

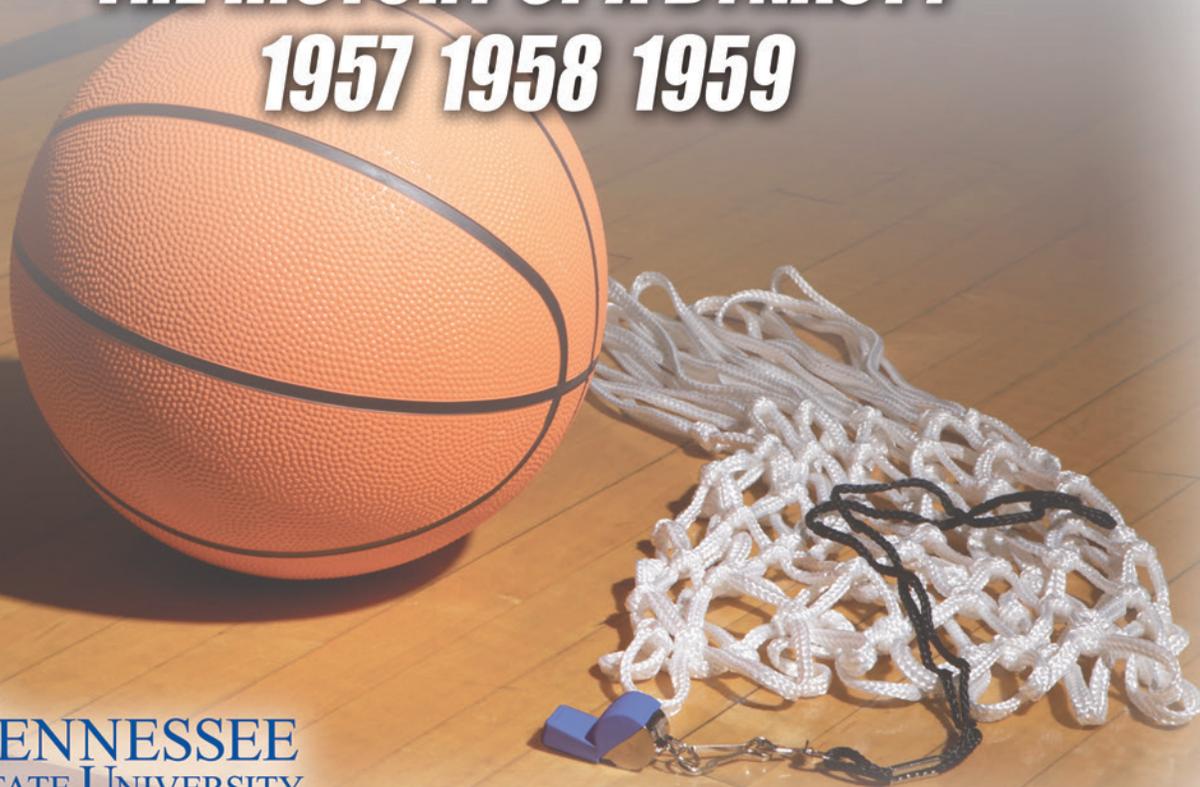
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL TEAM

THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY

1957 1958 1959



**TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY**

THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY

HISTORY, HEART, HALL OF FAME

Founded in 1912, Tennessee State University started from meager beginnings as a normal school for Negroes with 247 students. Everyone worked to keep the institution operating in its early years, from clearing rocks to harvesting crops, and even carrying chairs from class to class. The Tennessee State University Men's Championship Basketball teams of 1957, 1958 and 1959 truly embodied the spirit of its institution, a proud legacy of achievement, innovation, determination and courage. Armed with the mission of *"Think. Work. Serve,"* these young men helped to bring worldwide recognition to Tennessee State, the city of Nashville, and the state of Tennessee.

Today, TSU is recognized as a comprehensive, urban co-educational, land-grant university and premiere Historically Black College or University (HBCU). In January 2013, Dr. Glenda Glover became the first female president to lead the institution. President Glover is one of hundreds of notable, trailblazing alumni who stand on the shoulders of this accomplished basketball powerhouse of the late 1950s.

THE REAL PIONEERS



Another all-black team was the first on "Glory Road"

On March 16, 1957, a Saturday night, the Associated Press moved a story from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics basketball tournament in Kansas City, Mo. It reported that Tennessee State defeated Southeastern Oklahoma 92-73 to win the NAIA title. It would have been just another small-college championship game, except for what was mentioned in the third paragraph:

"Tennessee State thus became the first all-Negro team to win a major basketball tournament in history."

Wait. Wasn't Texas Western, the team depicted in the current hit movie "Glory Road" the first all-black starting five to win a college national title? Not by nearly a decade. Not that many people remember.

"I've always felt that we've been overlooked," said Nurlin Tarrant, who played on the team and serves as president of the Tennessee State basketball alumni association.

The Tigers have been overlooked in part because the NAIA is a lower classification than the NCAA. Still, it was the only classification available to them. And it was only through the efforts of their legendary coach, the late John McLendon, that Tennessee State was eligible to compete for a national title at all.

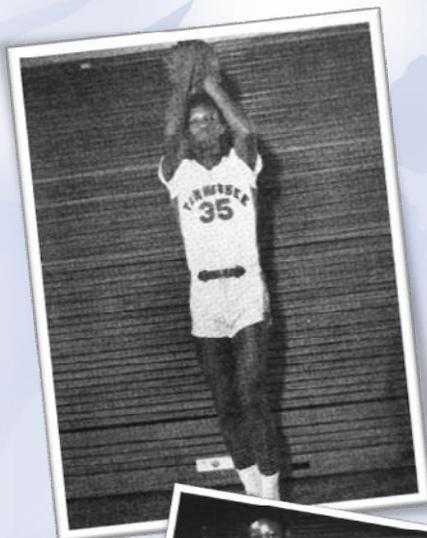
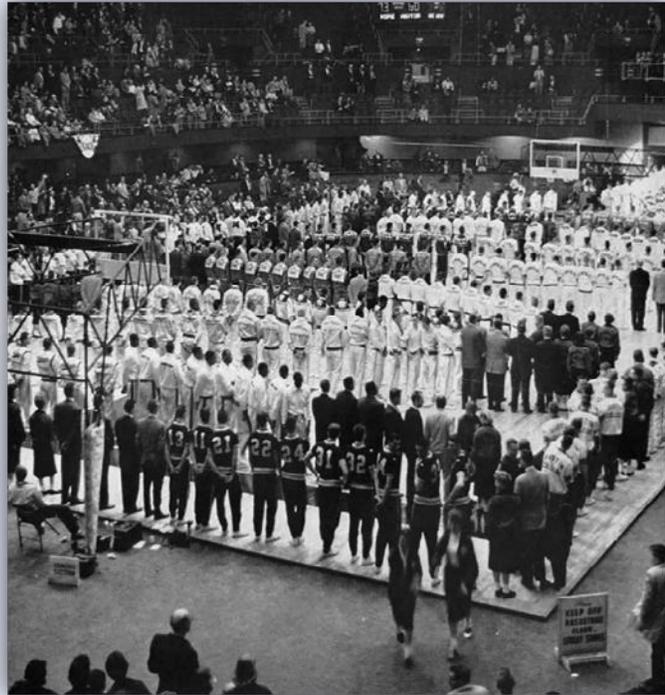
-By Ed Miller

The Virginian-Pilot January, 2008

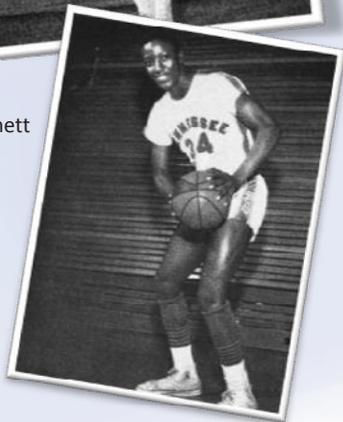
THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY

PRELUDE TO A CHAMPIONSHIP (1956)...

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Tournament was established in 1937 by Dr. James Naismith to recognize the basketball programs of smaller colleges and universities, with the ultimate goal of crowning a national champion. From its conception, the NAIA Tournament has featured only 32 teams with the Finals taking place in Kansas City, MO at the Municipal Auditorium. In 1948, the NAIA became the first national organization to open their intercollegiate postseason to black student-athletes. Today, the NAIA sponsors a Division II championship.



(Top photo)
Richard "Dick" Barnett
(Bottom photo)
John Barnhill



In 1953, Tennessee State became the first black college to compete in a national championship tournament, their first ever NAIA appearance. Four years later the Tigers would shock the world! In 1956, the men's basketball team of then Tennessee State Agricultural & Industrial College made it to the Elite Eight of the NAIA Tournament by defeating Indiana Central (86-63) and Wisconsin-Eau Claire (62-61). Led by legendary Coach John McLendon and All Americans Dick Barnett and John Barnhill, the team lost to eventual champions McNeese State. It was a bitter 76-68 defeat the Tigers would not forget.



Coach John McLendon

THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY

THE DYNASTY BEGINS (1957)

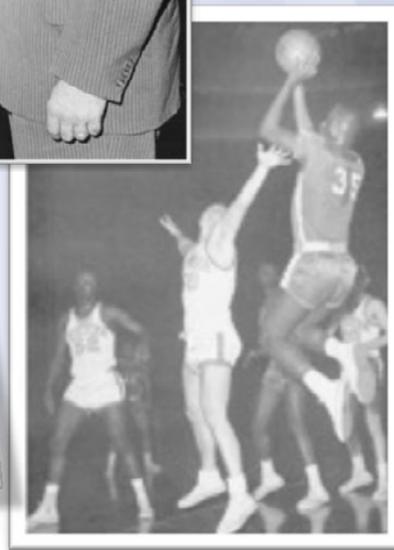
In 1957, the NAIA Men's Division I Basketball Tournament became the first tournament to have seeded teams making it the first to have an upset. (The NAIA seeded teams 21 years prior to the NCAA Men's Tournament.) The unseeded TSU Tigers had four upsets on the way to their first tournament finals by beating the #5 seed Portland (87-70), followed by game thrillers against the #4 seed Western Illinois (90-88) and the #1 seed, and perennial powerhouse Pacific Lutheran (71-70). The Tigers dished out the fourth and most important victory by defeating the #7 seed Southeastern Oklahoma State in a 19-point blowout (92-73) and winning the school's first NAIA Championship. With the win, Tennessee State became the first historically black institution to win a collegiate basketball national championship. This was just the beginning...



THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY

THE CHAMPIONS RETURN (1958)

The 1958 Men's NAIA Division I Basketball Tournament saw defending champions Tennessee State return as the #3 seed behind #1 Western Illinois and #2 Coe of Iowa. That year the Tigers' average margin of victory throughout the tournament was a blazing 29 points with wins over unseeded Northern Michigan (113-45) and Anderson (77-56) in the first two rounds. TSU faced and defeated its first seeded opponent of the tournament, #7 East Texas State (81-62) followed by a victory over unseeded Texas Southern (110-85) in the semifinals. The team's closest win came in the championship finals against the #1 seed and tourney favorite Western Illinois (85-73). With the win, the Tigers became only the third team to have back-to-back championships. That year, Coach McLendon was selected "Coach of the Year," while player Dick Barnett received the "Chuck Taylor Most Valuable Player Award."



THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY

THE FIRST TO 3-PEAT! (1959)

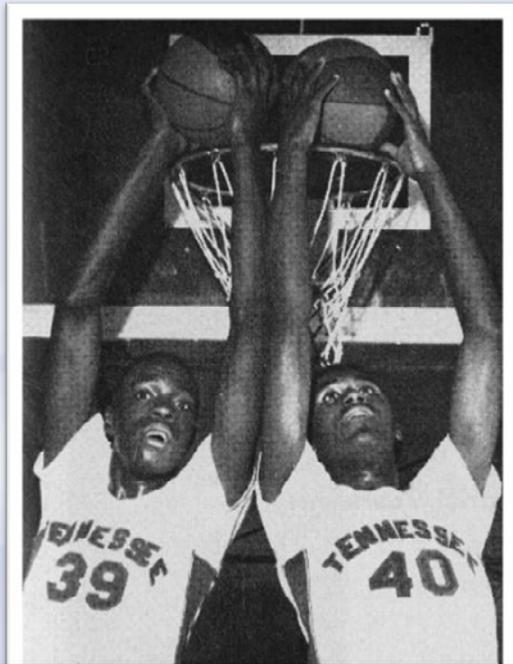
With back-to-back NAIA Championships, Tennessee State entered the 1959 Men's Division 1 Basketball Tournament as the top seed. The team had an opportunity to accomplish a feat no other team had done, win a third consecutive title. TSU breezed through the tournament beating unseeded Nebraska Wesleyan (75-57), #9 seed Youngstown (89-80), and #8 seed Illinois State Normal (131-74). It wasn't until the semi-final round that the team was challenged and edged out the #5 seed Southwest Texas State (64-62). The finals pitted the Tigers against a familiar foe looking for payback, #3 seed Pacific Lutheran University. TSU had knocked off the former #1 seed in the '57 semifinals round (71-70) on the way to winning its first NAIA Championship. Again, Tennessee State prevailed beating Pacific Lutheran (97-87) to capture the title. It was the first time any school had won three tournaments in a row. Barnett received his second "MVP Award."



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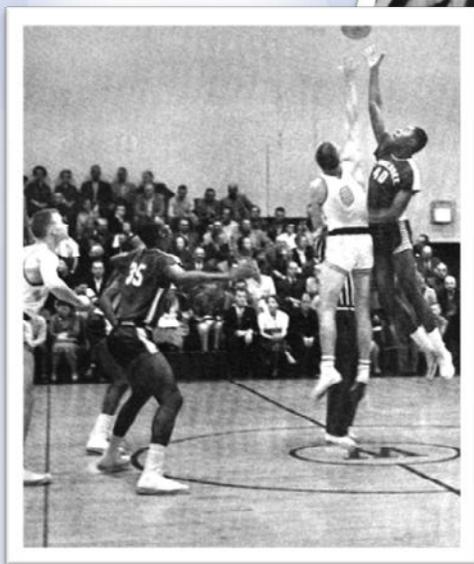
THE McLENDON “CHAMPIONSHIP” MILES

Tennessee State was known for its relentless all-court pressure and fast-break tactics during the 1957-1959 championship run. Coach McLendon put players through an intense conditioning program, which included having the athletes run three miles every day before the season and three miles every day before the tournament. They were affectionately named the “Championship Miles.”

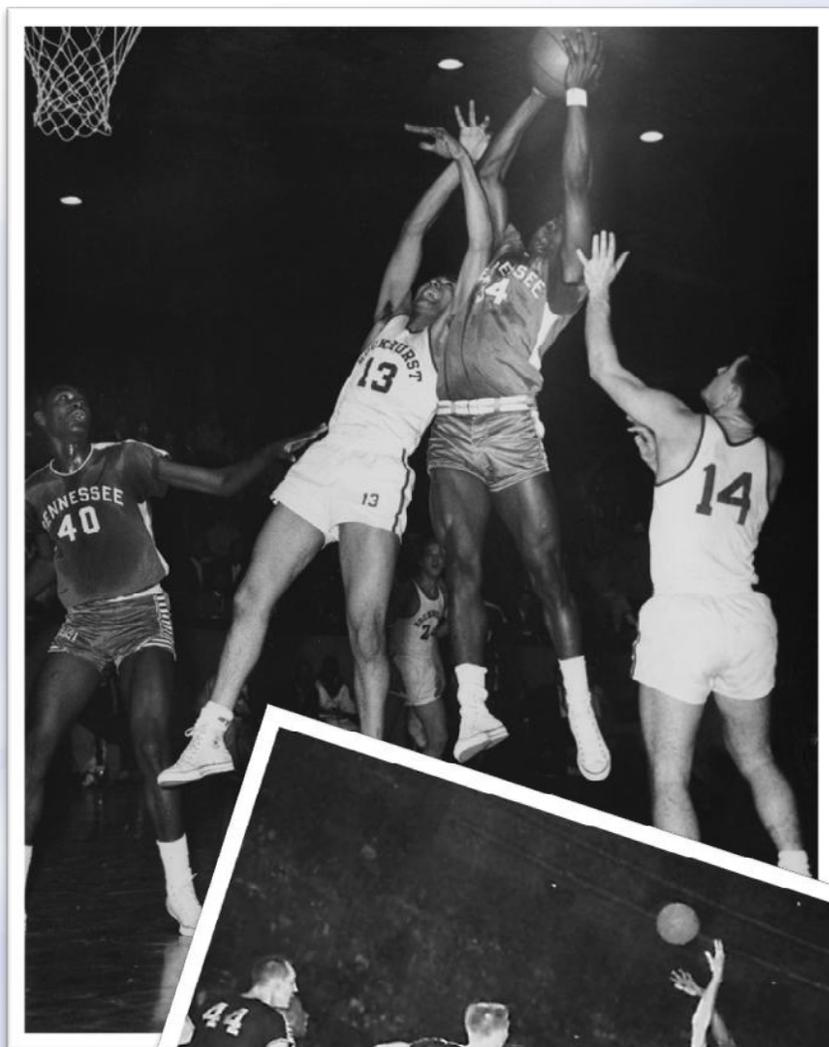


THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY

TIGERS IN ACTION



THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY



THE HISTORY OF A DYNASTY

MEMBERS OF THE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
1957 1958 1959
NAIA MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS

President

Dr. Walter S. Davis

Athletic Director

Raymond H. Kemp

Head Coach

John McLendon

Assistant Coaches

Harold Hunter Richard Mack

Players

Richard "Dick" Barnett

John Barnhill

Sam Bowens

Joe Buckhalter

Henry Carlton

Bobby Clark

Albert Cook

Mel Davis

George Finley

Ronald Hamilton

Rossie Johnson

Porter Merriwether

Remus Nesbitt

Rubin Perry

James "Jim" Sattlewhite

Nurlin Tarrant

Ben Warley

Eugene Wertz