

**Brandon Charles “Don” Coleman
1933-2020**

Brandon Charles “Don” Coleman graduated to heaven on Sunday, the 9th of February, at his home in Houston surrounded by his loving family. He was 87.

Don was born on the 2nd of February, 1933, in Port Arthur, TX. He was one of two sons and two daughters to Brandon Chenault Coleman, a Gulf Oil Safety Superintendent, and Beryl Sydney “Honey” Coleman, a renowned and beloved educator at Port Arthur Thomas Jefferson High School.

Known to many as “District Don”, Brandon Charles “Don” Coleman was one of the premiere legendary figures in the history of high school basketball. Honored in two Texas Halls of Fame, he inspired a level of excellence from his players that resulted in 893 wins and an overall lifetime average of 25 wins per season. His teams’ records include 16 district championships, a state championship, 26 consecutive 20-win seasons, and a string of 81 straight district wins that still stands as the Texas record today.

From humble beginnings in Port Arthur, Don grew up on the tennis courts where he learned from his father how to compete, to demonstrate integrity and to be a gentleman on and off the court. He also began to play basketball in junior high school, but it wasn’t until he entered high school at Port Arthur Thomas Jefferson and came under the influence of Coach Pete Pence that he was inspired to dedicate his career to the sport.

Following high school graduation in 1952, Don received a basketball and tennis scholarship to Lamar University (known then as Lamar Tech) in Beaumont. After his sophomore year, he had to make a choice between basketball and tennis. He chose to play tennis, but prepared himself to coach basketball in the future.

He went on to lead the Lamar Tennis team to many records, capturing an unprecedented three consecutive Lone Star Conference Singles Championships, ultimately winning the NAIA National Doubles title and receiving the distinguished John Gray Award for the Best Student Athlete at Lamar.

After graduation from Lamar in 1955, he returned to his high school alma mater as an assistant basketball coach to his former coach and mentor, Pence, for two years. In this role he had an opportunity to make his second trip to the State Tournament and ignite his desire to become a head high school basketball coach.

In 1957, Don was recruited to become Head Basketball Coach at Aldine High School where he remained for five years, making his third trip to the State Tournament in 1960 where his team won the third place trophy. As a result of his successes at Aldine, Don attracted much attention and a number of offers to move to larger schools.

He reluctantly departed Aldine in 1962 when he felt he could not turn down the offer to go to the newly opening Memorial High School in the rapidly growing Spring Branch ISD located on the westside of Houston. This was his last career move. He coached 30 more years, all at Memorial, where he built one of the most successful programs in the nation.

At Memorial, his teams made four more trips to the State Tournament, winning the State Championship in 1966 and advancing as a State Finalists in 1967, 1969, and 1984. His teams also won 16 District Championships. Additionally, he coached three State All-Star teams to victory: 1966, Texas High School Coaches Association; 1992, Texas Association of Basketball Coaches; 2002, Greater Houston Area Basketball Coaches Association.

While Don's life and passion were focused on winning basketball games in high school gyms across Texas, he spent his summers as a teaching tennis pro at Houston's original Sagewood Country Club and eventually the Memorial Forest Club. Don was also a top ranked tennis player in the State Senior's Division, winning many tournaments and ultimately, the state title with his doubles partner, Army General Buddy Lomax.

At his retirement in 1992, Don held one of the best coaching records in the history of Texas basketball and the nation. That year, he was honored with the UIL Denius Award for Excellence and in 1995, was honored by the Texas High School Basketball Coaches Association as an inductee to the TABC Hall of Fame. Four years later, in 1999, the Outstanding Coach of the Year award for the State of Texas was renamed "The Don Coleman Coach of the Year Award" to honor the State's best coach.

In evidence of his commitment to excellence in education and sports, both of Don's schools, Port Arthur Thomas Jefferson High School and Lamar University inducted him into their Halls of Honor in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

Don was always firm in his commitment to advancing the coaching profession both on and off the court. He valued his fellow coaches and felt called to encourage younger coaches coming into the profession. His strong leadership ability led to his being elected President of Texas Association of Basketball Coaches. During his presidency the association made many bold decisions that resulted in the tremendous growth and prestige TABC enjoys today. Don also served as Chairman of the Texas Basketball Hall of Honor Selection Committee.

Coach Coleman was known for his intensity on the court and his dedication to hard work off the court. He expected excellence from everyone around him, but he expected more from himself. No one got to the gym earlier or left the gym later than Coach. In teaching others to "Aspire to Excellence", Coach instilled his values of faith, discipline, dedication and patience. This legacy is permanently captured in his bronze at the SBISD Don Coleman Coliseum on Dairy Ashford in Houston.

Coach Coleman's legacy goes far beyond the hardwoods of Texas high school gymnasiums. His passion for helping others and serving his Lord and Savior were the ultimate scoreboard for which Coach liked to be measured. Nothing meant more to Coach

than a former player or student coming to him years after the fact and noting the difference he had made in their lives, and he always gave the glory to God.

In retirement, he dedicated much of his time serving his Lord through his commitment to Bethel Church, where he served as Chairman of Men's Ministries and a mentor to younger men seeking to direct their lives in a Godly manner. In 2000, he was inducted in the Ring of Honor at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes for which he had served for many years.

His favorite Bible verse was Philippians 3:14 "Press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Coach Coleman has been called heavenward to be the new dean of high school coaches for Jesus.

FAMILY

Don is survived by his loving wife and best friend of 47 years, Mary Kay Coleman; his three sons, Brandon C. Coleman, Jr. of Dallas and his wife, Carri, Kevin B. Coleman and his wife Vivian of Katy, and Scott A. Coleman and his wife Beverly of Fayetteville, TX; his step-daughter, Barbara Lovingfoss Mayfield of Austin; 5 grandsons, Brandon Coleman, III, Blake Coleman, Bradford Coleman, Brice Coleman, Wesley Coleman and 2 granddaughters, Brooke Coleman and Amanda Coleman; and great grandson, Brandon C. Coleman, IV.

He is also survived by his two sisters, Ylora Gerald and her husband C.H. Gerald of Port Neches Groves, TX and Melanie Wood of Knoxville, TN; by 6 nieces and nephews; and scores of former players and loving friends.

Don is predeceased by his mother and father, as well as his brother, James Merideth Coleman, and the mother of his three sons, Patsy J. Creed.

The family would like to express heartfelt gratitude to the the three caregivers who shared so much love and time with Coach; Juana Bazan, Demaris Efrem, and Monique Scott as well as the fantastic care team at Crossroads Hospice.

The Funeral Service will be conducted at eleven o'clock in the morning on Thursday, the 20th of February at Chapelwood United Methodist Church, at 11140 Greenbay in Houston, TX with ministers from Chapelwood and Bethel presiding. Immediately following all are invited to greet the family during a reception to be held at the church.

Prior to the service, the family will have gathered for a private internment in the Columbarium at Chapelwood United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests those wishing to make contributions to further honor Coach Coleman's memory and passion, to please direct your tax-deductible gift to the Don Coleman Scholarship Fund at the Spring Branch Education Foundation or the charity of their choice. The donation link, as well as further information, photos and videos of Coach can be found at CoachColeman.org.

Sunday, Feb 9, 2020