

SCOTTY ROBERTSON

*Note: This is the **last** in a series of four articles on this year's inductees into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame and the LABC's 2003 Mr. Louisiana Basketball award recipient. The 2003 inductees are Marlbert Pradd of Dillard, Jerry Reynolds of LSU and Randy White of Louisiana Tech. Mr. Louisiana Basketball for 2003 is Scotty Robertson of Louisiana Tech.*

ROBERTSON HONORED AS "MR. LOUISIANA BASKETBALL"

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RUSTON --- Grab a road map and let's discuss the basketball life and good times of Scotty Robertson.

Point down there on your Rand McNally to tiny Rodessa, Louisiana.

That's where he began a trailblazing career as one of Louisiana's most successful, well-liked and best-known ambassadors to the game.

For three years, Robertson was the head basketball coach at Rodessa High. And also an assistant in football and baseball.

Same thing during two more stops along the Bayou State's prep highway, a trio of seasons at Vivian and then eight years at his alma mater of Shreveport Byrd.

Then, in 1964, Scotty got The Big Break. He was chosen as the head coach at Louisiana Tech University, where he had wound up his college playing career following a one-year stay at the University of Texas in both baseball and basketball.

It was 10 legendary-forming years with the 'Dogs before he went on a whirlwind stay in the NBA. He and wife Betty Lou must have felt like members of the Harlem Globetrotters.

"Nine different cities," Robertson offered. "We had a great time in all of them, met some great people, enjoyed a lot of special moments."

He's going to be savoring another special moment during the 29th Annual Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame Awards Luncheon in Baton Rouge on July 24.

Robertson has been chosen as "Mr. Louisiana Basketball" for 2003 by the organization, a second honor being presented to him by the group of collegiate coaches based in the state; he had previously been inducted into its Hall of Fame in 1983. The Mr. Louisiana Basketball award is



given annually by the LABC to someone who has made a significant contribution to the game of basketball at any level in the State of Louisiana.

This latest recognition for a man who will be in six different Hall of Fames by year's end (Byrd High will honor him this fall for his administrative contributions) is extra special.

"Any award that is related to basketball is special, but this is one I consider as the ultimate because of who votes on it," he said. "When you're voted on for an award by your peers, it means even more. I deeply appreciate it."



Robertson is unique to the state's basketball heritage in that he is the only individual to have been a head coach at every level of the game in Louisiana: high school, college and the NBA.

The many players and staff members who have been a part of the Scotty Robertson legacy certainly appreciate what he has meant to them in their lives, both on and off of the court.

"He instilled in me a constant belief of being persistent about being the very best possible player I could be," said Mike McConathy, head coach at Northwestern State University.

Said Dan Majerle, who played for the Phoenix Suns while Robertson was on that NBA teams' staff: "On the court, he's a great teacher of the game. Off of it, he is the type of person you could always go to about things outside of the sport."

The words of "tough-minded" and "discipline-oriented" were used by veteran NBA head coach Pat Riley to describe the man who was an assistant on his Miami Heats' staff.

"What you see with Scotty is what you get," he said. "He's as natural as they come, the kind of person you want in this game. He related to players very well."

Robertson guided Tech to a 161-86 record from 1964-74, for a career winning percentage of 65.2%. He was a two-time Gulf States Conference Coach of the Year, and his teams won three GSC championships. He led Tech to two NCAA Division II Tournament appearances and a No. 1 national ranking four times. He had seasons of 23-5 in 1971, 23-3 in 1972 and 20-8 in 1967. He left Tech in 1974 to become the first head coach of the NBA's expansion New Orleans Jazz.

Although his stay was short in the Big Easy (he lasted only 16 games), it would establish the foundation for a long career in the NBA as a head coach, interim head coach, assistant or scout. In addition to the Jazz, Robertson served as head coach of the Chicago Bulls in 1979 and Detroit Pistons from 1980 to 1983.

There have been 12 individuals who either played for or served as an assistant to him who later became head coaches in the NBA, 13 if you include Bill Laimbeer with his current at-the-helm post with the WNBA's Detroit Shock. The others include Rudy Tomjonovich, John Lucas, Isiah Thomas, Mike Dunleavy, Danny Ainge, Sidney Lowe, Butch Carter, Frank Johnson, Tim Floyd, Elgin Baylor and Don Chaney.

College players and college assistant coaches linked with Robertson who eventually earned head coaching jobs at the collegiate level include Leon Barmore, Tommy Joe Eagles, Bob Rachel, Tommy Vardeman, Gene Robbins, Don Landry, Benny Hollis, Jim Wooldridge, McConathy and Floyd.

"Charismatic, a great communicator, an outstanding teacher, everything you want in a person who has a leadership role," said Wooldridge, who played for Robertson at Tech and is now head coach at Kansas State University. "He's the full package."

And the "full package" is also "Mr. Louisiana Basketball" for the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches in 2003.

The 2003 awards luncheon, sponsored by SportsCare, will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge at noon on July 24.

In addition to the presentation of the prestigious Mr. Louisiana Basketball award, the luncheon will include the induction of three 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.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$15 and can be obtained by contacting the LABC at labball@gmail.com. The Embassy Suites Hotel is located at 4914 Constitution Avenue in Baton Rouge (exit 158 off Interstate 10). You can learn more about the LABC by visiting its website at www.labball.com.

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