



Earl Lloyd Statue Unveiled

Trailblazer broke the color barrier of the NBA.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Under the glare of a national spotlight, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier for Major League Baseball in 1947. Three years later, on a snowy evening in 1950, a similar but quieter revolution took place when a black man stepped onto a court in Rochester, N.Y., marking the first time an African American played for an NBA team.

That man was Earl Lloyd and on April 3, what would have been Lloyd's 93rd birthday, a statue of the basketball trailblazer was unveiled at a virtual dedication ceremony at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

"Earl Lloyd's legacy goes much deeper than his success as a player on the court or coaching on the sidelines," said Ted Leonsis, owner of the Washington Wizards and Washington Mystics professional basketball teams. "Earl's perseverance paved the way for countless young African American men and women across the country to see for the first time that they, too, could play professionally. This statue will help ensure that all of his life lessons will never be forgotten and those who see it will be reminded of what they can accomplish."

Lloyd's NBA debut passed without fanfare. The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle didn't mention Lloyd, playing for the Washington Capitols, in its game story of the Caps' 78-70 loss to the Rochester Royals. But it was a watershed moment in American history.

Just four years earlier, in 1946, the Alexandria native had graduated from the segregated Parker-Gray High School, now the site of the Charles Houston Rec Center, where athletic teams had to travel to cities such as Roanoke, Charlottesville or Petersburg in an open-bed canvas truck filled with hay because there were no hotels or eating establishments available to African Americans.

Nicknamed "Big Cat," Lloyd would go on to become the first African American to play on an NBA championship team when his Syracuse Nationals defeated the Fort Wayne Pistons in 1955. In 1960, the Detroit Pistons took him on as the NBA's first black assistant coach



Alexandria African American Hall of Fame committee members Julian "Butch" Haley Jr., Robert Dawkins and Jimmy Lewis stand in front of the Earl Lloyd statue April 3 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



Earl Lloyd made history as the first African American to play in the NBA when he took to the court for the Washington Capitols on Oct. 31, 1950, in Rochester, N.Y.

and, later, he would be hired as the league's first African American

bench coach. In 1971, he became the NBA's fourth black head coach.

Tony Dungy, the first African American head coach to win a Super Bowl, grew up in the Detroit area when Lloyd was named head coach of the Pistons.

"Earl was a pioneer and a trailblazer and had an impact on so many lives, including mine," Dungy said. "When Earl became head coach of the Pistons, that was a landmark occasion that told me as a young athlete I could strive not only to be a player but someday to be a coach. And as I sat there in Super Bowl 41 as the first African American coach to win a Super Bowl, I thought back to Earl Lloyd and what he did to blaze the trail for us."

As a high school basketball star, Lloyd was named to the All-South Atlantic Conference three times and the All-State Virginia Inter-



Karen Lloyd and Cornelius Lloyd, the niece and nephew of Earl Lloyd, unveil the statue of their uncle at the April 3 dedication at the Charles Houston Recreation Center. Earl Lloyd was the first African American to play in the NBA, breaking the color barrier in 1950.

scholastic Conference twice. Following his graduation from Parker-Gray, the 6'6" Lloyd attended West Virginia State College, where

he led the school to two Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association Conference and Tournament Championships in 1948 and 1949. Lloyd was named All-Conference three times and was All-American twice.

"This statue will help ensure that all of [Earl's] life lessons will never be forgotten and those who see it will be reminded of what they can accomplish."

—Ted Leonsis, owner of the Washington Wizards and Washington Mystics basketball teams

Following his college graduation in 1950, Lloyd was drafted into the NBA by the Washington Capitols. After seven games, he was drafted into the Army during the Korean War.

He returned to basketball in 1952 with the Syracuse Nationals.

In 1958, Lloyd moved to Detroit, where he played two

seasons with the Pistons before retiring as a player and moving to Alexandria.

SEE EARL LLOYD, ON PAGE 3

City Council Palooza

Meet the 13 candidates for six slots on Alexandria City Council.

Primary is June 6; early voting begins April 23.

See pages 4-5

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

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FROM PAGE 1

into coaching. In 2003, he was enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame. Lloyd was inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 1993 and the CIAA Hall of fame in 1998. In 2001, Alexandria celebrated Earl Lloyd Day and in 2007, the new basketball court at T.C. Williams High School was named in his honor.

Additional speakers for the ceremony featured sports and political notables, including CBS broadcaster James Brown, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, NBA Hall of Famers Dave Bing and Sonny Hill, Detroit Pistons coach Ray Scott, Sen. Mark Warner, Gov. Ralph Northam, Mayor Justin Wilson and Lloyd's sons Kenneth, Kevin and David.

Dr. Frank Enty was a teammate of Lloyd's in college.

"This means more than just a statue," Enty said. "It shows that someone coming from humble beginnings, from a segregated school in Alexandria, could rise and become a notable figure in the history of athletics. It means that any youngster who has the ambition, the determination, the stick-to-itiveness can also rise to great heights. That is what the statue really represents."



Earl Lloyd, serving as the 2006 George Washington Birthday Parade grand marshal, talks with members of the T.C. Williams JROTC program before the start of the parade.

The 8-foot statue of Lloyd, who died in 1915, was crafted by Brian Hanlon, the official sculptor for the NBA's Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. It is on display as part of the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame located at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

Said NBA Commissioner Silver: "More than 70 years after his debut, Earl Lloyd's impact is still being felt around the league."

www.alexandriaafricanamericanhalloffame.org



The West Virginia State College collegiate letter sweater of Earl Lloyd on display at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



Earl Lloyd, front row center, graduated from the segregated Parker-Gray High School in 1946. With him in front: Coach Louis Johnson, William "Red" Jackson, Rozier Ware, Horace Burton, Oliver Ellis and Henry Brooks. Back: Lee McCoy, Albert Burts, Robert "Tex" Matthews, Francis McGee, Louis Napper and Willie Rice.



Playing for the Syracuse Nationals, Earl Lloyd (11), battles Fort Wayne's Mel Hutchins (9) for a rebound during an NBA championship game on April 5, 1955. With the series victory, Lloyd and teammate Jim Tucker became the first African Americans to become NBA champions.

Hop to It Lee-Fendall holds annual Easter Egg Hunt.

The Lee-Fendall House held its annual Easter Egg Hunt March 27 on the grounds of the historic building complete with a socially distanced visit from the Easter Bunny. With warm temperatures and sunny skies, families and children gathered to search for the hidden treasures.

An additional day of Easter Egg Hunts was held April 3 in the Lee-Fendall garden.

www.leefendallhouse.org.

- JEANNE THEISMANN



The Prakob family, with daughters Kyra and Karyn, enjoy their found Easter eggs at the March 27 Lee-Fendall House Easter egg hunt.



The Easter Bunny greets twins Blake and Brynn Wheeler at the March 27 annual Lee-Fendall House Easter egg hunt.



Children and families count their found reassures on the ground of the Lee-Fendall House during the March 27 Easter egg hunt.



Owen Woodbury holds one of his Easter eggs while brother Colin pretends to be the Easter Bunny at the March 27 Lee-Fendall House Easter egg hunt.



Lisa and Brandon Wheeler with twins Brynn and Blake at the Lee-Fendall Easter egg hunt March 27.



Mercedes, Andrew and Skye Sigfrids at the March 27 Lee-Fendall House annual Easter egg hunt.

Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

SERVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

AUGUST 5, 2021



Canada's Andre de Grasse, center, races for the gold medal ahead of Americans Kenneth Bednarek, left and Noah Lyles.



Principal Pete Balas, left, with Noah Lyles' mother Keisha Cain Bishop at the Aug. 2 Tokyo Olympics watch party at Alexandria City High School.



Alexandria's Noah Lyles wraps himself in the U.S. flag following his bronze medal run of 19.74 seconds in the men's 200-meter final Aug. 4 at the Tokyo Olympics.

Noah Lyles Takes Bronze

Chance for gold in 4x100m final Aug. 6

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria's Noah Lyles, one of the most talked about athletes leading up to the Tokyo Olympic Games, left the world's biggest athletic stage with a bronze medal in the men's 200-meter final Aug. 4 at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo.

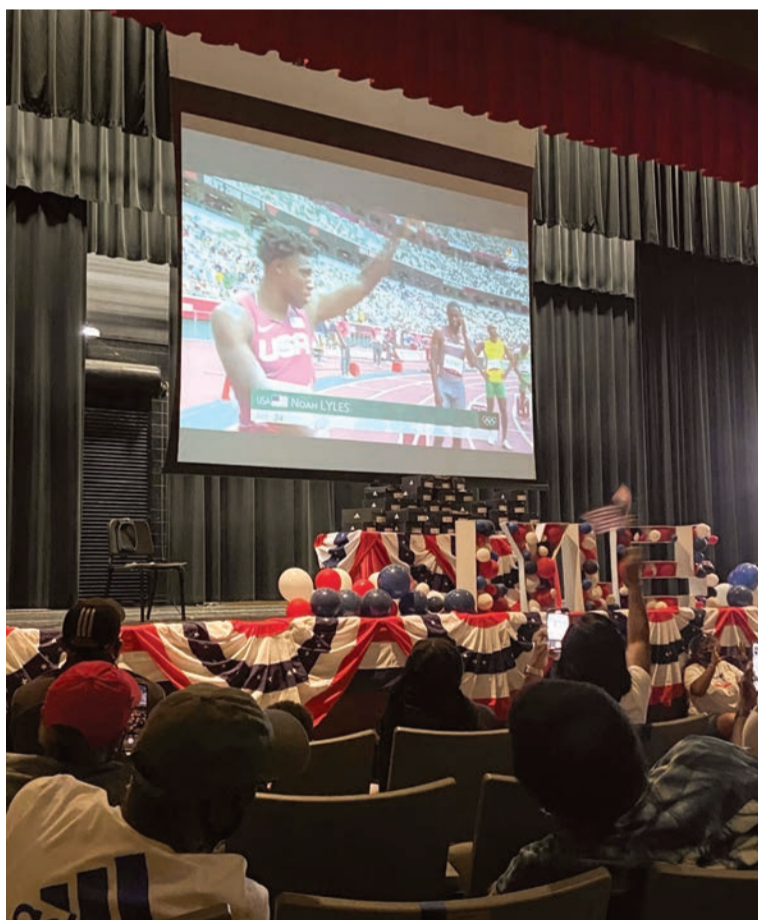
"I've dreamed of being on this track for five long years," Lyles said after his semifinal heat Aug. 3.

Canada's Andre de Grasse took home the men's gold medal with a personal best 19.62 seconds. Lyles' USA teammate Kenneth Bednarek took silver in 19.68, also a personal best, with Lyles finishing in 19.74.

Lyles was seen as a contender for 200-meter gold following Usain Bolt's retirement in 2017. Bolt's world record in the 200 meter was set in 2009 at 19.19 seconds. Lyles missed a spot on the 2016 Olympic team by six-hundredths of a second.

Before coming to the Olympics, Lyles won two world championship gold medals in 2016 for the 200m and 4x100m. He most recently won two world championship gold medals for the 200m and 4x100m relay in 2019. His fastest time in the 200m was 19.50 seconds in 2019, making him the fourth-fastest man in the world in the 200m.

Lyles was a high school stand-out at what was then T.C. Williams High School, where he graduated in 2016. His younger brother Josephus, also a professional sprinter, joined their mother Keisha Cain



A crowd watches Noah Lyles on a big screen as he takes to the starting line of the 200m qualifying heat Aug. 2 at the Tokyo Olympics watch party at Alexandria City High School.

"I've dreamed of being on this track for five long years."

— Noah Lyles after his 200m semifinal heat.

Bishop at Alexandria City High School Aug. 2 where the Lyles Brothers Sports Foundation sponsored a watch party to cheer on Lyles

during his qualifying 200m heat. Lyles still has a chance for a gold medal Aug. 6 when he is expected to run in the men's 4x100m final.



Josephus Lyles poses for photos during the Aug. 2 Tokyo Olympics watch party for his brother Noah at Alexandria City High School.



Noah Lyles' mother and brother, Keisha Cain Bishop and Josephus Lyles, center, watch Noah Lyles run his 200m qualifying heat during a Tokyo Olympics watch party Aug. 2 at Alexandria City High School.

PHOTOS BY
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25 CENTS

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JULY 22, 2021

40 Under 40 Chamber honors young business leaders.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria's business community gathered July 15 at The Alexandrian Hotel to celebrate the Chamber ALX's 40 Under 40 class of 2021 honorees.

Chosen from a broad range of nominations earlier this year, each honoree was selected for their professional accomplishments, scholastic achievement and community impact.

Presented by Beyer Subaru, the 40 Under 40 program was established in 2016 to recognize those age 40 and under engaged in a variety of fields including business, technology, nonprofit management, civic life, public service, education, and the arts, who are shaping Alexandria for the future.

In addition to the 40 Under 40 business honorees, the Chamber ALX recognized 2021 Alexandria City High School graduates Lorraine Johnson and Ashley Sanchez-Viafara with the organization's first Youth Honoree awards.

The Chamber ALX 2021 40 Under 40 honorees are: Amanda Alderson, National Industries for the Blind; Morgan Babcock, The Carlyle Council; Rachel Baer, Esq., Family First Law Group; Jackie Barbarito, Goodwin House; MI-SEE 40 UNDER 40. ON PAGE 10



The Chamber ALX 40 Under 40 honorees Michelle Smith Howard, Natasha Walters and Morgan Middleton smile together before the awards ceremony July 15 at The Alexandrian Hotel.



Honoree Jake Truex, right, poses in the Booth-o-Rama photobooth at the Chamber ALX's 40 Under 40 celebration July 15 at The Alexandrian Hotel.



The Chamber ALX's class of 2021 40 Under 40 honorees gather for a group photo July 15 at The Alexandrian Hotel.

PHOTOS BY KIP RADT/JASON DIXSON PHOTOGRAPHY

Blazing a Trail Aces' Hammond lone female Ripken League coach.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Jennifer Hammond may be the new kid on the block when it comes to the coaching staff of the Alexandria Aces but she is no stranger to a baseball field. The Alexandria native is well known as a player and coach throughout the region and as the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League begins its playoffs, she is blazing a trail as the league's lone female baseball coach.

"Unfortunately, it is still a rarity to see females coaching baseball," said Hammond during the team's July 14 practice at Frank Mann Field. "I think that some of the players were a little unsure at first but they have been very respectful and have come to recognize that I've been around the game and have some knowledge of the sport."

In her first season with the Aces, Ham-



Alexandria Aces pitching coach Jennifer Hammond, the only female coach in the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League, has helped lead the team into second place in the standings. Playoffs run July 24-31.

JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

mond has helped lead the team to second place in the standings as they head into the playoffs, which run July 24-31.

Hammond grew up playing fastpitch softball in the Northern Virginia area but baseball was her first love. After planning to play softball in college, she instead jumped at the chance to play baseball after discovering the Eastern Women's Baseball Conference, an all-women's baseball league. She spent her summers playing with their DC Thunder tournament team, traveling around the country playing with and against the best women's players in the United States and Canada.

"I grew up playing softball," Hammond said. "I was a girl, therefore there was no choice — girls played softball, boys played baseball. It's just what you did. But the EWBC changed everything. For the first time in my life I actually got to play baseball and

I loved it."

Hammond continues to participate as a player/coach with the EWBC/DC Thunder and with several area men's leagues. She recently completed her seventh season as a high school baseball coach in Fairfax County. After spending five years at Falls Church High School as the Junior Varsity Associate Head Coach and a member of the Varsity Staff, she moved on to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology where she took on the role of Varsity Associate Head Coach and Catching Specialist.

"Jen has exceeded expectations," said Aces head coach Chris Berset. "You never know how it's going to be with a woman going into a male world, especially with college kids. Are they going to accept her? Will she have a voice that is listened to? She was able to capture that and the boys respect her. It's

SEE BLAZING A TRAIL. ON PAGE 10

Blazing a Trail

FROM PAGE 1

a win-win for everyone and we are lucky to have her.”

Aces pitcher Adam Schwartz agrees.

“Coach Jen is so encouraging to our bullpen,” Schwartz said. “She always has something positive to say after each outing but also gives us great constructive criticism. She is especially great at pitch sequencing -- telling us when and how to use our pitches.”

Hammond also serves as a Head Coach with DC Girls Baseball, a nonprofit program dedicated to developing opportunities for girls to play baseball. In the five years she has been with the program, Hammond has grown the program to provide a welcoming arena for girls to play baseball; to help them develop solid fundamental skill sets and baseball knowledge; and to provide competitive opportunities for more advanced players who wish to play at the high school level and beyond.

“Many of the players in the DC Girls Baseball program are one of only a few girls on their little league, travel or school teams,” Hammond added. “When they play with us they find community. No longer are they sticking out or drawing a lot of attention as the only girl. It’s been amazing to see



Coach Jennifer Hammond, left, demonstrates a pitching grip to the Alexandria Aces bullpen July 14 at Frank Mann Field.

the girls as they grow into confident and capable young women and I am hopeful that they will be exposed to many more opportunities in the baseball world than existed when I was their age.”

Hammond credits Berset and the other Aces coaches for making her feel welcome and valued as part of the team.

“I am looking forward to the day when women are seen simply as ‘coach,’ when this is less of a novelty that sticks out,” Hammond said. “I hope there comes a time when

we don’t have to worry that every move we make or the outcome of a game is a reflection on our gender’s ability to be successful in this field.”

The Aces will take on the league-leading Bethesda Big Train in their final regular season home game July 22 at Frank Mann Field at 6:30 p.m. Playoffs run July 24-31.

“Baseball is a great vehicle to learn life skills,” Hammond said. “It is a game full of failure and helping players learn to confront



Alexandria Aces coach Jennifer Hammond hits fly balls to players during a practice July 14 at Frank Mann Field.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

that, to handle disappointment and learn from it and go right back at it is one of my favorite parts of coaching. That resiliency, that mental

strength, that ability to reset and grind — these are all skills that translate to life outside the lines.”
www.calripenleague.org

40 Under 40

FROM PAGE 1

guel Blancas, City of Alexandria; Taryn Brice-Rowland, National Association of Truck Stop Operators (NATSO Inc); Alycia Burant, Healthy Minds Therapy; Christina Calloway, United States Patent and Trademark Office; Cynthia Chin, United States Patent and Trademark Office; C.J. Cross, Hops N Shine; Lieutenant Marcus Downey, Alexandria Police Department; Cheyanne Dwyer, Building Momentum; Paula J. Eichenbrenner, MBA, CAE, Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy Foundation; Kelly Ferenc, Bishop Boutique; Claudia Girerd, Freeman Decorating Company; Alyson Glick, Aptive Resources; Kellie Gunderman, The Social Edge, LLC & VIP Alexandria Magazine; Connie Hammell, KWC Certified Public Accountants; Amanda Parker Hazelwood, The Spitfire Club; Jenna Hong, MD, INOVA Medical Group; Mary Charlotte Horner, Legal Services of Northern Virginia; Michelle Smith Howard, Smart Beginnings Alexandria; Lorraine Johnson, Alexandria City High School Student;

Nicole Jones, Stomping Ground, Bagel Uprising & Mae’s Market & Café; Harrison C. Lee, Cotton and Company; Lizzie Liu, The Campaigna Center; Sarah Locke, Old Town Tax Consultants; Drew Marks, Mark-Woods Construction Services; Jennifer N. Masi, Children’s Law Center; Cody Mello-Klein, Alexandria Times; Morgan C. Middleton, United States Senate Federal Credit Union; Ashley Sanchez-Viafara, Alexandria City High School Student; Oliver N. Schipper, MD, Anderson Orthopedic Clinic; Robin Shultz, INOVA Health System; Faith Spillman, Alexandria Police Department; Jacobson Truex, McLaughlin Ryder Investments; Jaqueline Tucker, Esq., City of Alexandria; Lauren H. Waldron, Society for Marketing Professional Services; Natasha Walters, Brandywine Living at Alexandria; Toriseju Whyte, MD, Kaiser Permanente Mid Atlantic Medical Group; Jordan Wilhelm, The Critical Mass LLC; Andrew Young, Renner and Company, CPA, PC.

www.thechamberalx.com



Honorees Morgan Babcock and Christina Baucom share a laugh after the Chamber ALX’s 40 Under 40 ceremony July 15 at The Alexandrian Hotel.



Youth Honorees Ashley Sanchez-Viafara and Lorraine Johnson pose with their awards at the Chamber ALX’s 40 Under 40 celebration July 15 at The Alexandrian Hotel.



Honorees and audience members gather for the Chamber ALX’s 40 Under 40 program July 15 at The Alexandrian Hotel.

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