

50th Annual Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches Awards Banquet

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Baton Rouge Marriott
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

BATON ROUGE, LA --- A high-flying player from Monroe, along with coaching legends from Baton Rouge and Natchitoches, were the major honorees at Saturday's 50th Annual Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches Awards Banquet.

Inducted into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame was former University of Louisiana at Monroe star Carlos Funchess.

Former long-time Scottdale Magnet High School coach Carlos Sample received the LABC's Mr. Louisiana Basketball award. This award is given annually to someone who has made a significant, long-term contribution to the game of basketball at any level in the State of Louisiana.

Former long-time Northwestern State University coach and athletic director Tynes Hildebrand received the LABC's Don Landry Award. This award is given periodically to someone who has rendered distinguished service and made a significant contribution to the LABC.

Also honored at the banquet were Louisiana's major college, small college, junior college and high school basketball players and coaches of the year, along with the top pro player from the state.

Funchess played at UL-Monroe (then known as Northeast Louisiana University) from 1989 to 1991, where he was the Southland Conference Co-Player of the Year in 1991 and a two-time first team All-SLC selection. He finished his two-year career with 1,044 points for a 16.6 average. He also averaged 6.2 rebounds and shot over 54.1% from the field and 44.2% behind the three-point line. He averaged 19.4 points and 5.8 rebounds in 1991, and 13.4 points and 6.6 rebounds in 1990.

He earned acclaim for his tomahawk dunks and contributions to some of the school's greatest teams, including two Southland Conference regular season and tournament championships and two NCAA Tournament appearances. Following his senior season, he won the 1991 slam dunk national championship during the NCAA Final Four in Indianapolis and earned North MVP honors during the LABC's North-South All-Star Game.

Decades later, Funchess has established himself as an outstanding women's basketball coach as well, leading Southern University to two Southwestern Athletic Conference championships and two NCAA Tournament appearances in five seasons.

Sample stepped down last year as the head basketball coach at Scotlandville Magnet High School after 16 seasons and one of the most prolific tenures in Louisiana high school basketball history, in which he won 482 games and had an 85% winning percentage.

While at Scotlandville he had three nationally-ranked teams, won eight state championships and had six state runner-up finishes, which included an unprecedented 14 straight state title game appearances in Louisiana's highest classification. He also produced two high school All-Americans, four Louisiana Gatorade Players of the Year and eight Class 5A state players of the year. During his overall 26-year high school head coaching career, which included a nine-year stint at Istrouma and one season at Livonia, he won a total of 676 games.

Prior to coaching, Sample starred as a two-time All-Southwestern Athletic Conference player at Southern University from 1987 to 1990, where he scored almost 1,400 points and handed out almost 500 assists.

Hildebrand was one of the charter members of the LABC Board of Directors in 1974, serving as one of the original officers and then as the third President in 1977-78. He was an instrumental voice in growing the LABC from its founding and often served as the master of ceremonies of the LABC's annual awards banquet. He was also the head coach of the victorious North squad in the second annual LABC College All-Star Game in 1977.

He coached at Northwestern State University from 1965 to 1980, where he won 191 games and two consecutive Gulf South Conference championships and received two conference Coach of the Year awards.

Hildebrand received the LABC's Mr. Louisiana Basketball award in 1981 and was inducted into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 1992, the Southland Conference Hall of Honor in 1999 and the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame in 2014.

After retiring from coaching, Hildebrand served as Northwestern State's Athletics Director from 1983 to 1996, and later as one of four regional officiating advisors for NCAA Division I men's basketball from 2006 to 2015.

The LABC also presented the Pete Maravich Memorial Award, honoring Louisiana's Major College Player of the Year, to graduate guard Shahada Wells of McNeese State. This season Wells was a CollegeInsider All-American and the Southland Conference Player of the Year and Newcomer of the Year, as well as the Most Valuable Player of the SLC Tournament. He averaged 17.8 points, 4.7 assists, 4.5 rebounds and 2.97 steals (2nd in nation). His single game highs were 37 points, 10 rebounds, 9 assists, 6 steals, 5 three-point field goals made and 3 blocked shots. Wells led McNeese State to the SLC regular season and tournament championships and to a 12th seed in the NCAA Tournament with a 30-4 record.

Coach Donte' Jackson of Grambling State received the Tommy Joe Eagles Memorial Award as Louisiana's Major College Coach of the Year. He led the Tigers to the Southwestern

Athletic Conference regular season and tournament championships and to a thrilling First Four victory in the NCAA Tournament with a 21-15 record. It was Grambling State's first-ever NCAA Division I Tournament berth. Jackson was named the SWAC Coach of the Year and received CollegeInsider's Ben Jobe Award as the nation's top minority head coach.

Freshman forward Jamal Gibson of Southern-New Orleans received the Louisiana Small College Player of the Year award after being named a third team NAIA All-American. He was also the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year and Freshman of the Year, while averaging 21.0 points, 15.8 rebounds (2nd in nation), 2.4 blocked shots (5th in nation) and 1.4 steals, including 28 double-double games.

First-year coach Dimario Jackson of LSU-Alexandria, who was named the Louisiana Small College Coach of the Year, guided the Generals to the Red River Athletic Conference regular season and tournament championships and to the first round of the NAIA National Tournament with a 24-7 record. Jackson was also named the RRAC Coach of the Year.

Zyquarius Cowart of Southern-Shreveport and Coach Byron Starks of Baton Rouge were honored as the Louisiana Junior College Player and Coach of the Year, respectively. Cowart, a sophomore guard, averaged 17.4 points, 7.5 rebounds and 1.6 steals and was the Louisiana Community Colleges Athletic Conference Co-Player of the Year. In his first season at Baton Rouge, Starks led the Bears to the LCCAC championship and the quarterfinals of the NJCAA Region 23 Tournament, while earning LCCAC Coach of the Year honors. This is the fifth straight year that Starks has received this award.

The Bob Pettit Award, which is given to Louisiana's Professional Player of the Year, was presented to guard Cam Thomas of the Brooklyn Nets. In his third year in the NBA, the former LSU star averaged 22.5 points and had a 36.4% three-point field goal percentage and an 85.6% free throw percentage. He had four 40+ point games and fifteen 30+ point games, along with single game highs of 45 points, 8 rebounds, 8 assists and 6 three-point field goals made.

2024 LABC Honorees:

Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame Inductee: Carlos Funchess, UL-Monroe

Mr. Louisiana Basketball: Carlos Sample, Scotlandville

Don Landry Award: Tynes Hildebrand, Northwestern St.

Bob Pettit Award for the Louisiana Professional Player of the Year: Cam Thomas, Brooklyn Nets

Pete Maravich Memorial Award for the Louisiana Major College Player of the Year: Shahada Wells, McNeese St.

Tommy Joe Eagles Memorial Award for the Louisiana Major College Coach of the Year: Donte' Jackson, Grambling St.

Louisiana Small College Player of the Year: Jamal Gibson, Southern-New Orleans

Louisiana Small College Coach of the Year: Dimario Jackson, LSU-Alexandria

Louisiana Junior College Player of the Year: Zyquarius Cowart, Southern-Shreveport

Louisiana Junior College Coach of the Year: Byron Starks, Baton Rouge

Louisiana High School Players of the Year:

Class AAAAA: Allen Graves, Ponchatoula

Class AAAA: Daijon Leatherman, Carver

Class AAA: Dashawn Ceasar, Iowa

Class AA: Jay'Shaun Johnson, Franklin

Class A: Dwight Magee, Crescent City

Class B: Jalen Brown, Avoyelles Public Charter

Class C: DeAvery Durham, Gibsland-Coleman

Louisiana High School Coaches of the Year:

Class AAAAA: Brandon White, Liberty

Class AAAA: Charles Smith, Peabody

Class AAA: Alex Perkins, Marksville

Class AA: Tremayne Johnson, Franklin

Class A: Brandon Russ, Crescent City

Class B: Gary Henry, Negreet

Class C: Roger Jones, Gibsland-Coleman