



A Tribute to Wayne Leghorn

The Court

By James A. Johnson ©2019

“I have missed more than 9000 shots in my career, I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions, I have been entrusted to take the game’s winning shot and missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life and this is why...I succeed.”

Michael Jordan

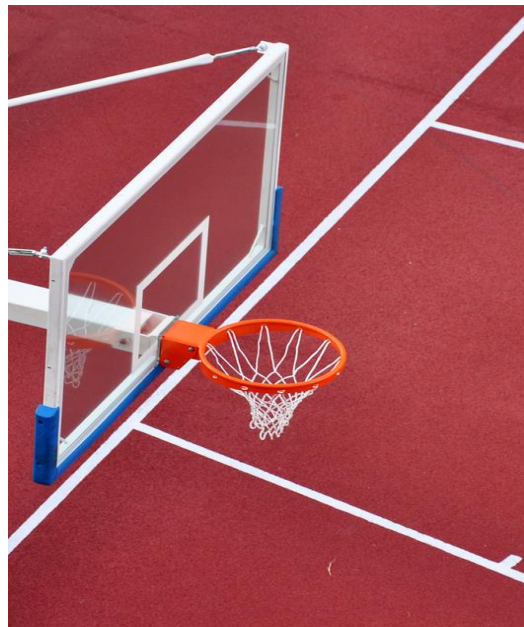
Every city and state has a rich basketball history particularly at the high school level. This is where the games purest, most dramatic and most nostalgic records and exploits take place. Of the three major sports, basketball has the most participants and draws the most spectators. All a boy or girl needs is a pair of sneakers and a playground or schoolyard within walking distance or a bicycle ride.

Bulkeley High School

What do Wayne Leghorn and Edward Bennett Williams have in common? Wayne was highly skilled and prolific on the court and Edward was highly skilled in court. The answer to this question is that both men were athletes and graduated from Bulkeley High School in Hartford, Connecticut. Edward Bennett Williams in 1937 was a member of the cross country

team at Bulkeley, attended Holy Cross in Wooster, Massachusetts and Georgetown Law School. He became one of the most skilled trial lawyers in America and his international law firm, Williams and Connolly exist today based in Washington, D. C. Some of his high profile clients were Hugh Hefner, Jimmy Hoffa, Frank Sinatra and Adam Clayton Powell. Edward was also owner of the NFL Washington Redskins and the Baltimore Orioles.

When you mention Bulkeley basketball in the modern era you start with Charley Mazurek, Billy Schmidt, Carmen Perrone, Barry Leghorn, Jim Belfiore and Gene Reilly. These players are deities whose exploits are legendary. All-State, All New England and even Honorable Mention All-America (Carmen Perrone & Gene Reilly) are some of the accolades bestowed upon them. *However, none of them erupted for 44 points in a single game.* Enter **Wayne Leghorn**, Class of 1966 and the younger brother of Barry Leghorn. To keep things relative Jared Leghorn, current boys Varsity Basketball Coach at Conard H. S. in West Hartford is related to Wayne & Barry.



Hall of Fame

Any hip-hop generation reader not familiar with Mazurek, Schmidt, Perrone, Barry Leghorn or Reilly should go to the Bulkeley Athletic Hall of Fame – Inaugural Class of 2015 at <http://bulkeley.hartfordschools.org/index.php/about-bulkeley/hall-of-fame> . If you are still not satisfied contact the Chair of the Hall of Fame committee, Bob Raffalo and he can probably answer your questions.

Some of the movie stars in 1966 were John Wayne, Paul Neuman, Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor. But, they had to give way to Bulkeley basketball on Tuesday and Friday nights because Wayne Leghorn was performing. And, you better get to the gym early to see what heroics he was going to perform that evening. Some spectators said he was a little bit of a gunner and many others said that Wayne was a gunner supreme. Wayne Leghorn had the ability to explode at any time. Coach Lou Bazzano said that Wayne Leghorn is on his all-time list of best players.



Wayne Leghorn

In 1965 and 1966 Wayne was a unanimous choice *First Team - Capital District Conference* (CDC). In 1966 he was elected Captain and selected *Second Team - All-State* by the New Haven Register. Wayne's jump shot with range was executed off the dribble or straight up on a catch and shoot. He could drive to the basket any way you wanted it left or right and finish. Wayne averaged 24.2 points per game and his foul shooting was superb with a 3 year career average of 83%. Now you can understand why Wayne Leghorn was inducted into the Bulkeley Hall of Fame in 2016 along with Joe Hourihan, Jackie Brown, Danny Simeone and many others.

Conclusion

Some readers may ask, why a prominent lawyer would write about a childhood game and events that happened over 50 years ago. One of the reasons is that this story is about important history and is inspirational. The past illuminates the present and provides a window to the future. If one young person who reads this story says I want to be like the Leghorns my purpose is satisfied. In addition, the players and events are linked to the pleasant memories of youth. Lou Bazzano retired at the end of the 1966 season culminating 13 years said Wayne Leghorn is on his all-time list of best players. This statement cements his legend. Keep in mind a star is not something that flashes through the sky. That is called a comet or a meteor. The kind of *star* I am referring to is fixed, permanent and gives off a steady glow. This is Wayne Leghorn, the lodestar of Bulkeley basketball that has not diminished after 53 years.

I will not say goodbye, but see you later, because I have more good stories to tell.

About the Author

James A Johnson is an accomplished trial lawyer and concentrates on Sports and Entertainment Law, serious Personal Injury and Insurance Coverage under the Commercial General Liability policy. He is an active member of the Massachusetts, Michigan, Texas and Federal Court Bars and can be reached at www.JamesAJohnsonEsq.com