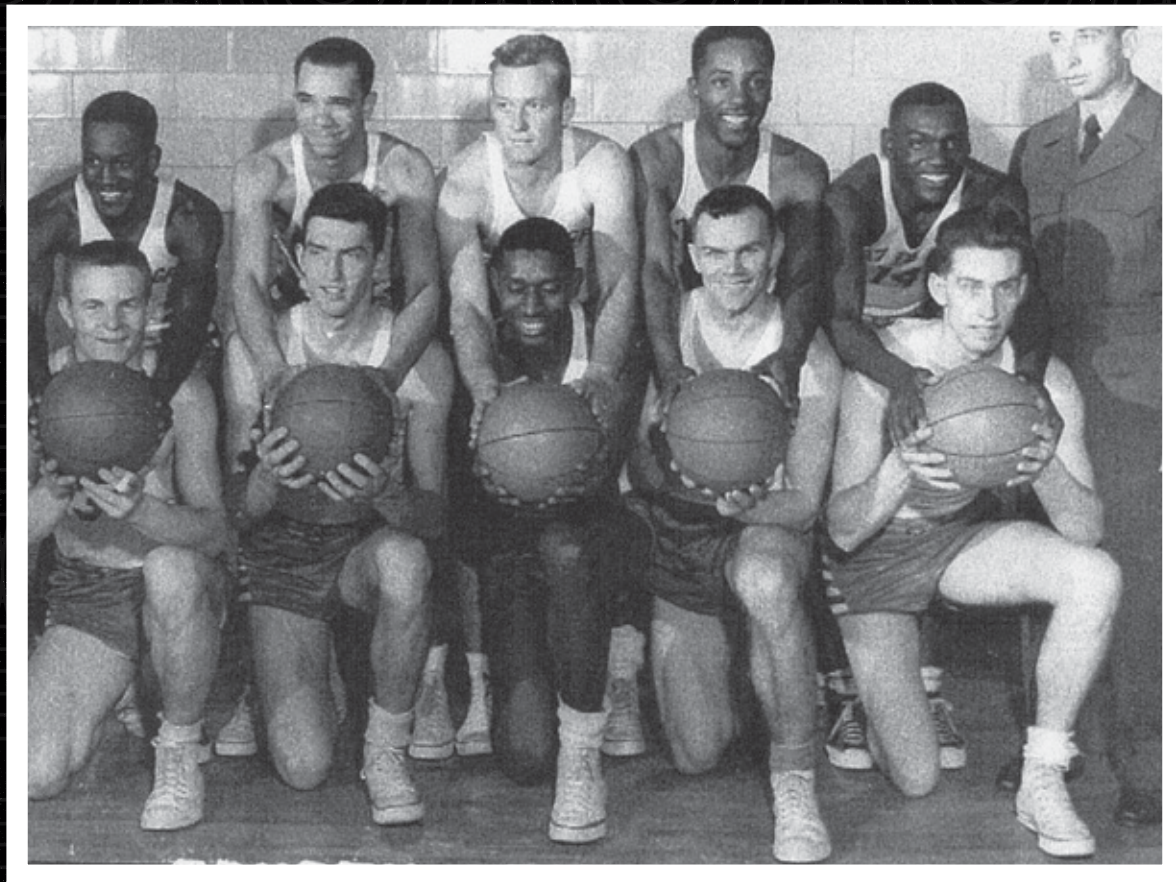
Dr. John W. Davis
West Virginia College
Institute, West Virginia



TRANSPORTATION

The West Virginia State College 1946 basketball team's mode of transportation was not one of "Luxury" ... they had to make regular stops in the fields or in the woods.





FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA

“For me, at every major stop along my incredible journey, there was nothing for me but a whole lot of love.”

Earl Lloyd



THE RESILIENCE OF A CHAMPION

Against all odds from Parker-Gray High School, West Virginia State College, the Washington Capitols, Earl navigated the negative challenges he encountered and excelled far beyond anyone’s expectations academically, socially and athletically, to become a Champion and a Hall of Famer.

FACING PAGE: Earl is the third person from the left in the front row with 4th Army Champions Fort Sill.



Reflections

Sean Kirst

The other day, thinking of the magnitude of the statue that would soon be unveiled in Alexandria, I went back and found the first column I ever wrote about Earl Lloyd. It was 30 years ago, when I was a young columnist with The Post-Standard in Syracuse, and December 1991 marked the 100th anniversary of the creation of the game of basketball.

I wanted to find the right person to signify the moment in Syracuse, a town rich in basketball lore and history. I was still new to the community, and I had learned only recently that one of the stalwarts on the old Syracuse Nationals of the National Basketball Association had also been the first African-American to set foot in a sanctioned regular-season NBA game.

That was a stunning contribution, not simply to sport but to the national fabric. Yet Earl Lloyd, who should have been a household name to anyone who loves basketball, was hardly remembered for that milestone in Syracuse - or nationally, for that matter. So I tracked him down in Detroit, where he was involved with a school district program to rekindle the educational passion of teenagers at risk of dropping out, and he did exactly what anyone who knew Earl would expect:

He downplayed his own significance. He spoke with reverence and appreciation of Jackie Robinson, who shattered longstanding segregation in Major League Baseball. Earl spoke of the importance of the work he was doing in the schools, and he established a pattern that would continue through the extent of what I now gratefully describe as a friendship that ended only with Earl's death in 2015:

Over the years he would unfailingly mention such groundbreakers as Dolly King and William "Pop" Gates, among the Black pioneers who made a mark in the old National Basketball League that was so foundational to the NBA. He would speak with warmth and gratitude of Chuck Cooper and Nathaniel "Sweetwater" Clifton, who came into the league at the same pivotal time as he did, in 1950.

Earl was unceasingly and unfailingly humble, which in a beautiful way is part of why his old Parker-Gray community will celebrate this statue in his honor, and why I think it would have held such staggering meaning for him. I know that he would look in memory at childhood home in Alexandria - at his family and his classmates and the teachers to whom he offered such respect - and he would say:

They are the ones who deserve a monument, and I think he would insist that what you are doing today is really a tribute to all of them. Whenever he spoke of his success, he always measured his own life by the "handprints" of those who helped him navigate what at the time seemed an almost impossible passage.

He preferred not to speak about himself, and it was only in many conversations over the years that what Earl endured was laid clear: The brutal insults and taunts hurled at him from the stands in many cities. The hotels and restaurants that served his white teammates and sent him away. The landlords in white neighborhoods who refused to consider renting him a home, even when he was a starter in Syracuse on one of the best teams in the best professional basketball league in the world.

While he would say it, his unshakeable grace and courage were made clear over the years by his contemporaries. It explains why such giants of the game as Bill Russell and Oscar Robertson were there to see Earl's first statue dedicated in 2014 at West Virginia State, the college he loved as a cradle and a refuge.

"He was everything to us," said Jim Tucker, who died in 2020, some 65 years after joining Earl as one of the first two Blacks to ever play on an NBA champion when the 1954-55 Syracuse Nationals won it all.

Tucker revered Earl, and he grew emotional when he saw him seven years ago, at that earlier dedication. Tucker was only 21 when he arrived in Syracuse, and he quickly grew frustrated at the constraints he saw and felt everywhere throughout the league, from the fashion in which he was often treated when the team was on the road to the limitations put on the way in which he was asked to play the game.

Earl was a friend, a guide, a listener, a protector. He knew his way around the league, knew what it took to survive, knew they had to meet an entirely different and unwritten standard than what was demanded of their white contemporaries.

He knew - he always knew - they were there for everyone still waiting to come in.

Certainly, Earl imparted a lesson to Tucker and other young African-American players he learned himself from Louis Johnson, his coach at Parker-Gray. Johnson's own experience and perspective were the major reasons Earl went on to West Virginia State - meaning the coach was a critically important figure in his life.

Of Johnson, Earl said: "He taught me early: So much in life comes back to how you carry yourself. If you're angry, make it work for you. Or else it buries you."

Tucker, who went on to a successful career in business, never forgot. Those lessons were offered with warmth and relentless humor and above all else, with love - which was really Earl's defining quality, and the reason we all gather today.

I was fortunate enough, in the late 2000s, to be the guy who wrote it down as Earl laid out his memoir. What was most interesting about the process was what he sought to do. He kept going back and sculpting it down, cutting away material until the book came together as a few central themes Earl wanted to make clear, and one of them certainly was this:

Alexandria would always be the place he associated with everything he achieved. It was home to the parents who showed him the meaning of devotion, courage and hard work and to the teachers he saw as noble and selfless in a suffocating era of Jim Crow segregation. It was where he attended Parker-Gray, a chance to meet inspired classmates he recalled with admiration, the school that he felt prepared him to face a system built in so many ways to shut him down.

Instead, Earl broke through in unforgettable and enduring ways. I am lucky to know Earl's wife Charlie and their family, the most powerful of witnesses to a truth that we all know: The extraordinary nature of Earl's presence explains why it is so easy to call up his voice even now, to feel his words as much as hear them at the times we miss him most, and I think if we pause to listen we can be sure of one thing.

What you are doing here would have meant the world to Earl Lloyd.

Sean Kirst, a longtime friend of Earl Lloyd, was co-author of Earl's memoir, 'Moonfixer' and is a recipient of journalism's Ernie Pyle Award for human interest writing.

My Letter Of
Thanks, Gratitude & Love
To My Mentor, Earl Francis Lloyd!



In December of 2007, the pupil and his teacher are joined together again as the naming of the T.C. Williams basketball court becomes officially, "The Earl Lloyd Court!" Jimmy Lewis and Earl Lloyd both attended and played basketball at Parker-Gray High School in the 1960's and 1940's respectively.

Earl,

I believe without any doubt, that you were my guardian Angel who had a tremendous influence on the arc of my life. Like you, I grew up in Alexandria, Virginia and at an early age, fell in love with sports. I was one of many young Alexandrians who heard of you, saw you on the playgrounds and felt the comfort of your genuine interest. It was the summer of 1958 and as a twelve year old, all I knew about the NBA was Elgin Baylor and you. Baylor, because he was from Washington, DC and you because you were right in front of me as I tried to learn about sports. It is true that young people can sense sincerity and will trust those who show them by example that they care. My development in basketball led us to a crossroads where you greatly assisted in my earning a full basketball scholarship to West Virginia University. Your call to your former teammate George King, who was the new Head coach at WVU, set my path towards higher education and college basketball. "THANK" you for helping me to gain that wonderful opportunity!

My "GRATITUDE" remained strong as you also helped me to get my first job after college with Chrysler in Detroit, Michigan. Two years later, you made another call to Ed Martin at Tennessee State University and he hired me as his graduate assistant coach purely on your recommendation. I just retired from a fifty year coaching career which was inspired by watching you coach during a time when I was not sure of a career choice. I am so "GRATEFUL" that like you, I have hopefully touched the lives of young people through a Ministry of coaching!

I "LOVED" my father and next to him, you were the most significant male figure in my life. When I was able to bring you to Fordham University to speak to the student athletes, we all felt your loving words of wisdom. When you were inducted in to the Naismith Basketball Hall Of Fame, I drove from our home in Stamford, Connecticut to join in with the crowds as you walked by so that I could shake your hand and show my "LOVE". When you had the gym floor at T.C. Williams High School in our hometown of Alexandria named after you, I was thrilled to introduce you before I coached the girls team that marvelous day. When I called to check on your health and share my latest coaching opportunity, you always said to keep riding that horse and that you loved me ... I always knew that you did from that first encounter on the playground in Alexandria in 1958 and I know that you knew and felt my "LOVE" for you as well!

Rest in Peace in Eternity as your work on GOD's earth was well done!

Jimmy Lewis

Ron Thomas

“They Cleared the Lane”

Director, Morehouse College
Journalism and Sports Program

A house cannot stand for long without a strong foundation. Neither can a man of great character like Earl Lloyd, who frequently praised his foundation that was laid by the black men and women of Alexandria, Virginia.

Earl was raised by struggling but proud folks when strict racial segregation was the practice and the law of the land in his hometown. So it's truly fitting that the statue that celebrates Earl's incredible success at Parker-Gray High School, West Virginia State College, and as the first black player in an NBA game will now be a focal point of the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame.

As I interviewed Earl many times for my book “They Cleared the Lane: the NBA's Black Pioneers,” he often spoke about the people he revered who shaped him. “In my hometown, I could have started a role model agency: two older brothers, my Mom and Dad, my teachers and your coaches,” he said. “You just knew what was expected of you. If we had a curfew, the whole town knew it.”

His father, Theodore Lloyd, supported the family by working in a coal yard, but if there was balloting for sainthood, Earl would have voted for his mother, Daisy Lloyd. “Cleanliness is next to Godliness” would have been her motto, and it served Earl well throughout his life. He was always respectful, well-scrubbed and well-dressed. If someone rejected him, it might be because of his color, but not because of his behavior or attire.

Earl's high school basketball coach, Louis Johnson, showed him what respect and trust looked like. “Never raised his voice, never cursed, but he was the man,” Earl recalled. So when Coach Johnson recommended his alma mater, West Virginia State, to Earl and his mother, no other college mattered. The coach was right. Playing for Johnson's college teammate, Mark Cardwell, Earl's teams went 80-14 and in 1947-48 became the CIAA's first undefeated team.

But you didn't need to be a parent or someone with a title to impact Earl's life. Just the fact that Alexandria's black adults left their sofas to watch Earl and his peers play basketball on dirt courts on Friday nights made him feel appreciated as a teenager.

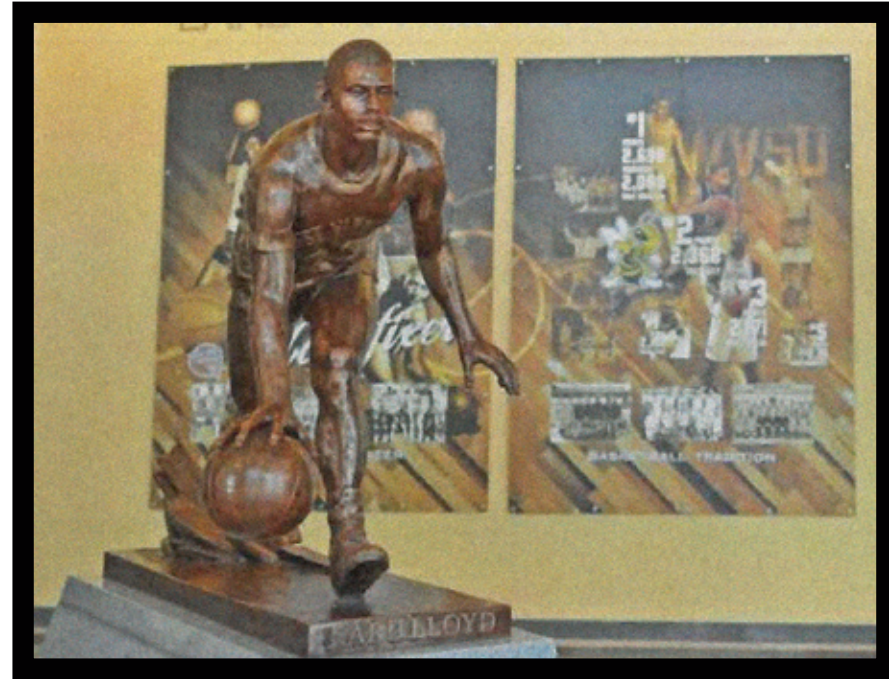
Today, black youth have evidence everywhere that intelligence and diligence can be rewarded. Look no farther than former President Barack Obama, current Vice President Kamala Harris or Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III to know that is true.

But Earl was raised in Alexandria when such stature could not have been imagined by its black residents. A black policeman wasn't hired here until Earl was 37 years old, so the foundation beneath his feet was based on adults in this community having blind faith in the future.

Let's all thank Earl's wife, Charlita Lloyd, for donating to this Hall of Fame a duplicate of the statue West Virginia State erected in his honor. There could be no better tribute to the black people of Alexandria who lifted Earl with their love.

A STREET NAMED

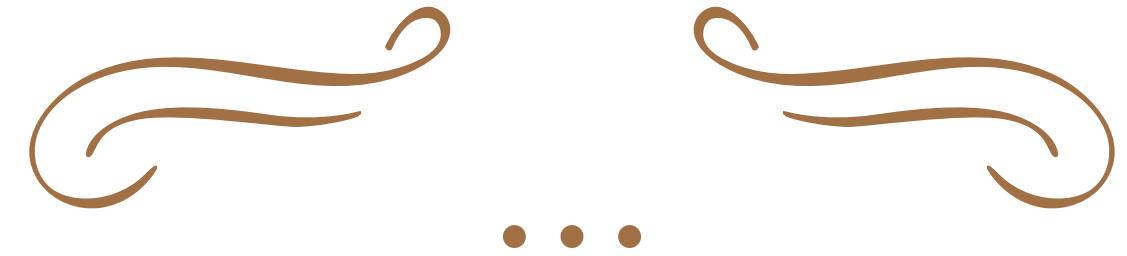
Earl



1020 MONTGOMERY STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA -

On Saturday, Alexandria City Council will consider an honorary street name proposal for a groundbreaking athlete who hailed from the city. The Alexandria African American Hall of Fame proposed naming a section of Montgomery Street for the late Earl Lloyd, an Alexandria resident who was the first African American athlete to play in an NBA game.

The name "Earl F. Lloyd Way" in the 1000 block of Montgomery Street would honor Lloyd and recognize his legacy in the community, according to a city staff report. This block of Montgomery Street between North Henry Street and North Patrick Street is the site of his childhood home in the Parker-Gray area.



In the application, the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame described Lloyd as a pioneer who came before Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Julius Erving, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Bill Russell, and Wilt Chamberlain. He is credited with helping to "knock down the barriers of racism in the NBA, showing the rest of the world that African Americans know how to play the game of basketball on the highest level."

Lloyd grew up in a segregated community known as "The Berg," attending segregated public schools in Alexandria and graduating with honors. As one of Parker-Gray's most celebrated student athletes, he went on to West Virginia State with a basketball scholarship and helped his team win two CIAA Championships. In 1950, he was selected by the former Washington Capitols, one of three African Americans drafted into the NBA that year. After his playing career ended in 1960, he became the first Black coach in the NBA and was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2003. Lloyd died in 2015.

The Alexandria Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the name. The property owner on both sides of the Montgomery Street block, the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, endorsed the request.

ROBERT N. DAWKINS, Founder of AAAHOF



The Visit

Joe Biden's dad was a stock holder of the Syracuse Nationals Basketball Team. He and his dad often went to the games and saw Earl as a player. As you know Earl was the only black player on the team at that time.

Well, fast forward to 2010 when Earl and I went vacationing in DC, we got a call from Vice President Joe Biden inviting us to visit him in his White House office. Wow, what a wonderful surprise. Come to find out the Vice President Biden got my cell number from Sean Kirst, friend and author of Earl's book (The Basketball Journey of Earl Lloyd). The visit was marvelous!!! Vice President Biden then took us down the hall to meet President Obama but, unfortunately the President was just taking off to another engagement, so we just missed him.

Now, it's 2012 and we got a call from Vice President Biden's office inviting us to attend the "Motown Concert" which was to be held in the White House ... again, yippee, wow!!! Of course, it was a grand event and we enjoyed every minute of it. Being from Detroit we knew all of the entertainers personally; Detroit is a big city but a small town, at least for all of us old timers. What a fabulous evening!!!

Thinking back those were really fun and happy times.

Sincerely,

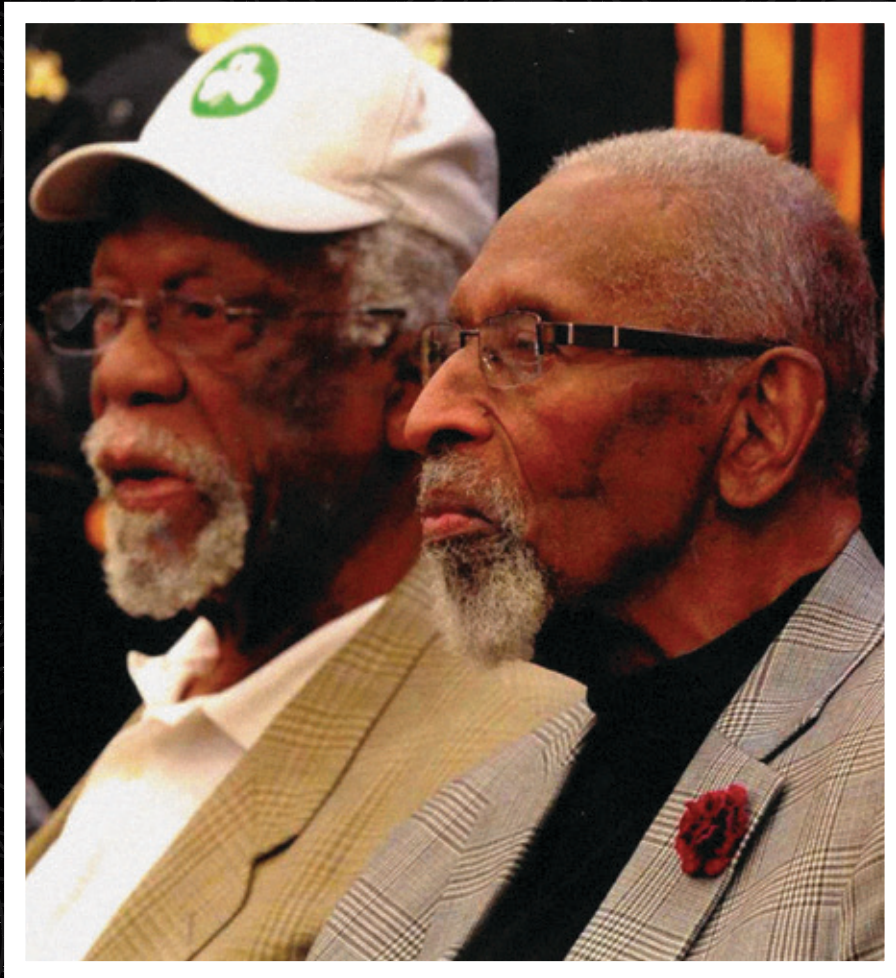
Charlita Lloyd

Destination *The White House*



**Charlita D. Lloyd, Vice President
Joseph R. Biden and Earl F. Lloyd**

Men Of Stature



William F. (Bill) Russell and Earl Francis Lloyd at the unveiling of the Earl Lloyd statue March 7, 2014, West Virginia State University.



NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION

ADAM SILVER
COMMISSIONER

April 3, 2021

Mr. Robert Dawkins
Mr. Julian Haley, Jr.
Alexandria African American Hall of Fame
901 Wythe Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Messrs. Dawkins and Haley:

On behalf of the NBA, thank you for celebrating Earl Lloyd and his extraordinary accomplishments. As the first Black player to play in an NBA game, Earl was a true pioneer whose impact is still felt around the league more than 70 years after his debut. We are proud to join the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame, Mayor Wilson and the City of Alexandria in unveiling Earl's statue, which will honor his legacy forever.

Very truly yours,

Unveiling Earl F. Lloyd Statue Handprints

ALEXANDRIA AFRICAN AMERICAN HALL OF FAME

Robert N. Dawkins, Founder, Project Director • Julian "Butch" Haley, Jr., Chairman

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Debra Collins

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

James Spengler, Director • Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director
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Councilwoman Canek Aguirre • Councilman John Taylor Chapman
Councilwoman Amy B. Jackson • Councilwoman Redella S. Pepper
Councilman Mohamed E. Seifeldin

STATUE UNVEILING VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS

Co Host Julian "Butch" Haley, Jr. • Co Host Jimmy Lewis
Reverend Professor Quardricos Driskell, Pastor Beulah Baptist Church
Mayor Justin Wison • Senator Mark Warner • Governor Ralph Northam
West Virginia State University Head Coach Bryan Poore • Sports Analyst Tony Dungy
David Lloyd • Kevin Lloyd • Kenny Lloyd • Reggie Lloyd
Former West Virginia State Teammate Dr. Frank Enty • Mentee O.J. McGhee
Former NBA Assistant Coach Ray Scott • Sports Analyst James Brown
NBA Commissioner Adam Silver • Advisor Philadelphia 76'ers Sonny Hill
Owner Washington Wizards Ted Leonsis • Former NBA Player Dave Bing

Unveiling Earl F. Lloyd Statue Handprints

"CLEARING THE LANE"

Author Ron Thomas

"MOON FIXER"

Sean Kirst

PHOTO'S COURTESY OF

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Le Moyne College • West Virginia State University

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Charlita Lloyd

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“A Revelation”

Robert N. Dawkins

Hoop Academy International INC.

& Derek Lymus

Alexandria African American Hall of Fame, Honoree

In 1997 at the request of Robert Dawkins, Director of Hoop Academy International Inc., I Derek Lymus, Director of Video Productions for Hoop Academy Project, had the distinct pleasure of conducting an impromptu interview with Alexandria’s most celebrated Hall of Fame Basketball Player Earl F. Lloyd. It was during an event in honor of Earl F. Lloyd at Bolling Air Force Base that I began to interview Earl for the next 15 years on different occasions. I cannot recall whether one interview was more significant than the other, however 10 years after I had met Earl, I had no idea that I would be interviewing him in his home.

At the request of Mr. Dawkins, in 2007, I was en route to Crossville, Tennessee, with Video production equipment and cameraman Rodney Clark in tow as a welcomed guest in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd, to conduct a unique and unprecedented interview, (that included lodging and superb hospitality) with Earl Lloyd and Harley “Skeeter” Swift, a former National Basketball Association (NBA) player, who is also a native Alexandrian residing in Tennessee.

This three-day interview was one that rarely occurs involving two living legends from the same hometown, one black disadvantaged, one white privileged from different sides of the tracks. Earl grew up during extreme racial Segregation with limited resources, and where the system was designed for him and all black people to fail.

Skeeter, on the other hand, who is white, grew up during integration and with white privileges. During the interview Earl stated that Skeeter was a very unique individual and that there will never be another Harley “Skeeter” Swift story in Alexandria again. You see, from kindergarten through his college graduation, Earl F. Lloyd, growing up Alexandria, Virginia never had a white classmate much less a white friend.

Robert Dawkins, HOOP ACADEMY DIRECTOR, another Skeeter Swift

observer stated, “Skeeter was unique and blessed, because he was able to enjoy life on both sides of the Tracks.” As a result of these blessings, he was never inconvenienced or denied the opportunity to journey to the other side of the tracks to satisfy his curiosity about some unresolved issues he had concerning his ability to compete with talented inner-city African Americans.

The lesson Skeeter learned from these experiences speak for itself, because of the multitude of distinguished and prestigious awards he accumulated during his career.

Although they played in the NBA, and are from the same hometown, these legends had never met until this historical occasion. Here I was in Earl’s home for three days of videotaping an eloquent, unrehearsed, and unapologetic account of their life’s experiences. There are no words I can use to express the emotions that engulfed me during this interview, which resonate within me to this day. I am blessed and honored to have had two such legends of affluence and influence, to indiscriminately deem me and the Hoop Academy worthy and responsible enough to document their profound life stories. Without their understanding, sacrifices, and patience we could not have shared and preserved their rich legacies.

Today Saturday April 3, 2021 we celebrate Earl Francis Lloyd’s Legacy by unveiling an 8-foot bronze statue at the former site of his alma mater Parker-Gray High School and the current Charles Houston Recreation Center in Alexandria, VA.

There will never be another Earl Francis Lloyd story!!

“Happy Birthday”

Earl

Welcome Home

Visit AAAHOF.org for the Tracks Black &
White Skeeter Swift & Earl Lloyd

"Legacy Matters"

EARL F. LLOYD

