

# NBA Legends Awards

Sunday, February 16, 2025  
San Francisco, California, USA

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: No, please, sit down.

Morning, y'all. How are we? Any first-timers in here?  
You're in for a great morning, you really are.

Probably my favorite time of All-Star Weekend every year because it gets pretty crazy, everybody gets very busy, everybody's pushed and pulled. This is a little oasis in the midst of all that where we can sit, enjoy breakfast, enjoy reconnecting.

So thank God for this morning. Thank God for friends. Thank God for teammates. And thank God for Mac McClung. I mean, that happened at just the right time, I mean to tell you. That was something to see. Three straight slam dunks. Never seen that before. So congratulations to him.

What's going to happen today, for the uninitiated, we're going to honor some greats. It's already pretty surreal where you can be going through the buffet line, you know, next to Oscar Robertson or Mitch Richmond, you know, and all of a sudden you look up from your eggs, and there's another legend. So it's a great morning. It's like all your basketball cards come to life.

I see Shawn Marion out here. I saw Shawn Marion at Kenny "the Jet" Smith's party the other night. Glad to see. That was Friday night. Here it is Sunday morning. Glad to see you here. That's awesome.

Yao Ming here today. Wow!

(Applause.)

Wonderful to see you.

I start the festivities every year, and this is 20-something years of doing this, writing something about the host city and the people who are going to be honored. It is poetry.

Some of you are already groaning at the concept that this is going to happen. Last year, in fact, I did like a rap for those of you who were here.

Again, hold your applause.



So I figured basically the way things are going, it would be a great year for a disstrack. So -- no, I'm not going to -- would not do that.

But I will bring you this. So relax. Sit back. Enjoy. Groan. Shake your head. Do whatever. Here goes.

So much to discuss these days. Where do we start in this place Tony Bennett one day left his heart? Tonight we'll see something we've not seen before, a quartet of teams will be taking the floor.

Two games to 40. Two winners advance to the finals. It's different, but give it a chance. We're hoping competitive juices will flow, and several hours from now, I guess we'll all know.

But that all goes down at Chase Center tonight. This Legends Brunch is unchanged, I hope that's all right. We'll do as we always do, honor the greats, their basketball talents, just one of their traits.

In the stanzas which follow, we'll spotlight a few of the legends you'll hear from before we are through. So as in years past, it would please me no end if you'd stand for a moment and hear cheers again.

Now, before triple-doubles became a big stat, a fella named Oscar produced them like that. 31-12-11 back in 1962, a feat it took decades for someone else to do. This man has been a beacon standing for what's right, a snapshot of talent and grit and of fight. At 86 he looks like he could take the court and go, he's Oscar Robertson, here's to "the Big O."

(Applause.)

This guy was a nightmare for players he checked. When it came to defense, the man came correct. Nine times All-Defensive, and when push came to shove, you couldn't do better than No. 20, "the Glove." He'd shut his man down and provide play-by-play. There's not been a moment he had nothing to say. A product of Oakland

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found a sport he was great in, here's Hall of Famer, "the Glove," Gary Payton.

(Applause.)

Now, while we normally single out players of note, we'll break from tradition, no need for a vote. These three Hall of Famers live in Warriors lore for their dynamic penchant to run and to score. Mitch Richmond, Chris Mullin, and Tim Hardaway played two years together way back in the day. Each night they'd combine for about 73, let's welcome the iconic Run TMC.

(Applause.)

Golden State got its first chip 50 years ago, led by this dead-eye shooter I'm assuming you all know. Now, his free-throw technique was unique and effective, led the league from the stripe seven times, for perspective. His scoring was prolific, led the nation and college and the NBA and ABA, you're welcome for that knowledge. If you're asking if that's rare, my answer would be very; he's the only guy to do it, and his name is Rick Barry.

(Applause.)

Now, Rick and I share common ground. We've both worked at TNT. I bring that up because tonight is personal for me. It's TNT's last All-Star Game in what is our last season. We've relished every second with this league, and you're the reason. You the players and you the fans who watch us night to night, for 40 years each game, each show, it's been a sheer delight. Pointing fingers or placing blame have no place in this rhyme. Bitterness or ill will, come on, don't waste my time.

Instead consider gratitude. We're thankful and we're blessed. Our TNT production crew, our backbone, just the best. And so for all my colleagues, every teammate in our ranks, we offer you a simple yet sincere and heartfelt thanks.

(Standing ovation.)

When I say sit down, now I mean it. I mean, seriously. But I will accept that on behalf of the hundreds and the thousands of people over 40 years of this relationship, TNT, TBS and the NBA. It was a heck of a run.

And so on behalf of everybody behind the scenes, in front of the cameras, thank you. That just means the world.

And now it is my pleasure to introduce to you the best commissioner in sports, Adam Silver.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER ADAM SILVER: Thank you, Ernie. And what I just said to him, let me add my thanks for 40 years of Turner's coverage. It's been unbelievable. Looking forward to the All-Star Game tonight.

And to the Retired Players Association, thank you for hosting this brunch. All-Star Sunday for me always begins at this event. It's fitting because it's the story of the NBA, because the story of the NBA starts with its legends.

There are roughly 175 legends in town this weekend, participating in all sorts of events. Thanks to all of you. And would every former player in attendance please stand or wave and be recognized.

(Applause.)

Thank you. Today I have the pleasure of honoring one of these legends, a pioneering figure in our league. He is an NBA champion, an MVP, an Olympic gold medalist, and a 12-time All-Star.

Just as importantly, off the floor, he paved the way for free agency. He fought for change and broke down barriers. At the height of his career, he served as president of the Players Union and went on to become one of the founders of this group, the Retired Players Association.

I'm, of course, talking about my friend, the great Oscar Robertson.

(Applause.)

On Friday we held our annual All-Star Day of Service. I stopped by a local elementary school here in San Francisco, and there was Oscar, engaging and connecting with young students.

Those kids, of course, never saw him play, but they were in awe. Not of Oscar the player, but of Oscar the person.

That's what I admire most about you, Oscar. You're humanity. You're a man of dignity, character, and respect. You can tell the deep reverence that people have for him, whether it's his fans, his contemporaries, or the generations of players who have followed.

The "Big O" is NBA royalty, and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award. Let's roll the video.

(Oscar Robertson award video.)



(Applause.)

And now it's my honor to present the Lifetime Achievement Award to Oscar Robertson.

OSCAR ROBERTSON: Thank you very much, Adam. I want to thank the Commissioner for that lovely introduction.

You know, growing up, I never would have thought of myself as a future labor leader. I simply believe that situations in life should be as fair as possible for everybody.

Some say that my game reflected that belief. As an all-around player, one of the things you have to do is get every guy on the team involved in the game so the team can win together. That was instilled in me in my high school coach, Ray Crowe, a guy that you couldn't say anything to when he talked to you. You had to say "Yes, sir" or "No, sir."

That's changed over the years.

Therefore, looking back, it was natural for me to accept the role as president of the Players Association in 1965, and I only did it because of my friend Jack Twyman and Tommy Heinsohn. They were good friends of mine. I played with Jack Twyman and Tommy Heinsohn, we got together.

I didn't know what in the world was going to come with this, to be honest, folks. I was a kid in the dark. I just got into pro basketball. We didn't have such a great basketball team in Cincinnati, but we competed.

Although the NBA thrived on competition among teams, the players had to work together to become strong as a unit. It wasn't always easy to convince the players. Some feared their owners. Others believed that we would ruin the league with our demands, and some just didn't believe us as an association.

It was very difficult, to be honest. After many hours of conversations at meetings, over dinners through the years, the players came together.

Then we approached the owners to work with them. We had to convince the owners that we were not the enemy, but we were on both sides to have strong representation so the league could grow. We went in together as a partnership.

As we watched some of the older players retire, including ourselves, it became clear that the retirees needed support. These people, the founders -- Dave Bing, Archie Clark, Dave Cowens, myself, and Dave DeBusschere has

passed on -- we formed the Retired Players Association in 1992.

But in 1992, we only had a few hundred players paying dues. Now that figure has grown to over 2,000 members. I'm very happy about that.

(Applause.)

Once the Retired Players Association began, it was important for us to gain recognition for the newly formed organization. One of our main goals was to start this Legends Brunch on Sunday because there were no other events scheduled before the All-Star Game.

There were some unsung heroes, and one I hope is here, because I talked to him quite a bit over the years, who did a tremendous job for us in getting in touch with corporations, Tom Hoover.

(Applause.)

But there were many others who were instrumental in securing partnerships with corporations in different All-Star cities.

Another goal of ours was to secure health insurance for the retirees, which we discussed back while I was still playing. We finally achieved that goal of health insurance for our retirees in 2016 with the help of the Players Association under the leadership of the one and only Chris Paul. Thank you, Chris.

(Applause.)

The mission of the Retired Players Association has expanded beyond health and wellness to education, financial literacy, and career transition. We have Retired chapter programs operating in 13 cities now for retired players to connect with each other in their communities.

The Retired Players Association now serves retired players from the WNBA, the ABA, and the fabulous Harlem Globetrotters.

(Applause.)

The Retired Players Association wants to continue to grow globally to support our retired players' needs. Both associations, the Players and the Retired Players, have historically supported international play.

I was part of the first organized team by the State Department under President Johnson in 1964 to play against former Iron Curtain countries following an



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embarrassing international loss by the USA. That was with Red Auerbach. That was a fun trip also, I must tell you.

Kareem and I put on basketball clinics in several African countries in 1972. With the Retired Players, I took on a team to play games in China in 1998.

The Retired Players Association is back again on solid footing. After 15 years of outside leadership, the organization has changed its leader to a former player, Antonio Davis --

(Applause.)

-- a 13-year veteran with vast experience as a former Players Association president.

And I must give thanks to two people, Johnny Davis and our founder, Dave Bing, for their sacrifices and hard work as we transition to new leadership.

(Applause.)

I am so proud of what the Retired Players Association has grown into. I look forward to all the new opportunities. So, again, thank you for this recognition.

And I must say, to see this crowd, man, this is magnificent.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: So I have to apologize to our esteemed producer, George DeFotis. I'm always supposed to come out this way to come here. But when you have a chance to go out that side and tell Oscar Robertson how awesome he is, you don't pass that up. All right? So, sorry, George, but congratulations, Oscar. That's tremendous.

Before we hear from our next speaker, have somebody else I want to recognize. We do this every year because, again, this is such a great room and so many folks in here, but there are three tables in particular over here on the far right which are occupied by the families of the Make-A-Wish kids. So please --

(Applause.)

Yeah, hey, this is your moment. Stand up. You can stand up. You can wave. You can do whatever. Yeah, there you go.

(Applause.)

All right, that's enough. Now you can sit down. That's

okay, good.

(Laughter.)

As always, great to meet with you guys this morning. Great to spend time with you, with the kids and with the parents too. Much respect. All right?

Here to present the Hometown Hero Award is a nine-time NBA All-Star. He's been the All-Star Game MVP, a member of the 25 All-Star Team Eastern Conference. I believe he's playing on Team Shaq tonight because he's -- he's not a kid anymore, but he is a legend, and he's Damian Lillard.

(Applause.)

DAMIAN LILLARD: Good morning. This year's Hometown Hero Award is presented to an Oakland native whose defensive prowess and fiery competitiveness earned him the nickname "the Glove."

Gary Payton's career is a shining example of what it means to combine skill, heart, a relentless work ethic. In his 17 seasons in the NBA, Gary redefined what it meant to be a point guard, especially on the defensive side of the ball.

In 1996, he led the league in steals per game and was the first point guard to ever earn the NBA's Defensive Player of the Year Award. He's also led the league in trash-talking, as you all know.

(Laughter.)

Going into a game against Gary, you knew your body -- he was going to be into you, and especially your ears -- would be put to the test.

A nine-time All-Star and a member of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame, Gary's leadership helped guide the Supersonics to the 1996 NBA Finals, and he secured an NBA championship with the Miami Heat in 2006, cementing his place as one of the game's all-time greats.

For me, being a kid from Oakland, and obviously being an athlete and aspiring NBA player, you want something to be close enough to where you can feel like you can do it too.

And I remember a time, I think I was like 10 or 11 years old, and I'm playing AAU, I'm pursuing my career as a basketball player, I'm in the car with my dad, and we stop at Ben's Burgers. And I had never seen an NBA player up close before. And I look out the car, I'm like, man, that's GP right there.

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So my dad called him over. He started talking. You know, he's like, Man, I think I'm going to go to the Lakers.

So my dad, you know, he looked at me like, see? You know, going to the Lakers. I'm like, man.

So we get home. I get on the game, I trade GP to the Lakers, calling everybody.

(Laughter.)

I'm like, Man, I'm telling you, I just heard him say it, he's going to the Lakers.

So, for me, it was extremely inspiring to be able to get up close on somebody from my city that everybody I went to school with claim is a cousin, everybody know him. To see it up close, you know, to know that he knew my dad, it just made it seem a little bit more possible.

So, you know, that's my story as a kid from Oakland and, you know, who Gary Payton is to our city and to a lot of young men and young athletes.

So with that being said, let's take a look at the career of Gary Payton.

(Gary Payton award video.)

(Applause.)

DAMIAN LILLARD: Please welcome Gary Payton.

GARY PAYTON: They wanted to give me three minutes and write a speech. I said, man, I talk too much to be writing speeches, man. So, you know, I'm going to come up here and just speak from my heart.

We could have had a lot of people be hometown heroes -- Antonio Davis, my guy that just introduced me, Damian Lillard, Jason Kidd, Brian Shaw. We could have had a lot of people to do that.

But this is very much an honor for me. The only thing I hate is that my mom and dad didn't have a chance to see it. But I do have my other family here to really see what an Oakland kid can be and what he can do.

(Applause.)

I never expected to be doing anything like this. Ever. But I'm here. We could have honored Antonio. We could have honored Damian. They're going to be here at one time and be a hometown hero. I'm just very proud of myself because I did get out of Oakland, California, and become

the person I did become.

I just want to show all these kids that in Oakland, California, we're not a bad city. We're not that way. Some people can get out of here.

(Applause.)

And we just have to understand we have to be that guy, we have to be that guidance. And right now, with what Damian Lillard is doing right now for our city, as in right now, and my son, of being people of native or from this area, and having a kid like what Damian just said when he walked out and he traded me on the PlayStation and things like that, well, shoot, I traded Damian on PlayStation 2 to Milwaukee Bucks.

(Laughter.)

So, look, man, he don't know I'm in awe of him right now. So I'm just very happy, and I'm very grateful for people to recognize us. And we just want to keep everything going and let these kids understand that you can be a hometown hero in any city that you can be. You just got to be that one.

And understand people, please, have people talk to you about this mental health stuff. These people really need this. They need it very bad.

(Applause.)

And we're here to do that. And that's what a hometown hero is for.

People ask me today why did I take over a junior college at the College of Alameda. I told them because I want to help kids. I want to help kids get to a better place because they really don't understand it right now, and they don't have that help. And I'm that guy they want to help them.

So, please, thank you very much for me having this opportunity to step up here and be a hometown hero, and thank you guys very much. Appreciate it.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: We have a couple of folks we'd like to recognize this morning. Honored to have them with us. They're social justice champions, civil rights icons.

Martin Luther King III.

(Applause.)



Who continues his father's mission to build a beloved community. It's always good to see you. Thank you so much for being here.

And Dr. Clarence B. Jones is also with us.

(Applause.)

Last month the Golden State Warriors paid special tribute to Dr. Jones, honoring the lawyer and former speech writer for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by naming him their official Impact Warrior.

Please, one more time, a hand for these great leaders.

(Applause.)

Next up is an NBA All-Star, four-time NBA champion, NBA Finals MVP, and a name and a face familiar to all basketball fans here in the Bay Area.

He's the executive director of the National Basketball Players Association, Andre Iguodala.

(Applause.)

ANDRE IGUODALA: Thank you, Ernie. Really appreciate it. Ernie also told me not to mess this up. Wonderful morning. Good to see you all.

I think we're all curious which Legends team we're rooting for tonight in the All-Star Game. Is it Chuck's Global All-Stars, Shaq's OGs, or Kenny's Young Stars? Or maybe even Candace with her leading the Rising Stars? But they'll probably get blown out every time.

(Laughter.)

It's such a pleasure to be here today amongst some of the gentlemen that inspired me to be who I am, not only as the executive director of the NBPA, but also as one of your peers now, here in my new home, the Bay Area.

As we gather to honor our legends of the game, I must also note the NBPA's long-standing collaboration with the Retired Players Association. Congrats to my fellow Bay Area native, Antonio Davis, for being named CEO of our alumni organization.

AD, we just spoke the other night.

(Applause.)

Yes, yes, yes.

We spoke. We got it done. We got it done. I haven't told Adam yet either. We got it done.

I look forward to our unfinished business. We got it passed. Our current players understand how important it is to continue to build. And it's that journey that we're going to go down as professional athletes, and we'll all be retired players, and it's a family. I'm really looking forward to it.

It's also incredible to be back and look upon how much league history has been made here in the Bay Area, from Rick Barry, honored here today, being drafted by the Warriors in '65 and earning Finals MVP 10 years later in '75. GP, "the Glove," who we just celebrated, he represents Oakland through and through.

We also got Tim Hardaway, Mitch Richmond, Chris Mullin -- lives literally two minutes from me -- and Run TMC. Although it was not as long as we would have liked, that Run TMC team just took the league by storm, and their impact continues to have such an inspiration to our kids and our youth to this day.

Going to my former teammate who's made all of this happen, for me, I would say, my dear friend, Steph Curry, four-time NBA champ, 11-time NBA All-Star, two-time league MVP, one unanimous, certainly future Hall of Famer, amazing golfer. His legacy sounds like a Tiger Woods' tee introduction on all the accolades that he's acquired.

But not only just on the court, but Steph's legacy going beyond that as he continues to do so much in our community. He led an incredible Day of Service effort this past Friday through his foundation with Ayesha Curry, his wonderful wife, Eat.Learn.Play.

Other Bay Area legends, talk about Bill Russell, Jason Kidd, just to name a few. We've been speaking about them throughout this day, but we can go on and on and on about how many incredible memories are going on here in the Bay Area.

But all these milestones and memories are built in all 30 NBA markets by all of our players in each city. We bring our love of the game to not just domestically but all over the world.

Like "the Big O," Oscar Robertson, an NBA champion, 12-time NBA All-Star, and the first player to average a triple-double for a full season who was honored first here today.

In his fight for player rights, Oscar was among a prominent group of players who famously led the potential strike



during the first televised NBA All-Star Game in 1964. That was the turning point, and the fight for pension plans laid the groundwork to the many benefits our players enjoy today. The guys are spoiled, I must say.

Don't worry, Adam, we will play tonight. And we're going to play hard.

But this weekend we come together to celebrate this beautiful game, all we poured into it, and all it has given back to us. I know I can speak for our current members in saying thank you to all of the players who have come before them, laying the foundation for the modern game in the global basketball community we enjoy today.

So thank you, thank you, thank you. AD, see you soon.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: It has been an exceptionally difficult year in the NBA family with the losses of many legends.

Here to help us honor those legends, starting guard for the Western Conference All-Stars, best shooter anybody's ever seen, Stephen Curry.

(Applause.)

STEPHEN CURRY: Good morning, everybody. The Legends Brunch celebrates the members of the NBA family whose contributions both on and off the court have created indelible memories. We are also here to honor the memories of those whom we lost this year, and we've lost so many giants of our game in the last year.

Jerry West, who is known as Mr. Clutch, was a 14-time All-Star. Yeah, give it up.

(Applause.)

He was a 14-time All-Star, an NBA champion, and a three-time member of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. His talent, both on the court and in the front office, may never, ever be equalled.

Bill Walton.

(Applause.)

Bill was the first pick of the 1974 NBA draft and the 1977 NBA Finals MVP. His larger-than-life personality is greatly missed.

Dikembe Mutombo.

(Applause.)

Dikembe was an eight-time NBA All-Star and a four-time Defensive Player of the Year. His trademark finger wag after blocking a shot was the exact opposite of his selfless and welcoming nature off the court. Dikembe was a true global ambassador and a humanitarian.

And Alvin Attles. We know him as Al.

(Applause.)

Al spent over 60 years in the Golden State Warriors organization and was beloved as a player, a coach, an executive, and a civic leader.

And Al has a special place in my heart, obviously, representing the Golden State Warriors franchise. He welcomed me with open arms back in 2009 when I was drafted out here. He showed me what it meant to have a true impact on and off the court and speak for those who can't speak for themselves in the community.

His lasting impact will forever be felt. Every time I go into our practice facility at Chase Center, his name is on the practice floor, his picture is on the wall, and his impact on our organization and the entire Bay Area will be felt forever.

(Applause.)

And to help us honor these and so many other legends we've lost, I'd like to welcome five-time Grammy winner and member of Maroon 5, PJ Morton.

(In memoriam video with PJ Morton live performance.)

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: There is a heaviness to the room. As those images were placed on the screen, some of them hit differently, some of them hit more distinctly. We feel them all.

And, look, I just know the league is lucky to have a friend like PJ Morton who has done this in memoriam at Legends Brunches past. And it's just perfect. In fact, the first time he did that at an All-Star Weekend, I made it a point -- I had never met him. I went up afterwards, and we spoke, and it was just awesome to get to know him a little bit.

And so a few years ago, three years ago, when Cheryl and I lost a son, Michael, at 33 years old, like one of our first times we went out after that, it was to a PJ Morton concert in Atlanta.

And we talked to PJ beforehand, and then he looks out at us late in his concert, and he says, "I know some of you in here are struggling, going through stuff, going through loss," and he launches into this song called "Everything's Gonna Be Alright."

And that's my message to you today too. We've all had losses here this year, but everything's going to be all right. And so we'll ride that out. It's okay to be sad.

(Applause.)

Perfectly fine to be sad. Perfectly fine to remember with great fondness how great these folks were in our lives.

It's my pleasure now to introduce the chairman of the board of directors of the Retired Players Association, Charles "Choo" Smith.

(Applause.)

CHARLES "CHOO" SMITH: Thank you, Ernie. Good morning everybody. Thank you, everyone, for attending this year's All-Star Legends Brunch. And let's please remember those that couldn't be here with us today, as we've seen.

I'd like to thank our incredible partners, the NBA and the NBPA, for working alongside us to honor the rich history of basketball. We are honored to have such dedicated partners, and we look forward to growing how we work together to celebrate our game and our legends.

So many on our staff and board of directors work tirelessly through the year to make all of our events and success for our members a success.

Special thanks to our chapter presidents and founders as well. Our board of directors consists of vice chairman Shawn Marion, treasurer Nancy Lieberman, secretary C.J. Kupec, Spencer Haywood, Eddie Gill, Rushia Brown, Bob Elliott, and Mike Bantom.

And our newest elected directors are Major Jones, Sedric Toney, and Ronald Dupree. Please give them applause, please.

(Applause.)

Most of you know the NBRPA has undergone a change in our leadership, and we couldn't be more excited or optimistic of the direction of the NBRPA and our relationships with the league and the Players Association.

Under this new leadership, we will be working closer than ever before with our partners, building more impactful programming, and our members, and making the transition from active player to legend as seamless as possible for all.

This took a lot for us to come together like this, and we're forever grateful.

Now, without further ado, it's my honor to introduce the new president and CEO, 13-year NBA vet and former president of the NBPA, my friend, our brother, Mr. Antonio Davis.

(Applause.)

ANTONIO DAVIS: What's up, baby? Thank you, Choo. I appreciate that.

Good morning, everyone. How's everyone doing?

I want to thank Commissioner Silver. Special thanks to Andre Iguodala, Terri Jackson, our esteemed guests, and, of course, our legends for attending the 25th annual Legends Brunch today.

Looking around here today, I see the history of basketball all in one room, and I can't help but smile knowing that my hometown, the Bay Area, is truly the epicenter of basketball universe this weekend, and welcome to our city.

(Applause.)

I'd like to start by thanking the NBRPA search committee and especially our chairman, Charles "Choo" Smith, for their hard work and dedication to this organization.

I'd also like to acknowledge our founders -- Dave Bing, Archie Clark, Dave Cowens, Oscar Robinson, and Dave DeBusschere for creating this brotherhood and sisterhood of basketball.

Thank you to our board of directors and our chapter presidents. I can't and I will not do it without you.

For over three decades, the NBRPA has been here to serve our players, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for entrusting me with this responsibility to continue this work. I'm truly honored. Thank you.

(Applause.)

I'm grateful to be chosen as the lead of our association into this next chapter and for the opportunity to be a part of the process for our players transitioning out.





We want to make sure that they're empowered, we want to make sure that they have support, and we want to make sure that they feel that love that we have as this brotherhood and sisterhood that was created for us.

We want to make sure that we give them a new passion in their lives. We want to continue uplifting this game that we all love.

But first I want our partners, the NBA, the NBPA, the WNBPA -- you guys are going to be paramount to our mission of bringing all our former professional basketball players together to create an association that empowers to be who we are.

And what are we? As we've just seen, we're legends of the game. We're entrepreneurs. We're job creators. We're game changers. We're role models. And we do this all in and for our communities.

Adam, Andre, Terri, I'm very much looking forward to working alongside you and all your teams in this work.

We have so much to offer, and it's time for us to come together to be a big impact for change. But to do all this, I need to speak to everybody.

To our RPA membership, there's a lot of work to be done, and we're going to get that work done. I ask for your patience and cooperation as we move forward.

To those who aren't yet members, my aim is to show you the value of this organization, and I hope you're ready to join us to make this team stronger.

While I certainly cannot predict the future, one thing I do know, if you want to go fast, you go alone. But if you want to go far, you go together.

(Applause.)

Thank you again for this opportunity. I hope everybody enjoys the NBA All-Star in the Bay. You guys have a great time. Be safe. God bless.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: Here to present the Legend of the Year Award, 16-time All-Star, four-time MVP across the NBA and ABA, Hall of Famer -- it could be much simpler just to say, ladies and gentlemen, The Doctor.

(Applause.)

JULIUS ERVING: Good morning, everybody. I think it's still morning, although it's moving along. Happy to see you.

It's my pleasure to present the Legend of the Year Award, and this is going to a man who is as iconic for his scoring ability as for his style. Eight-time NBA All-Star, four-time ABA All-Star, Rick played with an intensity and flair that captivated fans throughout his career.

He was a First-Team selection five times in the NBA and four times in the ABA as well as the 1975 NBA Finals MVP where he led the Golden State Warriors to the championship.

Rick was a player ahead of his time. He played several years ahead of me. And since he played on Long Island with the New York Nets over at Island Garden --

(Applause.)

We got one Island Garden person here. I'm the other one. I'm the other one.

(Laughter.)

So believe it or not, I never told him because I didn't want to create a situation of him looking down on me or anything, but he was one of my heroes. And he's still one of my heroes.

We do BIG3 basketball together for the last six years. So I get to see him ten weeks out of the year, going head-to-head. But I haven't seen him in the last six years shoot one underhand free throw.

And that was his trademark, as you know. He was a great passer. He was a tremendous, tenacious defender and one of the most reliable free-throw shooters the game has ever seen. It was mentioned earlier that he won the free-throw title seven years out of his career. So thanks in part to it being that famous under-handing style, which Wilt Chamberlain tried to duplicate.

But often imitated, but never duplicated, is that the expression? Often imitated. Often imitated, but never duplicated. But, Rick, I'm just going to let you know I never tried it.

(Laughter.)

So he was nearly automatic at the line. And in 1967, when he was the team MVP, he had the winner's share divided equally amongst his teammates. Who does that? Can you imagine if that happened today? I mean, they'd be creating



lifetime savings for a lot of players. But Rick was one of the first guys to do that, and I started to do it because he did it.

So he has played a role in my life. We've gone to Israel together. As I mentioned before, we've done BIG3 together. We used to do Spalding commercials together. We were on the back of the magazine, Rick and I.

And it was just kind of a Frick and Frack situation. I think it was just meant to be, and I think it led to this moment, being able to introduce him today.

So let's take a look at the remarkable Rick Barry.

(Rick Barry Legend of the Year Award video.)

(Applause.)

JULIUS ERVING: Legend of the Year, come on up.

(Applause.)

RICK BARRY: Well, thanks, Julius. I'm honored to have had him introduce me. I've always respected his game. I just wish that we could have played with each other instead of against each other. But most of all, I'm fortunate to call him my friend.

Blessings to all of you this beautiful Sunday morning. And since this is being televised, I've been allotted only four minutes to speak. Hell, that's like asking me to take only ten shots in a game. I'm just getting warmed up at ten.

But I am here today, really with an extreme sense of gratitude. I've shared the stage with Oscar Robinson, sitting at my table, one of my boyhood heroes, and Gary Payton, who we coach against in the summer at the BIG3 all the time.

I'm also here with my beautiful wife of over 30 years, Lynn. And believe me, she's worked tirelessly to mellow me out.

(Applause.)

And that has been a full-time job. And she continues to push me every day to keep me moving. She's either going to keep me young or she's going to kill me.

(Laughter.)

Also with me is my eldest son, Scooter, and his wife, Ruby. Scooter was born here in San Francisco, and he was just six months old at the time of the All-Star Game back in 1967.

Another special person here is Clifford Ray, one of my dearest friends, my brother for over 50 years.

(Applause.)

As most of you know, Clifford was the starting center on our '75 Warriors championship team, and there is no one in the world I would rather run the pick and roll with.

And a quick shout-out also to another of my Warrior teammates, I don't know where he's sitting, but Charles "Hopper" Dudley.

And to be here with these special people that are part of my life and to be surrounded by you former players and current players and, of course, all of you fans, it really does fill my heart. And I appreciate the recognition by the Retired Players Association.

As I enter my years as an octogenarian -- I love that word. For those of you who didn't pay attention in school, that's ages 80 to 89 -- I find myself reflecting more often on the passage of time and the importance of cherishing every single moment.

My father once said to me, he said, Son, the older you get, the faster the years go by.

And boy was he right. It's hard to believe. It's 58 years since I played here in the All-Star Game. The crazy part is I remember it like it was yesterday. And I guess I should be happy, hell, that I remember it at all.

(Laughter.)

Back then there wasn't a big break in the All-Star time, when the game was here. Heck, we didn't even play on a weekend. We played on a Tuesday night. And in those days the All-Star Game really did mean something to us. The winners made a couple of thousand dollars. And for most of us, that was a month's salary.

And to prove how much it meant when we played that game, it's the only time in the history of the All-Star Game that a coach got ejected. Yeah, Red Auerbach got tossed out of the ball game.

The one disappointment for me for the All-Star Game was that after the game, before I got to my car, and somebody had put my uniform in there, somebody stole it. And years later, I actually got a pair of shorts in the mail, and the person left me a note saying: I thought you would like to have these shorts back, but I'm not returning your jersey.



(Laughter.)

So if any of you see that jersey for sale someplace, please let me know because it's definitely stolen property.

(Laughter.)

For me to have played in a game that featured Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain, Nate Thurmond, Jerry West, Oscar Robertson, Elgin Baylor, Lenny Wilkens, and others, it really was surreal for me.

I was only 22 years old, and I had to kind of pinch myself. In fact, on that team, the two rosters, 13 of those 20 players made the NBA Top 50 team.

I loved competing. I still do today. And I truly loved to play the game of basketball. I can still say with certainty that whenever I put my uniform on, I gave my very best effort, something my father taught me.

And trust me, I would have a tough, tough time today with freaking load management. My God, I didn't even like it when we were blowing a team out because I knew that meant I wouldn't get to play as much.

In the Bible, Ecclesiastes 3:1 says: For everything there is a season, a time for activity under heaven.

My seasons of basketball were some of the greatest -- I'm going to get emotional here because some of the greatest times of my life, and I feel so blessed that I am just a small part of this incredible community of players and coaches.

Oh, I miss playing. And I'm still trying to convince the NBA to put in the designated free-throw shooter rule so I can make a comeback.

(Laughter.)

Unfortunately, that's going nowhere fast.

Now my seasons involve fly fishing and pickleball, lots of pickleball, and more importantly, spending quality time with my family and my friends.

But I will never, ever take for granted or stop loving this incredible game of basketball.

Thank you for this honor, and have a great time tonight at the game.

(Applause.)

(Run TMC video montage.)

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: Yeah, and you're about to hear from that tremendous trio here in just a second. We're going to have a little discussion that's led by -- I'll be honest, when I was a young sportscaster in Atlanta, Georgia, in the early '80s at WSBTV, all I wanted to do was be Bob Costas.

That's all. I mean, I watched him on NBC, and I said: That's the guy. That's the guy I want to be. I want to -- and I'll never get there.

But it's been great to call him a colleague after all these years and great to introduce him now to lead this discussion. Here is Bob Costas.

(Applause.)

BOB COSTAS: Thank you. Ernie doesn't have to look up to anybody. He's charted a path of his own, and he's one of the all-time greats, not just in basketball, but in sports broadcasting in general.

I'm very happy to be here at the Legends Brunch to have the opportunity to speak with, as you know, three Hall of Famers and Bay Area legends whose court chemistry formed one of the greatest combinations in the NBA.

Please welcome five-time All-Star and owner of one of the most wicked crossovers in the game, the UTEP two-step, Tim Hardaway.

(Applause.)

Next, a six-time All-Star and NBA Rookie of the Year, Mitch Richmond.

(Applause.)

And finally, a five-time All-Star Hall of Famer, member of the original Dream Team in 1992 in Barcelona, he possessed one of the sweetest jumpers in the game, Chris Mullin.

Okay, where do we start? Where did the name come from? I understand there were a number of suggestions, the Three Amigos, which was a popular movie at the time, Three Men in a Basket, Blame It on Trio.

I think Run TMC is better than any of them.

CHRIS MULLIN: You want me to handle that?

MITCH RICHMOND: Yeah, go ahead.



TIM HARDAWAY: Yeah, go ahead. Go ahead.

CHRIS MULLIN: Well, we had a little fan involvement and they sent their suggestions in to the "San Francisco Chronicle." One day at practice we gathered with Steve Albert, the great Steve Albert who was covering our games at that time. Picked a bunch out of the hat.

Tim said some words we can't say right now about most of the suggestions. When Run TMC came up, it was automatic. I'm like, That's it.

And ironically, Run DMC from Jamaica, Queens, I was actually a classmate of Darryl McDaniels, who was a member of Run DMC.

BOB COSTAS: Wow.

CHRIS MULLIN: So we had a little history there.

Being the oldest member of this group, I had seniority, and it became Run TMC.

BOB COSTAS: And as most of you know, for the first name of each of them -- Tim, Mitch, Chris.

TIM HARDAWAY: No, it was great. Just saying, you know, the run only lasted two years, but it felt like 30 years. It felt like, you know, 10 years.

And we had a very great impact on the NBA really, really quick. And everywhere we went, it was like we was rock stars. And we had fun, man. We had fun just running up and down the court, Mitch doing his thing, Mully doing his thing. Of course, me doing my thing.

So we enjoyed it. We enjoyed it.

MITCH RICHMOND: Yeah, I think we felt like we played longer than that because Don Nelson, we had 30 two-a-days in training camp. And so we felt like we played more than two seasons together. No question.

BOB COSTAS: Yeah, it felt like an era. It was only two seasons. And after Don Nelson, who also ran the front office as well as coaching the team, traded you to Sacramento for Billy Owens, about a year later somebody said, How do you defend this trade? And Nelson said, "It was a no-brainer. I had no brain when I made the trade."

(Laughter.)

MITCH RICHMOND: Yeah. Yeah. No question about it. No question about it. I hated him forever.

(Laughter.)

You know, I mean, because this was a family, man. Because we had kind of like a college atmosphere, what was going on.

And, you know, we all get the credit, us, Run TMC, but that whole team was special. We all continued to stay together. We all continued to be on a thread of our whole team that anything goes on, our family members, any holidays or anything like that, we always stay together. And we try not to text Tom Tolbert too much.

But other than that, though, no, it was a good group.

BOB COSTAS: You think you guys were kind of the forerunners of what followed the next decade or so and even today in the NBA where the positions were fluid? Nelson used to talk about point forwards. You'd look at the court and maybe guards were down low and bigs were up high. Other defenses had to adjust to that because no other team played that way at that time, right?

CHRIS MULLIN: Yeah, Nelly was a visionary. If you think back, you know, Nelly -- a lot of those principles were from the teams he played on with the Celtics.

You think about Dave Cowens, Willis Reed. They were small -- relatively speaking, small centers that played up at the elbow, tried to drag the bigger centers out. So Nelly was a forward-thinking person.

The only problem with us playing during that time was we played against some great centers. That's really what always got us beat was the offensive rebounding or centers or power forwards that could post up.

But I've got to say, Bob, for all the legends here that paved the way for us and the generation now, we had a short-lived two years, right? And whatever we did, we did.

But within the Warriors organization, and Steph mentioned it, Al Attles, Rick Barry, those great, great teams, when we got together, we were trying to rebuild. But the foundation was set way before moving from Philadelphia to San Francisco.

And Al Attles has been a mentor to all of us. His impact as a coach, GM, player coach, unmatched. And he taught us how to conduct ourselves on the court with grace and humility, whether we win or lose, and handle maybe a trade like Mitch's with professionalism.

So I just want to shout-out Al. His family is here. His wife,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Willhemina, is here.

(Applause.)

And in this day and age, of course, championships and gold medals, those things are so important. But a day like this, it brings to me the thought of brotherhood. Passing on your experiences, both good and bad, so the next generation of players or kids sitting here can understand that there is help out there, as Gary Payton mentioned, and help them with their journey through their careers.

It's really passing on those experiences. And these great, great players, it's an evolution of the players before them.

BOB COSTAS: Did you guys interact at all with Run DMC? Did they become fans of the Warriors?

TIM HARDAWAY: Everybody became fans of the Warriors.

(Laughter.)

Everybody became fans of Run TMC.

BOB COSTAS: Was Jam Master Jay hanging around practice and games?

TIM HARDAWAY: Hey, they was on the East Coast and they became fans of ours. Especially because of Mully.

But I tell you this. There's one thing we should not have done. We should not have had them call us that pre-game, call our name and introduce us.

Because Magic, he got his troops together, and they put on the greatest show there was that game. They was like -- they making a mockery out of us, and they came out and showed us what professionalism was all about.

But we had fun. Them coming in there, calling our name out and we being introduced by them, it was great.

BOB COSTAS: Before Allen Iverson came along, and I'm not going to say that you were the first guy ever with a crossover --

TIM HARDAWAY: No, don't tell Archie Clark that.

BOB COSTAS: Yeah, Archie "Baker." "Shake and Bake" Clark, right?

TIM HARDAWAY: Right, exactly.

BOB COSTAS: But you took it to another level, because

the games were more televised then and there was more fame attached to it, the UTEP two-step.

TIM HARDAWAY: Yeah, you know, I just practiced on my game, practiced on my craft I didn't even know I had until Magic had introduced it to the world.

I just had a move that we had to create because there was so much hand-checking going on in the NBA. If you didn't have a move, if you didn't have something to go to, you would be funneled into places where you didn't want to be.

So I had a move, I had it. Archie Clark brought me in. I just took it away and made it into what it is today, the killer crossover.

(Applause.)

TIM HARDAWAY: Archie, now you leave me alone, Archie. Now you can leave me alone.

BOB COSTAS: Is Archie out there?

TIM HARDAWAY: Yeah, there he is.

BOB COSTAS: There we go.

(Applause.)

BOB COSTAS: 76er.

Talk about consistency. This is five years in a row. I checked Basketball-Reference. Five years in a row.

I'm going to want a rounded up or down. Five straight years in the middle of your Warrior career: 26, 25, 26, 26, and 26 points per game. When you got to like 26, it just stopped, I hit my level tonight?

CHRIS MULLIN: No, that was a combination of style of play, being surrounded by great players, like Mitch and Tim. And really, to me, it was a rejuvenation of my career.

I got off to a tough start out here in the Bay Area. When Nelly took over, like I said, the style of play, we got Mitch in 1988, he became Rookie of the Year. Day one, he was ready to play. He was a pro coming off college campus. Lucky enough to get Tim in 1989.

So they really made me. They got me open. They got me shots.

People ask me a lot, who's the toughest player I ever played against and things like that. I don't really think I stepped on the court one time and really had an athletic





advantage. Going back to CYO. I was intimidated by every player I ever played.

So I was one of those players, no matter what level I played at, I always relied on my teammates. And I've never had any greater teammates than these guys on the court and brothers off the court.

(Applause.)

BOB COSTAS: Thinking about your career, went to a Final Four with St. John's, on the original Dream Team, and part of Run TMC, and in the Hall of Fame. You dotted every i and crossed every t.

CHRIS MULLIN: Yeah, very fortunate, Bob. Again, I go back to my upbringing in Brooklyn, and came from a great family -- Yeah, BK in the house.

(Applause.)

I came from a great family. I had great coaching as a kid, from grade school on. Played for Hall of Fame coaches all through my career: Lou Carnesecca, Bobby Knight in the Olympics, Don Nelson, Larry Bird. I was surrounded by great people my entire life.

Again, for a guy who's not extremely athletically gifted, I was one of those guys that actually listened to the coach. I had to pay attention to the game plan. Now I do TV for the Warriors where it's talking about what's important, attention to detail and scouting report, it's kind of like coach talk and media talk. I actually had to do that on a daily basis.

TIM HARDAWAY: Let me say this. These two are modest. I'm a guy that's voiceful and tell it like it is.

Chris Mullin, three-time Big East Player of the Year. Do y'all understand me?

(Applause.)

Three-time Big East Player of the Year. We talking with Patrick Ewing and all those guys on different teams and playing. He's playing against them. He got three-time Big East Player of the Year. That's really big.

Mitch Richmond, the rock. He gonna give it to you every night. And I made sure that he was gonna give it to you every night. All right? Because I gave him the ball.

Gary Payton said something to me and Chris one day. He said, "We got y'all now. We got y'all now."

I said, "Why you say that?"

He said, "We couldn't contain all three of y'all. Don Nelson did us a favor. He did us a favor. He got rid of Mitch." He said, "Y'all was a problem, all three of y'all. Y'all was a problem. We had zero answer for you all. Zero."

And I said, "Yeah, yeah, we know that."

(Laughter.)

But see, but us three together, we -- and we learned from Chris Mullin. When Chris -- when we got here, we thought we was in shape. We thought we was in superior shape. But when we saw Chris Mullin every day and what he was doing every day, we was like: We gotta get in better shape just to stay with Chris Mullin.

And that's what helped us with our career, because we had professionals like him to teach us what we need to know about this game and how we need to stay fit and how we need to grow in this game, with Rod Higgins and Jim Petersen, Alton Lister. You know, it was just a great bunch of guys that we played with.

Like I said, we only lasted for two years, but it was one of the best two years of my career playing basketball because, like Mully said, it's a bond.

Our families love each other. Our families kick it with each other. And they stay in touch with each other, the kids, the grandkids, everybody.

So it's just a bond, and we have so much fun. We could stay up here and talk like this for three, four hours.

BOB COSTAS: And I wish we could. We're down to the last minute. Just another note here. First ten years of your career, Mitch, you averaged between 22 and 26 every year for a decade. That's a kind of consistency too.

(Applause.)

MITCH RICHMOND: Thank you, thank you.

BOB COSTAS: And, Tim, as one of the great point guards in NBA history, all of you Hall of Famers, and since you're in the Hall of Fame, I think I can bring this up good-naturedly.

Every great shooter I've known has said: I don't care if I miss the last 10, I'm going to make the next one.

You had a game against the Timberwolves where you went 0-17. Okay? The Warriors won the game, 106-102. Did you think that 17th shot was going in?



TIM HARDAWAY: Yes.

(Laughter.)

MITCH RICHMOND: No, no, no. No, no. I got a story.

BOB COSTAS: Go ahead.

MITCH RICHMOND: I got a story for that. So I play in Detroit, and I'm having a terrible game. I'm 0-16. I make my last two. You know what I mean? I couldn't make a layup, I couldn't make another.

Who was the first person that talked to me? He was on the Miami Heat at the time. He called me and said, "You were terrible. You sucked."

I said, "Tim, I know I played bad. I know that."

Probably about two or three days later, he go 0-17. Oh, I couldn't call him fast enough. I'm calling, I'm like, "Goddamn, Tim."

(Laughter.)

He's like, "I know. Okay, I know."

TIM HARDAWAY: If you give it, you got to take it. But the next game against the Lakers, I had 37.

BOB COSTAS: Maybe the next one wasn't going in, but the next game they were all in.

TIM HARDAWAY: But we won against Minnesota. That was the main thing. I gave Chris Mullin the game-winning shot.

(Laughter.)

BOB COSTAS: Tim Hardaway, Mitch Richmond, Chris Mullin, Run TMC.

(Applause.)

Warrior legends. Thanks, everybody.

MITCH RICHMOND: Appreciate it. Thank you.

CHRIS MULLIN: Thanks, Bob.

MITCH RICHMOND: Thank you, Bob.

BOB COSTAS: Thank you, guys.

Thanks, Ernie.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: I think we'd all be game for another three hours of that, but much thanks to Bob Costas and Run TMC.

Much thanks to you for being here today. I hope, if it was your first time here, that it was as good as you thought it would be. For me, it always is. So thank you for being here. Your homework today is make somebody's day better in some way. Love you. Goodnight.

(Applause.)

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