

# Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame

Friday, February 18, 2022

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

## Hall of Fame Finalists

### Media Conference



MATT WINER: Hi, everybody. Great to have you here in the room with us in Cleveland in person for All-Star Weekend 2022. Great to have you out there watching on NBA TV, NBA.com and the NBA App as well. We are live from Cleveland All-Star Weekend 2022.

Of course, the state of Ohio has more than its share of great basketball history. History, of course, includes MVPs Stephen Curry and LeBron James, who were both born down the road in Akron. In 1970, Clevelanders finally got their team when the NBA welcomed the Cavaliers to the league, and in 2016, led by LeBron, the Cavs delivered to this city a world championship.

As a fan of the game, it is an honor to share the room today with so many important contributors, all of whom have made significant impacts on the game of basketball. Enough to be recognized by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, where the game lives forever.

But hobnobbing with hoop stars will have to wait for now because today is about breaking Hall of Fame news. Today we learn the names of the Hall of Fame annual award winners to be recognized during this year's enshrinement, along with the names of the Finalists for the Hall of Fame Class of 2022.

One caveat, we will not announce today the Class of 2022 members from the Direct-Elect Committees. Those committees include Early African-American American Pioneers, Veterans, International, Contributors and the Women's Veterans Committee. The class members chosen by those committees will be introduced with the full class in April at the NCAA College Basketball Final Four in New Orleans.

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame has the enormous responsibility to honor basketball across all levels. Today's nominees reflect that effort. A complete list of nominees for these five categories is available online at [hoophall.com](http://hoophall.com).

Now on to today's big reveal. The Hall of Fame is proud to

announce the winner of the 2022 Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award, the single greatest honor presented by the Hall of Fame outside of enshrinement. Our first honoree today began his life in hoops as an All-State high school player. Then starred at the College of Worcester. In 1964, he was named an alternate for the Men's Olympic gold medal basketball team. After graduation he served more than 20 years in the United States Air Force before turning to coaching. He spent a year as head coach at Dartmouth before moving on to become the head coach at the United States Air Force Academy, where his 15-year career remains the longest coaching tenure in the academy's history.

In 2004, he was named the Executive Director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches, advocating for the best interests of the coaches, the game and its players. He retired in 2020, but his legacy lives on following a distinguished career as a military officer and administrator. Join me in recognizing this year's recipient of the John Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award, Reggie Minton.

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame annually gives its Curt Gowdy Media Award to three deserving members of the media: one for work in print, one for electronic or broadcast media and the last for work in media that has inspired change.

Our first Gowdy winner has been one of the great innovative forces in sports television history. As a producer and executive, he has delivered epic events and driven coverage of some of sport's most memorable moments. Today he is credited as the architect behind eight of the 10 most-watched television events of all time. In 1989, he became the president of NBC Sports, where he created the NBA on NBC, a partnership that helped revitalize the league's brand and today still serves as the standard for league-network relationships.

He is best known for his passionate presentation of the Olympics. Over 19 Olympiads, he and his team framed the competition with cutting-edge production and context while never losing focus on the competitors' humanity. While NBC Sports became synonymous with the Olympics during his tenure, there was so much more to cover. In 1995,



NBC Sports became the first network to broadcast the World Series, the Super Bowl, the NBA Finals and Summer Olympics all in the same year. A 2011 inductee into the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame, this honoree has changed the way sports and entertainment are broadcast forever. Join me in recognizing the 2022 Curt Gowdy Transformative Media Award Winner, Dick Ebersol.

Our award winner for print journalism covered her first women's basketball game at the University of Missouri in 1984 where, like me, she later graduated with a degree in journalism. She's been writing about sports ever since, working as an editor and writer at newspapers in both Virginia and Missouri. In 2014, she was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame. In 1996, she joined ESPN.com as a women's college and pro basketball writer. To date, she has attended 20 straight NCAA Women's Basketball Final Fours. Aside from women's basketball, she has been instrumental in covering all kinds of sports, including both the Summer and Winter Olympics, women's World Cup soccer and professional golf's majors. Elected as the winner of the 2022 Curt Gowdy Award for print media, Mechelle Voepel.

[Applause].

Our final Gowdy Award winner finished his career as a Hall of Fame player right here in Cleveland as a member of the Cavaliers. Most NBA fans, however, remember him as the ball-hawking floor general for the New York Knicks. He began his television career shortly after retiring in 1980, serving as an NBA analyst for TBS, broadcasting Hawks games in his hometown of Atlanta. In 1987, he returned to New York and joined the Madison Square Garden Network, dishing and swishing his way through a Big Apple broadcasting career that has lasted more than three decades and becoming part of the soundtrack of Knicks basketball for generations of New York fans. He is currently the Knicks' TV analyst alongside the Hall of Fame Gowdy Award winner and play-by-play announcer Mike Breen.

Since joining the MSG Network, his colorful phrasing and keen analysis have earned him multiple New York Emmy nominations for his Knicks coverage. There is no one in the industry so adept at wheeling and dealing, hooping and scooping or posting and toasting as the 2022 Curt Gowdy Award winner for electronic media, and I guarantee no one will out-dress him when he accepts it. Walt "Clyde" Frazier.

Now that we've announced the honorees for 2022, let's welcome to the stage a 2016 Gowdy Award winner, two times my former colleague and now with The Athletic, Mr. David Aldridge.

Hello, D.A.

DAVID ALDRIDGE: I forgot how to use this.

MATT WINER: It's been a while. Take us back and put yourself in the shoes of the honorees today. What's that call like?

DAVID ALDRIDGE: First you think it's statistical error. Certainly, they couldn't have called you. It was in Toronto, and I remember being in my hotel room. The phone rings, and it's John Doleva, and he says, well, you're going into the Hall of Fame. I really thought it was a prank call. I was glad I didn't say what I was thinking of saying at the time, but he convinced me it was him. It was surreal. It's still surreal.

MATT WINER: It's well deserved, well earned obviously. Real. Very real.

DAVID ALDRIDGE: Yes.

MATT WINER: When you think of the nominees or the honorees this time around, what comes to mind?

DAVID ALDRIDGE: Dick Ebersol changed how the NBA was covered. I think everybody -- all of us understand how big the NBA on NBC was. They made it into a big, big thing, and he was the driving force behind that and certainly, as you mentioned, so many other sports over the years, and the Olympic Games and Saturday Night Live as well. He is a giant in the broadcasting business, and certainly I think transformative is the exact right word to use on him.

MATT WINER: David Aldridge, everybody, your 2016 Gowdy Award winner. The Hall of Famer, D.A.

DAVID ALDRIDGE: Good to see you.

MATT WINER: Yes. In person.

[Applause]

Now it's time for today's big announcement as the Hall of Fame recognizes these remarkable individuals who have given so much and helped the game grow. Here are the names from the North American and Women's committees for the 11 finalists for the Hall of Fame Class of 2022.

This Texas native began her coaching career in 1962 at Tolar High School and went on to a remarkable career covering 52 years at five schools. Her primary home was Granbury High in Granbury, Texas. She led her teams to



16 state Final Four appearances and won the state high school championship in 1990 while at Calallen High School. With a winning percentage of over .800, she has won more games than any other high school coach, male or female, ending her career with 1,416 wins. She was enshrined in the High School Texas and Women's Basketball Halls of Fame and was named the recipient of the Morgan Wootten Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007 by the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame. She's now named a finalist by the Women's Committee as a women's coach, Leta Andrews.

[Applause]

Our next finalist was an All-American forward at the University of Connecticut, leading the Huskies to an undefeated season in 2002 and two NCAA championships. Selected second overall by the Detroit Shock, she went on to a remarkable 15-year WNBA career, leaving her mark as a four-time All-Star and three-time champ. She found more success with Team USA as a member of two gold medal women's Olympic basketball teams. Named recently to the WNBA's 25th Anniversary Team and today as a finalist by the Women's Committee as a player, Swin Cash.

[Applause]

This California native was a major contributor to the Los Angeles Lakers Showtime teams of the 1980s. A third-round draft pick out of the University of New Mexico, he would spend his entire 12-year NBA career in purple and gold, never missing a postseason. A fierce defender, he took home the Defensive Player of the Year Award in 1987 and was selected five times to the NBA's All-Defensive First Team. One of the NBA's first 3-and-D players, this five-time NBA champion is named as a finalist as a player by the North American committee, Coop, Michael Cooper.

[Applause]

Our next finalist was a dual-sport athlete drafted by both the San Francisco Giants and the St. Louis Hawks in 1962. Following a stint in the Giants' system, he decided to make his living as an NBA referee. What a run he had. Working a remarkable 1,969 regular-season games over a 28-year career, he was recognized for his excellence on the court and officiated 170 playoff games, four NBA All-Star Games and 35 Finals games. Also, he served as the assistant supervisor of officials for the NBA for three seasons. Enshrined in the North Carolina A&T and New York City Basketball Halls of Fame and selected as finalists as a referee by the North American Committee, Hugh Evans.

[Applause]

Before he arrived in the U.S., our next honoree was a legend of the international game. Starring in Europe and winning several championships as part of Argentina's golden generation, he helped his home country defeat the United States in the 2004 Olympic Games. In the NBA, he was selected in the second round by the Spurs and quickly became part of a legendary trio in San Antonio, alongside Tim Duncan and Tony Parker. The swashbuckling shooting guard built a career on competitive spirit and clutch shot-making. A two-time All-Star, NBA Sixth Man of the Year and a four-time NBA champion, he is beloved by fans everywhere and is one of only two players in basketball history to win the EuroLeague, an Olympic gold medal and an NBA championship. The other being Bill Bradley. Named a finalist as a player by the North American Committee, Manu Ginobili.

Up next a Chicago native who had a prolific 14-year career with five NBA teams. This five-time All-Star and Olympic gold medalist is best known for his devastating killer crossover that has become a staple of today's game. Along with his "Run TMC" teammates, Hall of Famers Chris Mullin and Mitch Richmond, he starred on one of the most exciting fast-breaking teams of the 1990s. Selected as finalist from the North American Committee, Tim Hardaway.

[Applause]

Our next finalist was a three-year All-Ohio high school basketball pick and the 1972 Ohio Player of the Year. He began his coaching career in 1977 as a graduate assistant at West Virginia University. After stops at Akron, Cincinnati and Kansas State, he returned to his alma mater as head coach, armed with proven success as a program builder, recruiter and game strategist. Since 2007 he has directed West Virginia to over 300 victories, including a conference championship, 12 postseason appearances and a trip to the 2010 NCAA Final Four. Overall, he has amassed over 900 wins during his coaching career, ranking him third in total victories among active Division I head coaches. Named a finalist by the North American Committee as a coach, Bob Huggins.

[Applause]

Raised in Los Angeles, this star player was part of John Wooden's final championship team at UCLA. The consensus First Team All-American and National College Player of the Year, he was the third pick in the 1977 NBA Draft by the Milwaukee Bucks. This point forward was a five-time NBA All-Star, a member of the All-NBA First Team in 1979 and along the way helped lead his team to

five division titles. His number 8 hangs in the rafters in Milwaukee, and his name now appears on the list on Hall of Fame finalists. Named as a player by the North American Committee, Marques Johnson.

[Applause]

This finalist is one of nine coaches in NBA history to win 1,000 games and was named NBA Coach of the Year for the 2013 season. His impressive coaching career began back in 1978 when he transitioned to the bench as an assistant coach in San Antonio after five seasons as a player with the ABA and NBA Spurs. He became head coach of the Cleveland Cavaliers in 1984. The first of six coaching stops during a 27-year NBA career. Selected as a finalist by the North American Committee as a coach, George Karl.

[Applause]

Our next honoree's career as a women's basketball coach spans more than 40 years at the collegiate and pro level. At Old Dominion University, she won back-to-back AIAW tournaments with two current Naismith Memorial Hall of Famers, Nancy Lieberman and Anne Donovan. In 1985 she led the Monarchs to an NCAA national championship. Since 2000, she has served as an assistant and head coach for several WNBA franchises, earning WNBA Coach of the Year honors with the Washington Mystics. She's already inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, and today she's one step closer into induction into the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame. Named a finalist as a coach by the Women's Committee, Marianne Stanley.

[Applause]

Our final honoree is one of the most decorated players in women's basketball history. A three-time All-American standout at the University of Minnesota, she would lead the Gophers to their only Final Four appearance in program history. The wins continued to pile up in her pro career, and she stacked up individual honors and championships during 15 years in the WNBA. With USA Basketball, she would earn two Olympic gold medals and two more at the World Games. After five seasons with the Connecticut Sun, she returned home, leading the Minnesota Lynx to four championships before retiring in 2018 as the WNBA's career leader in games won. Named a finalist as a player by the Women's Committee, Lindsay Whalen.

[Applause]

Congratulations to all our honorees and Hall of Fame finalists today. Before we wrap up, I would like to get some thoughts from a Hall of Famer in the room, my NBA TV

colleague Isiah Thomas right over there.

[Applause]

ISIAH THOMAS: Hi. How are you doing, man?

MATT WINER: Good. It's been a while since you were announced this way and enshrined in Springfield. What has it meant to you all these years to be known as a Hall of Famer, have that "HOF" at the end of your name?

ISIAH THOMAS: Every time I have to sign an autograph and put "HOF" there, I'm just in awe about the enormity of the weight of being selected to be in the Hall. And as a little kid, no NBA player or no player ever grows up thinking, one day I'm going to be in the Hall of Fame. I mean, it just never enters into your mind. You say, I want to be an NBA player, I want to make the All-Star team. I want to be MVP. You never say, oh, I'm going to be in the Hall of Fame, and to be selected and to be honored in this way is truly a privilege.

MATT WINER: Some of us were just thinking, oh, I would like to get off the bench for my high school game.

ISIAH THOMAS: Well, you made it to the Hall of Fame.

MATT WINER: I made it to the Hall of Fame announcement. That's a very different thing.

You were a contemporary with some of the folks named as finalists, and you covered a lot of the other folks named as finalists. Who stands out for you?

ISIAH THOMAS: For me, you know, I'm personally rooting for Tim Hardaway, and not only am I rooting for him, but if you got -- if you got Richmond and Mullin in the Hall of Fame, then you got to have Tim in there. I'm rooting for him, what he has meant for the point guards in Chicago, and I hope he gets in.

And I would say that the other one that kind of stands out is Lindsay Whalen. I was telling D.A., when I was the GM of the Knicks one year, they asked me who was the best point guard coming out in the draft that year, and I said Lindsay Whalen.

MATT WINER: You weren't wrong.

ISIAH THOMAS: No. She's had a fantastic career.

MATT WINER: Thoughts on a couple of guys you played with in the 1980s, including in the NBA Finals. Michael Cooper and Marques Johnson.



ISIAH THOMAS: When I saw the film on Marques Johnson, the first thing that came to my mind was every time he came in the game, and he started at the point guard, that meant I would play two minutes, and then Chuck (Daly) would take me out because he was too big for me. And then when you saw what he was doing out on the floor, you know, he was way ahead of his time, not only as an athlete, but as a player. Now his broadcasting career has been spectacular in Milwaukee.

MATT WINER: Michael Cooper.

ISIAH THOMAS: The thing that comes to my mind is watching the Celtics and the Lakers play. Watching the Celtics and the Lakers play, Michael Cooper, Matt, this is how he was guarding Larry Bird (linking arms), the whole time.

MATT WINER: You were allowed to do that back then.

ISIAH THOMAS: You were allowed to do it. I will never forget. Bird somehow got away, somehow. When he got away, Michael Cooper had his shirt, like pulling it off, and you can see Bird pushing his hands to get away. Finally, Bird got away, took the shot and everything. But when you talk about a defender and somebody who was just tenacious about defending, I mean, that was Michael Cooper.

MATT WINER: You got a game to coach tonight?

ISIAH THOMAS: I got a game to coach tonight, and, unfortunately, I got no Michael Coopers, no Tim Hardaways and I got no Lindsay Whalens.

MATT WINER: You got some good players.

ISIAH THOMAS: I got some good players, and I'm excited to coach them. They're not like these ones coming into the Hall of Fame.

MATT WINER: Maybe someday. Maybe someday.

ISIAH THOMAS: Maybe someday.

MATT WINER: Good luck tonight. Isiah Thomas, everybody.

[Applause]

Let's hear from one more Hall of Famer, the chairman of the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame, who couldn't be here today, Mr. Jerry Colangelo.

Jerry, how does it feel to be back having this

announcement, again, at NBA All-Star Weekend?

JERRY COLANGELO: It's great because we haven't had the ability to do so for the last couple of years with COVID, and so it's terrific. To submit these names for voting, the Men's Committee, North American Screening Committee, the Women's Committee, the award winners, the Bunn and Gowdy Award winners, it's an exciting time for those individuals, for sure, and it's an exciting time for the Hall of Fame. For them to join the exclusive club, those who are elected, there's 400 members currently. That covers the history of the game going way back to the 1890s. To be part of that exclusive club, and I feel honored that I was elected myself back in 2004, it's a very, very special feeling. I can imagine what some of these individuals are feeling right now knowing that their names are out in front to be ready to be voted on.

MATT WINER: I can only imagine what's going through their minds right now. I hear there have been some major changes at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. What can you tell us, Jerry?

JERRY COLANGELO: It wasn't that long ago, let's assume around 70 years ago, that the Hall of Fame really came into existence. This is the third iteration in terms of facilities, and today we have a totally renovated, just about brand-spanking-new facility, which we consider to be the best of the best in terms of museums for sports. So a \$30 million raise -- a \$20 million renovation, \$10 million was put into technology and programming. We have an incredible facility that, compared to two years ago before COVID, we are up 37% in terms of attendance. That says it all. We're excited about it. It's a beautiful, beautiful facility. The Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame is a very, very exciting place.

MATT WINER: Thank you, Jerry. Jerry Colangelo. He has done everything you can do in basketball.

[Applause]

Thank you all for taking the time to share this afternoon with us and to all the Hall of Famers who have joined here in person or remotely. A round of applause for all the 2022 finalists. Congratulations to everyone who has been named here today. That is certainly an honor in and of itself.

The Class of 2022 will be introduced on Saturday, April 2nd, at the NCAA Final Four in New Orleans. Enshrinement 2022 will take place September 10th in Springfield, Massachusetts, at the Basketball Hall of Fame. I hope to see everyone in Springfield, the birthplace of basketball. Thanks to all of you for coming out today and,



of course, our audience at home on NBA TV, NBA.com  
and the NBA App. Enjoy the rest of the 2022 All-Star  
Weekend here in Cleveland, everybody.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

