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BCAM announces fourth group of Retro Mr. Basketball winners.

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For over 30 years, BCAM – the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan, in association with the Detroit Free Press, has sponsored the Hal Schram Mr. Basketball award. Given to the state's top prep senior, Lansing Eastern's Sam Vincent was selected in the spring of 1981 as the recipient of the first award. Monte Morris of Flint Beecher was named the 2013 winner

In 2010, the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan (BCAM) announced a program designed to honor the state's top senior prep basketball players from the years 1920 through 1980. This year marks the fourth year of the Retro Mr. Basketball project. Rolling out over a 10-year span, BCAM today announces the winners of the award for the 1923, 1933, 1943, 1953, 1963 and 1973 seasons. In 2019, the list will total 100 award winners, spanning the years 1920 to 2019.

As with the current honor, the goal of the Retro award is to focus on high school careers. Hence, information pulled from All-State, All-Area, All Conference and All-Tournament teams is used to guide the committee as they select nominees for the award. This year presented challenges for the group.

"For many of the list, this is the first time their high school accomplishments have been recognized outside their home towns," notes Ron Pesch, sports historian for the Michigan High School Athletic Association. "No All-Tournament or All-State teams were found for 1933, so regional sports reporting became especially important to the process. The 1943 basketball season was cut short due to travel restrictions and rationing in place due to World War II. The country as a whole was concentrated on defeating the enemy. Post season play ended after what we would call the regionals today. To date, no All-State teams have been found for either 1943 and again, regional reporting was used to identify the state's top ballplayers."

As with past teams, the committee examined details from the career of a number of players, established a final ballot for each season, and then selected a "Retro Mr. Basketball" winner for each season.

Tom Hursey notes: "BCAM is pleased to announce our Retro Mr. Basketball Award. There are many basketball fans in Michigan who will relate to these great players out of the past. I really enjoy looking at the list and remembering those players that I coached against or saw play during their high school career. Michigan should be proud of the fine basketball tradition of producing outstanding players."

(The winner of the award is listed below at the top of the page in ALL CAPS)

1923

HENRY SCHRUMPF – NILES

A calm, reliable leader, Schrupf set a state final scoring mark with a 26-point performance (eight field goals and 10 of 12 from the free throw line) in the 1923 state title game against Alma. He finished his senior season with 285 points (103 field goals, 79 of 143 free throws). A three-sport star and captain of the basketball team at Western Normal College, he later earned a baseball tryout with the White Sox, then returned to Michigan, serving as a basketball coach at Whitehall and Grand Rapids Creston.

Eddie Chambers – Niles

Made up for his lack of weight with speed and grittiness. Scored 134 points in 25 games. Became the University of Michigan basketball captain in 1927 then went on to a Hall of Fame career as high school coach at Crystal Falls. Chambers guided his cage teams to 312 wins, including 34 straight victories in 1938-40. His teams won 16 district titles in Class B, (12 consecutive from 1936-1947) six consecutive Upper Peninsula basketball championships from 1938-1944 (there was no quarterfinal, semifinal or final round in the tournament in '43) and finished as U.P. runner-up in 1934, 1936 and 1937.

George Elias – Alma

Earned All-Tournament honors at both the Central Michigan Normal College tournament and at the State tournament, hosted one week later, where his team finished the season as state runner-up in Class B. Later played college ball at Western Michigan Normal College (today known as Western Michigan University).

Elis Hartz – Holly

A speedy, diminutive forward, “who would dribble through the defense and shoot with deadly accuracy.” Led the 1922 and 1923 Holly teams to state Class C basketball championships. Named to the All-Tournament team in both seasons.

1933

LINCOLN DODSON TRUSS – FLINT NORTHERN

Blessed with outstanding jumping ability and defensive skills, Truss scored 139 points on the year, including a league-leading 103 points (42 field goals, 19 free throws) in Saginaw Valley Conference play. In the Class A state title game, Truss scored 12 points on six field goals to lead the Eskimos, as Northern was known at the time, to the championship with a 22-16 win over Grosse Pointe. He played in an era where, because of his skin color, his options on the athletic field after high school were severely limited.

Bill Barclay – Flint Northern

Brother of head coach Jim Barclay and captain of the Northern squad, Barclay tallied 72 points (28 FG, 16 FT) in Valley play earning all-conference honors. Following high school, Barclay earned eight varsity letters at the University of Michigan, before becoming an assistant football and basketball coach and the head golf coach at Michigan. In 1946, he was named head basketball coach at Harvard.

Marcel deBusschere – Detroit DeLaSalle, 6-3

Controlled the tipoff against all opponents, and was largely responsible for his team's undefeated record. Named to the *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit Times* All-City Catholic cage teams. Father of NBA legend, Dave DeBusschere.

Henry Kovacs – Detroit Southwestern

Leading scorer in the Detroit Public School league, hitting 59 field goals and 26 foul shots for 144 points. According to the *Detroit Times*, Kovacs "stood out as the most consistent player of the year. He had the best eye for the basket in the city league, winning the individual scoring honors." Scored 21 points in one game. Later played at Western State Teachers College (modern-day Western Michigan University).

Frank Lett - Battle Creek Central, 5-10

A four-sport letterman and the top athlete on the *Battle Creek Enquirer and Evening News'* All-City basketball team. "Has been a star during his entire school career," noted the newspaper at the time. Enrolled at the University of Michigan, Lett was allowed a spot on the school's football team but was barred from playing basketball. Michigan coach Franklin Cappon, explaining his decision said, "No other Big Ten school has used a colored boy, and I do not want to break the ice." Lett left the school in disgust in the spring of 1935.

Leroy Muth – Kalamazoo St. Augustine

"Strong and rangy, a power on both offense and defense," stated *Kalamazoo Gazette* sports editor, Jerry Hagan at the time. "His was the steadying factor on the St. Augustine team that extended its state tournament record to 31 straight wins before losing its hold on the Michigan Class C crown in the 1933 semifinals at Lansing." Named to the Kalamazoo All-City team, he earned Player of the Year honors in Kalamazoo and was also named to an All-Regional tournament team.

1943

DON BOVEN – KALAMAZOO CENTRAL, 6-3, Center

“A great retriever of rebounds,” noted the *Kalamazoo Gazette* when naming him to the All-City team. Moved from forward to the center position in mid-season and led the Maroons to a tie for the Southwestern Class A conference championship. Named to the all-conference team, Boven played college ball at Western Michigan College, where he earned first-team All-American honors in 1949. Later played NBA Basketball in Waterloo, Milwaukee and Fort Wayne. He returned to Western following his professional playing days, first as an instructor, then as their head basketball coach.

Art Bakeraitis – Bay City Central, 6-4, 210, Center

A three-sport star, Bakeraitis was the only unanimous selection of the 13 member board of coaches and newspaper writers that named the Saginaw Valley all-conference basketball team. Later played for the Detroit Vagabond Kings of the NBL he was a first year inductee into the Bay County Hall of Fame.

Dan Boisture – Detroit Holy Redeemer, 6-1

Standing 6-1, “the curly-haired sharp shooter” was called one of the best forwards in the state by the *Detroit Free Press* when they named him captain of their All-Catholic League team. Later became head football coach at Eastern Michigan.

Eddie Johnson – Saginaw

Topped the Saginaw Valley league scoring record by 41 points in his senior year, posting 196 points over 12 league games. Honored with selection to the Saginaw Valley All-Conference team.

Bob Hahn – Ann Arbor, 6-9½

The top ballplayer at Ann Arbor High, Hahn was a steady rebounder and top scoring threat for the Pioneers. Too tall to get in the service, he played for a year in the Ann Arbor Industrial League while working for a war plant, before heading off to college. Hahn lettered in 1947, 1948 and 1949 at North Carolina State for legendary coach Everett Case, who had served in the navy with Hahn’s high school coach, Al Shaw. He later played briefly with the Chicago Stags of the National Basketball League.

1953

RON KRAMER, EAST DETROIT, 6-4

Earned nine varsity letters at East Detroit. A first team All-State selection in the *Detroit News* and *Detroit Times*, Kramer earned second team all-state honors in the *Detroit Free Press*. "Averaged better than 27 points per game in leading his team to the Eastern Michigan title," according to the *Times*, scoring 370 points during the regular season, and "adding 100 more during the tournament." Later named the University of Michigan basketball MVP for three straight years.

Dean VanderWal – Holland, 6-3½, 185

Towering, rugged and a consistent scorer. VanderWal tallied a school-record 374 points for the Dutchmen. Later attended Michigan State.

Tom Klewicki – Lansing Sexton, 5-7, 142

First team selection by all three Detroit papers. Set school individual scoring record with 330 points. Led the Big Reds to 20 straight victories before losing to Dearborn Fordson in the tournament.

Leland "Lee" Ayotte, Alpena Catholic Central,

First team Class B selection of the *Free Press*, *News* and *Times* as a senior. Also named by the *Free Press* and *News* to their honorary All State team as a junior. "Drew acclaim from critics as perhaps the finest cager ever produced in the northeastern sector of the Lower Peninsula. During his four-year career, one year at Alpena St. Anne and three at Catholic Central, Ayotte amassed 1,099 points, excluding tournament competition. " Later played at Notre Dame, the alma mater of his high school coach.

Joe Roberson, Flint Northern, 6-5

Two-time All-Valley selection. Named to the All-State first team by the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Times*. A hookshot specialist, Roberson was the first Flint player to lead the Saginaw Valley conference in scoring in 16 years. Averaged 20.7 points per game as a senior. Top-notch baseball prospect. Signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers organization and later served as Athletic Director at the University of Michigan.

1963

CRAIG DILL – SAGINAW ARTHUR HILL, 6-10, 198

Scored 353 points in 12 league games, breaking Ernie Thompson's Saginaw Valley League scoring total of 314 points. Finished the year with 599 points over 21 games, including 30 or more in nine contests. Led the team to the state semifinals as a senior.

Dennis Bankey – Detroit St. Thomas, 6-2, 175

Scored 1,536 points in his prep career, including 669 as a senior, he "could score from the outside as well as by driving through the middle for layups," according to his *Detroit News* All-State write-up. Played college ball at Michigan. In 1978, Bankey was named as one of the top six basketball players in Detroit Catholic League history.

Joe Johnson, Grand Rapids South, 6-4, 175

Scored 328 points and held a 13-rebounds per game average. According to the *Detroit News*, Johnson was "a unanimous choice of coaches for the Grand Rapids All-City team. He has good rebounding spring and strong reflexes under the basket"

Lovell Humes – Saginaw, 5-11, 167

"An excellent rebounder and can shoot from anywhere on the court," stated the *Detroit News* when naming their All-State team, Humes scored 379 points in 16 games, including 30 or more in five games during his senior year.

Bill Koski, Jr., Champion, 5-11, 162

The second-leading scorer in Upper Peninsula history at the time with 1,953 points. Netted 609 points for a 32.5 points-per-game average as a senior. Played college ball at Northern Michigan then became basketball coach at Republic High School.

Cliff Williams – Detroit Southwestern, 6-3, 181

Scored a total of 682 points in 19 games. Set a Detroit Public School League single game scoring record with 61 points in a 86-60 win over Detroit Chadsey on February 13, 1963. In announcing William's selection to their all-state team, the *Detroit News* said, "has an uncanny jump shot from the side and can sink his shots from as far back as midcourt." Attended Bowling Green.

1973

TOM LAGARDE – DETROIT CATHOLIC CENTRAL, 6-11, 210

UPI Prep Player of the Year. Great coordination and mobility for his size with a good turn-around jumper. “Had a 25-point per game average that could have gone into the 30s if he had chosen to shoot more,” stated the *Detroit Free Press* when they announced their All State selections in 1973. Played for Dean Smith at North Carolina, then spent six years in the NBA. A member of the 1976 gold medal Olympic team.

Johnny Davis – Detroit Murray Wright, 6-1,

First team pick of the *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit News*. Extremely difficult to defend. Great outside shooter, Davis was considered by many observers as the finest shooter in the state. “After scoring 27 points a game as a junior, he averaged 31 points as a senior,” noted the *News*. Played at Dayton, and then spent 10 years in the NBA.

Bob Elliott – Ann Arbor Pioneer, 6-9, 220

A Dream Team selection in the *Detroit News* as a junior, (he earned second team honors in the *Free Press*), Elliot earned top honors from both Detroit papers as a senior. The leading vote getter on the UPI All State team in 1973, he “almost single-handedly made the Pioneers a season-long power. “ Averaged 28-points per game as he led the team to an unbeaten record in the regular season and a 24-1 mark overall. Played collegiately at the University of Arizona, followed by three seasons in the NBA.

Mark Veenstra – Hudsonville Unity Christian, 6-8, 194

Despite playing with a swollen ankle, Veenstra scored 112 points in three regional tournament games as a senior. He tallied 34 points in the state final to finish with 862 points over 28 games, the most in the state in 1973, and totaled 1,951 points in his career. Considered one of the best players to come out of Western Michigan since Chet Walker, he turned away many offers from top tier basketball programs and chose to attend Calvin College to pursue a medical degree.

Edgar Wilson – Dowagiac, 6-5, 190

Only player to be named to the *Detroit Free Press* first team in both football and basketball, Wilson averaged 26.7 points and 15.5 rebounds per game as a senior. Received 150 scholarship offers, he chose to play college ball at Michigan State. Following graduation, Wilson served as an assistant at MSU and Central Michigan then was named head basketball coach at Ferris State in 1996.