

I was born to James and Lillie Mae Shed on April 26, 1943 in Bronx, New York. I attended primary and secondary schools in the Bronx. I graduated from picturesque Morris High School in 1962, the Bronx's centerpiece of the reform movement of the New York Public education system, when it opened in 1897. While at Morris High School, I was a member of the basketball team and by my senior year I made the prestigious All-City Basketball Team.

I attended North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, a Historically Black College and University, on an athletic scholarship. During my first year at North Carolina A & T, I decided to transfer to Texas Western College to play for Coach Don Haskins. But my mother, Lillie Mae, said she wasn't going to permit me to transfer unless Coach Haskins promised her that he would see to it that I went to class and got a degree. Coach assured my mother that if I expected to play for him at Texas Western, I darn sure would be attending class and if I applied myself to my studies I would surely get a degree. Anyone who played basketball for Coach Haskins would tell you that he was tough, not just on the basketball floor but in making sure you attended class as well. I did and in 1972, with a newly minted college degree from the University of Texas at El Paso, made Coach Haskin's promise to mom a reality.

Basketball at Texas Western was tough, but good. During my three years on the team, I played in one National Invitational Tournament in my home town in 1965 (sophomore year); played on an NCAA Championship team in 1966 (junior year), and in my senior year in 1967 played on another successful team that was invited to participate in the NCAA tournament. This was at a time when only a few schools got invited to the post-season tournament.

I was known by my teammates as "The Shadow," because of my tenacious defense. But fans remembered me for my role as the starting forward for the 1966 team that went 28-1. This season was topped with a 72-65 win over perennial NCAA powerhouse University of Kentucky Wildcats, coached by the legendary Adolph Rupp.

What was unique about this championship game was that the "Miners" started an all black team. This was a first in the history of the NCAA championship game. In winning, my teammates and I tossed into the proverbial trash bin of history, certain stereotypes concerning the black athlete and our ability to play with discipline, intelligence, and win at the highest levels of sport. More importantly, the team's sound play offensively and defensively that led them to the victory, opened the eyes of the world. This event open doors to the black student athlete, permitting them to play for any college in the country.

In 1968, I was drafted by the Boston Celtics. However my promising career was cut short due to a severe knee injury in my first year.

In 1980-81, I teamed up with Basketball Hall of Fame Coach Don Haskins as his assistant coach at my alma mater Texas Western (UTEP). In 1981, I took a position as the assistant basketball coach for the first team fielded by the University of Texas at San Antonio. My tenure with UTSA lasted from 1981 to my retirement in 2006. Prior to my retirement, I served as Coordinator of Student Programs for the University Center.

In 2001, I was given the African American Legend Award for my contribution to the UTSA community. In the spring of 2004 I was received the San Antonio Black Achievement Award. This prestigious award honored me for my 20 years of contributions to the city of San Antonio, not only basketball, but in serving as a role model and inspiration to young people. In the spring of 2005, I along with my African-American teammates from the 1966 Texas Western National Championship Team, were the recipients of the Black History Makers Award. This award is given to those who have "made an enduring imprint on some facet of national or local contemporary life, and whose activities are worthy of emulation; who has been first in initiating some activity or promulgating some philosophy, which made for a better life and nation; who has

shown courage in public life and public service, when the faint-hearted would have cringed; who was a first or held a record the longest in some great cause for the uplift of humanity.” In September 2006 I was inducted into the New York City Basketball Hall of Fame.

For the past 22 summers, I have served as the youth basketball camp coordinator for the three time NBA champion San Antonio Spurs. My passion is teaching kids how to turn negative energy into positive action.

The 1966 “Miners” have been the subject of many documentaries, books, newspaper and magazine articles and a feature length motion picture entitled *Glory Road*. *Glory Road* was released in January of 2006 by Disney Motion Pictures and Jerry Bruckheimer Productions. The movie recently won an ESPY award as the best sports movie of 2006. Earlier this year, the team was the subject of a documentary entitled the “Final Four,” which was presented on CBS, HBO Real Sports and ESPN Classic. My teammates and I have also been the subject of a number of books including: *When the Walls Came Tumbling Down: Kentucky, Texas Western, and the Game that Changed American Sports* written by Frank Fitzpatrick; *Basketball’s Greatest Upset*, written by Ray Sanchez. In 2003, *The Asphalt Gods: an Oral History of Harlem’s Famed Rucker Tourney* was released. *Glory Road*, Coach Haskin’s autobiography written with Dan Wetzel, is about the 1966 NCAA Basketball championship and how one team triumphed against the odds and changed America forever.

For the past 18 years, my wife Melba and I have called San Antonio, Texas, home. I am the proud parent of seven children and six grandchildren. When I am not spending time with my family, I continue my plight toward helping the youth. I share my story across the nation in community centers, churches, colleges and corporations. “What people did for us yesterday, has a story for the youth, today. I’m hoping *Glory Road* will be a teaching tool to let them know how it was then, so those facing any challenges will be able to recall how far we have come as a country and that with *determination anything* can be achieved.”