



PRESS RELEASE

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VIRGINIA SPORTS HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES CLASS OF 2012

Portsmouth, VA—The Virginia Sports Hall of Fame is proud to announce the members of the Class of 2012, as chosen by vote of the statewide Honors Court committee.

The new class features:

- **Antonio Freeman**, ranked 2nd all-time in receiving yards at Virginia Tech. He was drafted in the 3rd round of the 1995 NFL draft by the Green Bay Packers;
- **Gerald Henderson**, 3rd round draft choice in the 1978 NBA draft from Virginia Commonwealth University with a 14 year NBA career totaling 7,773 points;
- **Ray Hendrick**, known as “Mr. Modified” during his 36 year career in motorsports and named to NASCAR’s 50 Greatest Drivers and All-Time Top 10;
- **Jess Kersey**, held a 36 year career as a professional basketball official that included 5 NBA All-Star games, 190 NBA Playoff games and 19 NBA finals;
- **Al Pearce**, sports reporter for the Daily Press for 35 years primarily covering racing and holds eight Virginia Press Association Awards;
- **Debbie Ryan**, University of Virginia women’s basketball coach for 35 years with a career record of 739-324;
- **Billy Wagner**, has a record of 422 career saves that ranks 2nd best by a left-hand relief pitcher in Major League Baseball.

Hall of Fame President, Eddie Webb, says “The Class of 2012 is an example of the quality of athletes and coaches that are being produced across the Commonwealth. Each nominee’s resume is recognized on a national or international level proving the point that the State of Virginia is one of the leaders in producing this nation’s top competitors.”

The 41st annual induction ceremony will take place on Saturday, April 28, 2012, at the Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel & Waterfront Conference Center, as the crowning event of Hall of Fame Weekend. Tickets go on sale January 23, 2012. *For more information, call (757) 393-8031.*

A closer look at the Class of 2012:



Antonio Freeman, native of Baltimore, MD, attended Baltimore Polytechnic High School, named the Baltimore Sun's offensive player of the year and was recruited by Virginia Tech where he red-shirted as a freshman in 1990. Into his collegiate career he set numerous records, many of which still stand, and as a senior, led the Big East in punt returns and ranked sixth nationally. Freeman's career touchdown reception mark still stands and his 2,207 receiving yards rank second all-time at Virginia Tech. He was selected in the 3rd round of the 1995 NFL draft by the Green Bay Packers where he was a member of the 1996 Green Bay Packers Super Bowl team, 1998 All Pro Team and the 1998 NFL leader in receiving yards. His career totals 477 receptions, 7,251 yards receiving; 1,007 yards returning kickoffs and punts with 61 touchdowns. Combined with Brett Favre, he holds the record for 57 scoring passes, ranking 5th best in NFL history. He ranks 5th all-time on the Packers receivers list with 6,651 yards on 431 catches. Freeman was inducted into the 2006 Virginia Tech Hall of Fame. He is currently an analyst for Comcast Sports and works actively with under-privileged youth with his non-profit B'More Free Foundation.

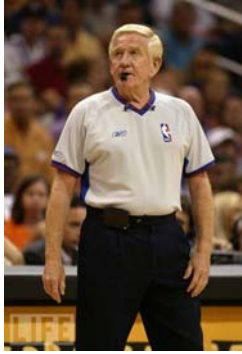


Gerald Henderson, native of Richmond, VA (Huguenot High School) and Virginia Commonwealth University graduate where he averaged 15 points per game during the 1975 – 1978 seasons, earning him All-State honors. He posted the third highest field goal total in VCU history with 682 career baskets, ranks second in school history in steals per game with a 2.13 average and collegiate total of 1,542 points. In the 1978 NBA draft, Henderson was the 3rd round draft choice of the San Antonio Spurs. From there, his 13-season NBA career would see three NBA championships; 1981 and 1984 with the Boston Celtics and 1990 with the Detroit Pistons. He played in 871 NBA games for the Celtics, Seattle, Knicks, 76ers, Bucks, Pistons and Rockets with career statistics of 7,773 points, 1,453 rebounds and 3,141 assists. Henderson was one of four members, and the only basketball player, inducted into the inaugural VCU Athletic Hall of Fame. He now lives in the Philadelphia area and is President of Henderson Energy Consulting. He has a wife Marie Henderson, three kids, Jermaine, Jade and Gerald Jr. that currently plays for the Charlotte Bobcats.



Ray Hendrick, native of Richmond, VA, was known as "Mr. Modified" during his 36-year career in motorsports. He passed away at the age of 61 in 1990. During his career, he collected more than 700 victories in modified racing, NASCAR Winston Cup Series and late model sportsman series. Ray Hendrick was the first inductee into the Virginia Motorsports Hall of Fame in 2003 and was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in 2007. In 1998, he was named one of NASCAR's 50 Greatest Drivers, named one of NASCAR Modified All-Time Top

10. He was best known for his racing philosophy of racing anywhere and everywhere. Hendrick won five track championships at the South Boston Speedway, and finished nine times in the Top 10 in the NASCAR Modified Division. In the NASCAR Winston Cup Series out of 17 starts, he collected 2 top-five finishes and six top-ten finishes. He is first on the all-time winners list of Martinsville Speedway with 20 wins between 1963 and 1975 ahead of Richard Petty, Darrell Waltrip and Richie Evans.



Jess Kersey, native of Newport News, VA, devoted 36 years as a basketball official in the American Basketball Association and the National Basketball Association. His officiating career started with the ABA where he worked for 5 years and refereed the 1975 ABA All-Star game plus many Playoff games. His 31 year NBA career includes 2,200 NBA games, 5 NBA All-Star games, 190 NBA Playoff games and 19 NBA finals. His officiating career was in the era when the ABA merged with the NBA and it gave him the opportunity to manage games with all the great talent the league offered. League Commissioner David Stern says “While [his statistics] alone are impressive, the truest measures of Jess’s success are the consistent excellence, integrity, and work ethic he displayed in one of the most difficult jobs in all of sports.” Jess also officiated in Puerto Rico for twelve years. He is a member of the Virginia Fast Pitch Softball Hall of Fame and was named to the All-World Team in 1969 as a second baseman. Jess is winner of his local sports club’s Henry Jordan Award and was also inducted into the Lower Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 2002.



Al Pearce, native of Rocky Mount, NC, graduated from Presbyterian College in 1965 and taught high school in Jacksonville, FL while awaiting a call from the Army. He had two postings at Fort Eustis and did a 13-month tour in Viet Nam (1967-68). He was hired by The Times-Herald (now the Daily Press) in June of 1969 and worked until retiring in November of 2004. Pearce covered everything in those 35 years, including high school, college and professional sports. He began covering racing in 1969, and it became his primary beat for virtually his entire newspaper career. He began working with AutoWeek magazine in 1973 and continues there as their NASCAR editor. He has authored solely or co-authored 13 books about NASCAR. He has eight Virginia Press Association Awards with the Daily Press and received the Henry McLemore Award in 2003, the highest recognition for a motorsports journalist. He also was inducted that year into the Media Wing of the International Motorsports Hall of Fame at Talladega, Ala. His contributions to motorsports journalism also have been recognized by Langley Speedway, Pocono Raceway and Martinsville Speedway, and by the Peninsula Sports Club.



Debbie Ryan has resided for over 35 years in Charlottesville where she was the head coach for the University of Virginia women’s basketball team. Her career covers all but four years of the program’s existence and also includes her role as assistant coach in the program for two years before becoming head coach. Ryan’s teams have compiled an overall record of 739-324, have participated in the NCAA Tournament 24 times and made 3 consecutive Final Four appearances. Her teams reached the NCAA Tournament Sweet Sixteen 12 times (11 consecutive years), won three Atlantic Coast

Conference Tournament Titles and 11 ACC regular season championships. She was the ninth active Division I women's basketball coach to reach the 700-win milestone. She was honored as the Naismith Coach of the Year in 1991 and has earned ACC Coach of the Year honors seven times. She is also a member of the Class of 2008 for the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.



Billy Wagner, native of Tannersville, VA, played baseball for Ferrum College from 1991-93. He earned All-Conference, All-Region and All-America first-team honors. He closed his 3-year Ferrum career with a 17-3 record and still to this day, holds the NCAA Div. III single-season record for strike-outs per innings. Wagner was selected in the first round of the Major League Baseball 1993 June Draft by the Houston Astros, as the 12th pick overall. His 15 year professional baseball career includes the Astros, Phillies, Mets, Red Sox, and Braves. He made his MLB debut in 1995 with the Astros and through his career became a seven-time MLB All-Star and was the 1999 MLB National League Rolaids Relief Award Winner. He has 422 career saves, second best by a left-hand reliever and fifth best of all time. He holds the record for most career strikeouts ever by a left-hand reliever with 1,196. His career statistics is a 47-40 record, 2.31 ear, 422 saves, 11.9 strike-outs per 9 innings.

About the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame & Museum

Since 1972, the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame & Museum has been proud to honor Virginia's contributions to the world of sports. We are the Commonwealth's official hall of fame, and one of only 16 throughout the nation. Our mission is to honor athletic excellence and serve as a nonprofit educational resource centered on health, math, science and character development programs, while inspiring visitors through sports history and interactive entertainment. For more information, go to www.vshfm.com.