



(Row I) Top to bottom, Theodore Vines, Henry Jones, James Ford, Jacob Davis, Wesley Harrison and Clarence Cooper. (Row II) Top to bottom, Ralph Jackson, Charles Wellman, Harold Diggs, William Davis, and Ronnie E. Avery.

WSSU's First CIAA Tournament Team Commemorates 50 Years

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) was organized in 1937, but the first Basketball Tournament was held in 1945.

Who played in the first CIAA Basketball Tournament? Winston-Salem Teachers College, later named Winston-Salem State University, was one of the first eight teams. The other seven teams, determined by the Dickerson Rating System, a system which rated teams according to the strength of their schedules, were Lincoln University of Pennsylvania; Virginia Union, Morgan State College, West Virginia State College, North Carolina College, Johnson C. Smith College, and Virginia State College.

The tournament was held in Washington, D.C. at Turner's Arena during the first weekend of March, 1945. Lincoln University was top-seeded and played Winston-Salem Teachers College.

The Tournament Committee allowed 10 players per team and the total team could not exceed fourteen.

Winston-Salem Teachers College's first CIAA team, coached by Howard (Brutus) Wilson and assisted by Clarence (Bighouse) Gaines, consisted of Romie Earl Avery, who held a 53 pt. record before it was broken by Earl Monroe. Clarence Cooper, Jacob Davis, William Davis, James Ford, Wesley Hairston, Ralph Jackson, Henry Jones, Theodore Vines, and Charles Wellman. The other member of the 1945 Team was Harold Diggs.

Coach Wilson became an instructor in the Department of Physical Education and the Mathematics Department at Winston-Salem Teachers College in 1941. The school was accepted in the CIAA Tournament in 1945. Coach Wilson's team made the basketball tournament three times out of his five years at Winston-Salem Teachers. Coach Gaines

was brought to the college as Assistant Basketball Coach on the recommendation of Coach Wilson. The "Rams" had a record of ten wins and six losses for the 1945 season.

Members of the Tournament Committee, who determined the standings and made the draw for pairing, were: Talmadge Hill, Morgan State College; John B. McLendon, North Carolina College; Hardy Jefferson, Virginia State College; and John Burr, Howard University. The Turner Arena, where the three-day playoffs were held seated 2,050 persons. Tournament trophies were awarded by Capitol Classics, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, and the Journal and Guide Newspaper. The North Carolina College "Eagles" coached by John B. McLendon won the first CIAA tournament by defeating Virginia Union 64-56 after the score was tied ten times, and the lead changed fourteen times, and in three overtime periods.



Coach "Bighouse" Gaines

The Winston-Salem 1945 Basketball Team celebrated its 50th Anniversary on Saturday February 25 at the home of Romie Earl Avery.

Among the special guests were six of the former players: Harold Diggs, James Ford, Henry Jones, Jacob Davis, William Davis and Romie E. Avery. Also present were Bettina Wilson, wife of the late Coach Brutus Wilson; Coach "Bighouse" Gaines and his wife, Clara; and thirty other guests.