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Chronicle Profile

Davis had the chance of a lifetime

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS Chronicle Staff Writer

In inner-city New York, especially down on 153rd Street and Seventh Avenue, cement was too dangerous a turf to play tackle football. Instead, you played basketball -- the man's game. It was how you proved your manhood.

Basketball, the dreamer's game, where in your imaginary world the ahhhhhhh, a sound effect you made by expelling air from your lungs, was the audience that cheered as you scored a 20-footer from downtown, much to the displeasure of a Lakers guard.

That's how the Wake Forest Basketball Hall of Famer, Charlie Davis, describes the "dreamer's game" he and other New York youngsters played. He played at Wake from 1968 to 1971. For Davis, the dream turned into reality when he played guard for two and a half years with me cleveland cavaners and the Portland Trail Blazers.

"They fired me," says Davis. "The bottom line is I just wasn't playing well enough. Pro ball is a business and they pay you well for performing well.

"I always think about how I had the opportunity to live the dream," he says. "I dreamed about playing Oscar, Wilt and Kareem. I played 'em and I smoked 'em, too."

Davis, who was inducted into Wake's Hall of Fame in February, is the first black in the school's 150-year history to be endowed with the honor. Today, he is a personal banker at the East Winston Branch Wachovia Bank and Trust Co., N.A., and a

family man.

Norwood Todman, the spoiler of Kareem Abdul-Jabaar's high school basketball records and the first black ('66-70) to play on Wake's basketball team, lived across the street from Davis. When Todman got a glimpse of him on the court, he let Wake in on the secret. And it was the assistant coach, Billy Packer, also a former Wake basketball standout and now a sports commentator, who followed up on Todman's tip and offered Davis a chance to play at the school. It was Todman, Davis, Charlie Scott and Gil McGregor who were the integrators of the university's formerly all-white basketball team.

Those dreams that materialized into reality for Davis are only memories now, and the slightly graying 34-year-old has at least two reminders that pain him the most -- a bad knee and a bad foot. "I started playing baskerbait on cement, dist and hardwood floors at nine," he says. "Now it's taking its toll on my knee.

"My rookie year with Cleveland, we played the Detroit Pistons," Davis says. "Bob Lanier's 22 stepped on my foot and I was out for six weeks. Talking about a man falling down in front of 5,000 people and crying. Yeah, I cried."

For the past 16 months, Davis has resided in Winston. After leaving Portland, he lived in Roanoke, Va., and later New Jersey as a sales representative for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., then Keds and then Equitable Life Insurance Co. He majored in English and minored in speech at Wake.



Unlike many of his inner-city playmates, Wake Forest University Hall of Famer Charlie Davis had the opportunity to live a dream (photo by James Parker).

"Banking is just an extension of everything else I've done," he says. "Everybody else thinks I'm just a basketball player. Only two and a half years of my adult life have been basketball."

It's seldom that Davis says he even attempts a game of Horse or Twenty-one. The aches and pains grow more intense with age, he says.

Although Davis says he would liked to have re-

mained in the pros for at least 14 years and retired in glory, he isn't bitter he says, because he did get the opportunity to play in front of a "real audience." His focus now is his banking career, his wife, Linda, and his daughters, Sharrika and Sydney, whom he says he would rather bring up in the South.

"Hopefully, I can find the same level of success in business as I found in sports," says Davis. "If I do, I'll do all right."

Tucker and Banks receive promotions

Mrs. Julia W. Taylor, president and chief executive officer of Mechanics and Farmers Bank, announced that Mrs. Julia V. Banks and Walter Tucker had received the top bositions for the local branch.

Banks has been promoted to vice president-branch





manager of Mechanics and Farmers Bank Winston-Salem branch and Tucker has been transferred to the ocal office as senior vice

Bank.

and has served in many ing at Rutgers University. Church. capacities with the bank. Tucker has worked with She came to Mechanics and Mechanics and Farmers man of the Redevelopment Farmers Bank with over 10 Bank over 25 years, initially Commission of the City of Carolina bank.

She has served on many Charlotte branch.

Walter S. Tucker

Julia V. Banks

president-city executive. ... County Chapter of the In- and is a member of the Banks joined Mechanics stitute of Banking and is a board of managers of and Farmers Bank in 1978 member if the Saint Mat- Hunterville Hospital, as new accounts clerk and thews Baptist Church in member of the board of head teller in the Raleigh Raleigh, where she co-visitors of Johnson C. office. Previously, she has chairs the board of trustees. Smith University, member served as assistant vice Tucker previously served of the Housing Authority president-manager of the as senior vice president-city of the City of Charlottee Rock Ouarry Road Branch executive in Charlotte. He and a member of the of Mechanics and Farmers is a graduate of Virginia Mecklenburg County ABC State College and Stonier Board. He is a member of She is a native of Raleigh Graduate School of Bank- the University Park Baptist

He has served as chair-

American Institute of as a member of the board of the board of directors of the Banking and the Raleigh directors of Mechanics and Charlotte Chamber of Wendell Branch of the Farmers Bank, as a member Commerce and as a NAACP. She is presently a of the board of trustees of member of the Mecklenmember of the board of the University of North burg County Health Comdirectors of the Wake Carolina at Chapel Hill, mission.

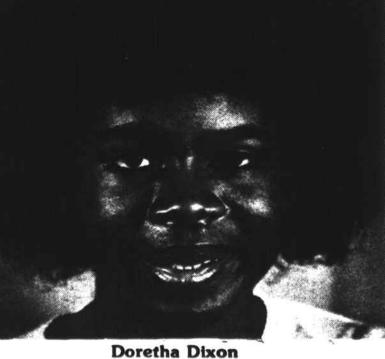
years banking experience in Durham and transferring Charlotte as well as chairfrom another North to Charlotte to assist in the man of the board of the Bank's opening of the Minority Economic Development Corporation. boards including the Tucker presently serves He served as a member of

Dixon awarded UNC-G scholarship

Doretha Dixon, daughter of Virginia B. Dixon of Free Street, has been awarded an Alumni Scholarship to attend the University of North Carolina at Greensboro this fall.

Valued at \$1,500 a year, the Alumni Scholarships are awarded annually on the bases of academic standing, intellectual promise, character, leadership ability and demonstrated ambition. The scholarships are renewable for up to three additional years of undergraduate study.

Dixon, a senior at Asheville High School, plans to major in communications and theatre or Junior Classical League.



The Alumni Awards Pro-



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computer science at UNC- In addition, she was a gram at UNC-G is funded semifinalist for a National by contributions from G. Listed in"Who's Who Achievement Scholarship alumni and friends through Among American High and she won first place in a the University Annual Giv-School Students," Dixon is Optimist speech contest. ing Program. During the treasurer of the National She also is a member of the 1984-85 year, approximate-Honor Society at her youth choir at her church ly 17 students will hold school, a member of the and a junior member of the Alumni Scholarships at dance club and active in the YWCA board of directors. UNC-G.

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