

JOHN ARTHURS

*Note: This is the **second** in a series of three articles on this year's inductees into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame. The 2001 inductees are Bobby Phills, John Arthurs and P.J. Brown.*

FORMER TULANE STAR JOHN ARTHURS TO BE INDUCTED INTO LOUISIANA BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME

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Written for the LABC

NEW ORLEANS --- Johnny Arthurs roomed and played with the great Lew Alcindor. For the younger generation, Alcindor changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and became one of professional basketball's wonders.

Arthurs also played against Mandrake the Magician, a/k/a Pistol Pete Maravich.

In other words, Arthurs has sweat with the best of 'em, from his days as a kid shooter at Wisner Playground in New Orleans until he was eventually drafted by the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks in the sixth round of the 1969 NBA Draft.

The 6-4, 190-pound forward has his name sprinkled throughout Tulane University's record book. Add a dash of Zatarain's crayfish boil here, a pinch of Chef Paul Prudhomme there and just enough Tony Chachere's and Johnny's years at Tulane (1966-69) will leave a lasting taste with Louisiana sports fans.

Arthurs, at first blush, would seem an unlikely candidate for his latest honor: he was elected into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame, where he will be inducted on July 19 in Baton Rouge, along with former Southern great Bobby Phills and ex-Louisiana Tech star P.J. Brown. When asked about his career, Arthurs would simply talk about others.

On Maravich: "He was ahead of his time. He was a good ball-handler and had great court awareness. Pete was impossible to stop one-on-one. It was always great to play him. He was an exceptional individual."

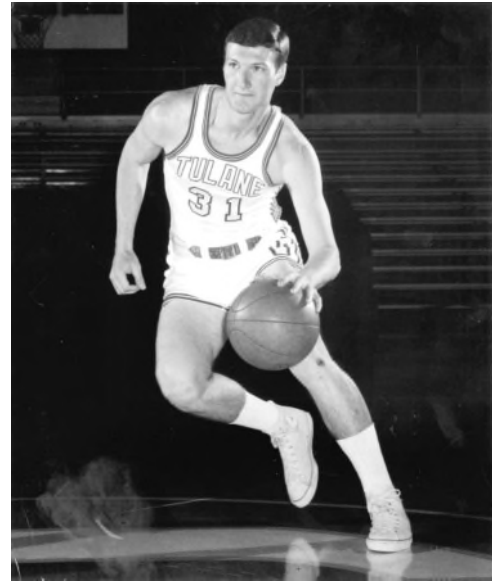


On Jabbar: "It was clear to me at that time that Alcindor was destined to be the greatest of all times."

Then, "Would it be possible for me to say something about my coaches, please?"

Arthurs was an outstanding performer at De La Salle high school just down St. Charles Avenue from Tulane and as graduation neared recruiters swarmed around the youngster like hungry mosquitoes. The scholarship offers were many. When he chose Tulane many asked why not play away from home.

Thirty-plus years later Arthurs still finds the question easy to answer.



"The proudest moment in my basketball career was when I set the all-time scoring record at Tulane against Georgia Tech," he said. "The game was stopped to present me the game ball. I will never forget being able to acknowledge that ovation and seeing my family there in the stands to see the moment."

Another highlight, Arthurs recollected, was playing against Alcindor and national champion UCLA in Pauley Pavilion. "Playing against Alcindor in my senior year influenced my decision to sign with the Milwaukee Bucks instead of the ABA New Orleans Bucs," Arthurs said.

He often wonders what it would have been like to have signed with the ABA Bucs and "completed a unique New Orleans cycle" of having played at home from playground through professional basketball.

"I am grateful for Ronnie Aucoin at Wisner, Johnny Altobello at De La Salle and Ralph Pedersen at Tulane who were my mentors," Arthurs said. "They shared their knowledge of the game and we still have that lifetime friendship."

After averaging 15.4 points per game as a sophomore in 1967 and 19.4 points as a junior in 1968, Arthurs achieved All-American status during his senior season in 1969.

That year he set a school single season scoring record, with an average of 25.6 points per game. He was named to the Helms Athletic Foundation All-American squad and was an honorable mention selection to the UPI All-American team.

Arthurs finished his three-year career as the leading scorer in Tulane history, with 1,501 points for a 20.3 average. He had a single game scoring high of 41 points.

Tulane retired Arthurs' No. 31 in 1993, and his name is indeed engraved in the school's record book and the section reserved for All-Americans.

And in the minds of those who coached him and watched him play.

That's not a bad cycle, Johnny Arthurs!

The Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame, located in LSU's Pete Maravich Assembly Center, is sponsored by the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches. The Hall of Fame was created in 1975 to honor former great basketball players and coaches from Louisiana colleges. The Hall of Fame induction ceremonies will be held in conjunction with the LABC's 27th Annual Hall of Fame Awards Luncheon. The awards luncheon, sponsored by SportsCare, will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge at noon on July 19.

In addition to the induction of the new Hall of Fame members, the luncheon will include recognition of Louisiana's college, junior college and high school players and coaches of the year, the top pro player from the state and the announcement of the recipient of the prestigious Mr. Louisiana Basketball award.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$15 and can be obtained by contacting the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge. The Embassy Suites Hotel is located at 4914 Constitution Avenue in Baton Rouge (exit 158 off Interstate 10).