



**ROBESON COUNTY
SPORTS HALL OF FAME**

CHARTER CLASS
INSTALLATION BANQUET

APRIL 18, 2009
UNC PEMBROKE
UNIVERSITY CENTER ANNEX
6 P.M.

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**Robeson County Hall of Fame
Installation Banquet
Sponsored by R.A. Jeffries Distributing Co.**

6 p.m. – UNC Pembroke – University Center Annex

Opening Remarks Abdul Ghaffar
Chair, Robeson County Hall of Fame Committee

Introduction of Charter Class Ghaffar

Invocation

Dinner

Remarks Ben Miller
Head Men's Basketball Coach, UNC Pembroke

Purpose and Recognition of RCHoF Committee Ghaffar

Induction

Introduction of 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees William Freeman

- Joe Brisson
- Tom Cope
- Tod Griffin
- Gene Locklear
- Dwight Lowry
- Regina Miller
- Nicky McKeithan
- Lee McRae
- Eva Patterson-Heath
- Ned Sampson
- Donnell Thompson
- Bob Van Hoy

Award Presentation to Inductees Ghaffar

Remarks on Behalf of the Charter Class Nicky McKeithan

Closing Remarks Ghaffar



JOE BRISSON
Baseball Player & Youth Coach

Joe Brisson played minor league baseball for the Denver Yankees. With the St. Paul Saints in 1948, he batted .354 and had a pitching record of 14-1. He coached recreation sports in St. Pauls for more than 40 years. Brisson twice earned Governor's Certificates of Appreciation for volunteering. His legend was made permanent with the naming of St. Pauls Little League field in his honor in 1981. Brisson distinguished himself wherever he went including with the Army during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II and later with the National Guard.



TOM COPE
Youth Coach & Sportswriter

Tom Cope Jr. was "Mr. Baseball" in Red Springs. He organized youth baseball programs as the town's unofficial athletic director in 1956. Later, he would be appointed to the town's Recreation Commission. Before that, Cope coached the Red Springs Robbins, a semi-professional baseball team sponsored by Robbins Mills. In 1980, The Tom Cope Athletic Park was named in his honor. He was a 1933 graduate of Duke University, where he acquired his love of baseball. He worked many years for the Red Springs Citizen newspaper.



ROD GRIFFIN
Basketball Player & Coach

In 1977, Rod Griffin was named Atlantic Coast Conference Player of the Year. Averaging 20.2 points and 8.6 rebounds with a .628 shooting percentage, he was also named 2nd team All-American. His jersey is one of only 10 retired by Wake Forest University. In the 1978 National Basketball Association draft, Griffin was the 18th overall pick by the Denver Nuggets. As a professional player, Griffin played in Italy from 1978-93, mostly for Basket Forli. He was named head coach for the team.



GENE LOCKLEAR

Baseball Player & Artist

Gene Locklear was signed as a free agent by the Cincinnati Reds in 1969 and played five seasons in the major leagues, from 1973-77. He also played with the New York Yankees and San Diego Padres. An outfielder and left-handed batter, his career batting average was .274. In his best year, Locklear batted .378 with the Padres in 1975. He closed the book on his professional career in Japan with the Nippon Ham Fighters in 1978. He earned an art degree from the Minneapolis Art School and is a successful professional artist, living in San Diego, Calif. Locklear's subjects are drawn from the wide world of sports and his Native heritage. His works hang in buildings from the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas to homes and offices throughout Robeson County.



DWIGHT LOWRY

Baseball Player & Coach

Dwight Lowry was an outstanding student-athlete at Pembroke High School, where he was salutatorian and all-conference in football, basketball and baseball. At the University of North Carolina, where he was all-Atlantic Coast Conference, Lowry was drafted in the 11th round of the 1980 draft by the Detroit Tigers. He broke into the big leagues in 1984 with the Tigers and earned a World Series ring. He played from 1984-88, finishing his career with the Minnesota Twins. His career as a manager began in 1991. He earned the Development Man of the Year Award, and in 1998, he was inducted into the South Atlantic League Hall of Fame.



NICKY McKEITHAN

Football Player & Golfer

Nicky McKeithan's name is synonymous with sports in Lumberton. After lettering in three sports for four years at the high school, McKeithan was recruited to play football for Duke University. In his senior season in 1955, McKeithan scored a touchdown and had an interception in Duke's 34-6 Orange Bowl win against Nebraska. While in college, he took up golf and later won 10 Robeson County golf championships, the last one at age 50. For 22 years, McKeithan was the radio voice of Lumberton Pirate Football.



LEE McRAE

Track

A Pembroke native, Lee McRae literally burst on the national track and field scene while at West Robeson High School. He was recruited to play football and run track at the University of Pittsburgh. Arguably, McRae was the fastest man in the world for two years. In one race, he defeated both Carl Lewis and Ben Johnson. McRae won the gold medal in the men's 100 meter run at the 1987 Pan American Games, and he won three consecutive NCAA indoor national championships (1986-1988) in the 55 meters and the 1986 NCAA Outdoor National Championship in the 100 meters.



REGINA MILLER

Basketball Player & Coach

Regina Miller put Parkton High School on the basketball map when she led her team to the state championship in 1980. As a freshman at Louisburg Junior College, Miller led her team to a national championship in 1981 and was all-American. At powerhouse Old Dominion, she went to the final four. After stops at Western Kentucky, Arizona, and ODU, Miller was named head coach at Western Illinois in 1992 and head coach at the University of Nevada Las Vegas in 1998. She took both teams to one NCAA tournament appearance. She was also an assistant coach for the U.S. National Team at the 1997 World Championships.



EVA PATTERSON-HEATH

Basketball Player & Coach

Eva Patterson-Heath played basketball at Red Springs High School and North Carolina A&T State University. She returned to her school to teach and coach in 1985. After going 15-9 in her first campaign, the legend was just beginning. In the 2008-09 season, Patterson-Heath won her 500th game as a coach. She has taken two teams to the state championship game and four of her players played in the East-West All-Star game. After organizing a recreation basketball league in Red Springs, she has continued to volunteer and mold the character of young women for 20 years.



NED SAMPSON
Basketball Player & Coach

John W. (Ned) Sampson played football, basketball and baseball for Pembroke High School and Pembroke State College, graduating in 1953. Sampson stood out on the hardwood. He averaged 24 points per game as a senior and his 40-point game against Campbell College was a record for many years at the college. He coached basketball for 34 years, first at Magnolia High School and Pembroke High School. “Mr. Ned” is a charter member of UNCP’s Athletic Hall of Fame and a member of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.



DONNELL THOMPSON
Football Player

After an outstanding football career at Lumberton Senior High School, Donnell Thompson moved up the road to the University of North Carolina. As a defensive lineman, Thompson was named an all-Atlantic Coast Conference performer. He was also the 18th overall selection of the Baltimore Colts of the National Football League. He played 11 seasons and 147 games with the Colts, recording 40 sacks. Thompson proved successful in business as well. He owned five McDonald’s restaurants and several Marriott and Choice hotels. Today, he is a building contractor.



BOB VAN HOY
Basketball & Baseball Coach

Bob Van Hoy coached basketball and baseball for boys and girls for many years at Red Springs High School. In 1956 his baseball team won the state championship and they were runners-up in 1957. He was successful with boys and girls basketball, winning a total of 12 county championships. Van Hoy was selected the first coach of the East-West Baseball Tournament. He was an outstanding college baseball and basketball player for Catawba.

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