

GERALD BOUDREAUX

*Note: This is the **third** in a series of three articles on this year's inductees into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame and the LABC's Mr. Louisiana Basketball award recipient. The 2008 inductees will be former star player Paul Thompson of Tulane and former Tulane coach Perry Clark. Mr. Louisiana Basketball for 2008 is long-time referee and current Coordinator of Men's Basketball Officials for the Southeastern Conference, Gerald Boudreaux of Lafayette.*

COACHES' RESPECT PART OF BOUDREAUX'S OFFICIATING LEGACY, LEADS TO TOP LABC HONOR

By: Dan McDonald
Lafayette *Daily Advertiser*
Written for the LABC

LAFAYETTE -- From the time he first officiated a college basketball game in 1983, Gerald Boudreaux didn't think there had to be an adversarial relationship between coaches and referees.

"You can get along with people and still disagree," Boudreaux said. "It happens in politics, in business, in everyday life. Athletics doesn't have to be different. You have to work together in this."

That kind of philosophy must have worked, because the Lafayette native became one of the country's most highly-respected officials in a quarter-century of on-floor work. He earned his way to five NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Final Four appearances and worked the national title game four times in a five-year period.

He obviously earned the respect of the state's basketball coaches, who will honor him with their top award. Boudreaux will receive the "Mr. Louisiana Basketball" award from the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches during the group's 34th annual awards banquet on May 10 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge. The banquet is sponsored by SportsCare and the Baton Rouge Orthopaedic Clinic.

The award is the most prestigious annual honor bestowed by the LABC and is presented to someone who has made a significant long-term contribution to the game of basketball at any level in Louisiana. The winner is selected by the state's men's college basketball coaches.

"There's a number of guys that have officiated in this state that have done an outstanding job," Boudreaux said. "It's just not accepted as much that you honor officials. It's a very positive thing, not just for me but for all the guys that officiate, that an official and coordinator is being recognized. It maybe signals a change in the mind-set of some."



Boudreaux, who stepped off the floor in 2007 to take over as coordinator of men's basketball officials for the Southeastern Conference, is the second official honored by the LABC with the "Mr. Louisiana Basketball" award and the first since 1991. Hurshel Meares of Baton Rouge was so honored that year.

It's not the first award for Boudreaux, director of the Parks and Recreation Department for Lafayette Consolidated Government. He was honored as the Naismith Men's College Official of the Year by the Atlanta Tipoff Club in 2000, the year he worked the second of his four national title games. He also worked championship games in 1999, 2001 and 2003, and officiated in 16 straight NCAA and SEC Tournaments.

That's a long way from Nov. 27, 1983, when he took the floor in Shreveport for his first college basketball game, a Southland Conference assignment matching Sam Houston State against host Centenary.

But Boudreaux was well prepared for that game, and he is fiercely proud of the time he spent working high school football, baseball and basketball games while attending then-USL. He graduated in education in 1982, and by that time he had become one of the state's most recognized officials in all three sports.

"I was fortunate enough to work state title events in all of those," he said. "I owe an awful lot to all of the officials I worked with during that time. Those were wonderful times."

Not long after moving into the collegiate ranks, he was named Parks and Recreation director in 1985, and balanced those full-time duties with a full officiating schedule for over two decades.

"The people here on the staff of Parks and Recreation, I how a great amount of gratitude for their continued support," he said. "It always wasn't a popular thing for me to be leaving a lot, but I always tried to balance my leaving by trying to do more with the community. I think we positively impacted our community because I was allowed to do some of those things."

Boudreaux's positive impacts have been numerous away from both basketball and his department. He is a past president of the United Way of Acadiana, has served on the board of directors for the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, was a charter member and two-time president of the Kiwanis Club of Southwest Lafayette and currently serves on boards for the Lourdes Foundation, the Miles Perret Center and the Community Foundation of Acadiana. He has also served as chairperson of the Martin Luther King Holiday Committee since 1993 and on the UL-Lafayette Athletic Council since its inception in 1994.

But his most visible image has been on a basketball court, and he has brought recognition to his community through those images. The LABC adds its own recognition in making him the third "Mr. Louisiana Basketball" recipient with Acadiana roots, joining honored coaches Don Landry (1980) and Beryl Shipley (1985).

“I’m very humbled by this,” he said. “Any time you’re recognized by the people around you it’s a great honor. I have to share this with a lot of people because I’ve had a good supporting cast, a lot who helped lay a foundation.

“I’ve always said that in order to have a successful basketball event, you need good teams, good coaches, good officials and the support of the community. When all of those come together, you have a great package.”

In addition to the honoring of Boudreaux, the banquet will include the induction of two new members into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame. There will also be recognition of Louisiana’s major college, small college, junior college and high school players and coaches of the year, along with the top pro player from the state.

A limited number of tickets for the banquet are available for \$25 and can be reserved by contacting the LABC at labball@gmail.com. The Embassy Suites Hotel is located at 4914 Constitution Avenue in Baton Rouge (College Drive exit off of Interstate 10). You can learn more about the LABC by visiting their website at www.labball.com.

May 5, 2008