

## OLD-TIMERS

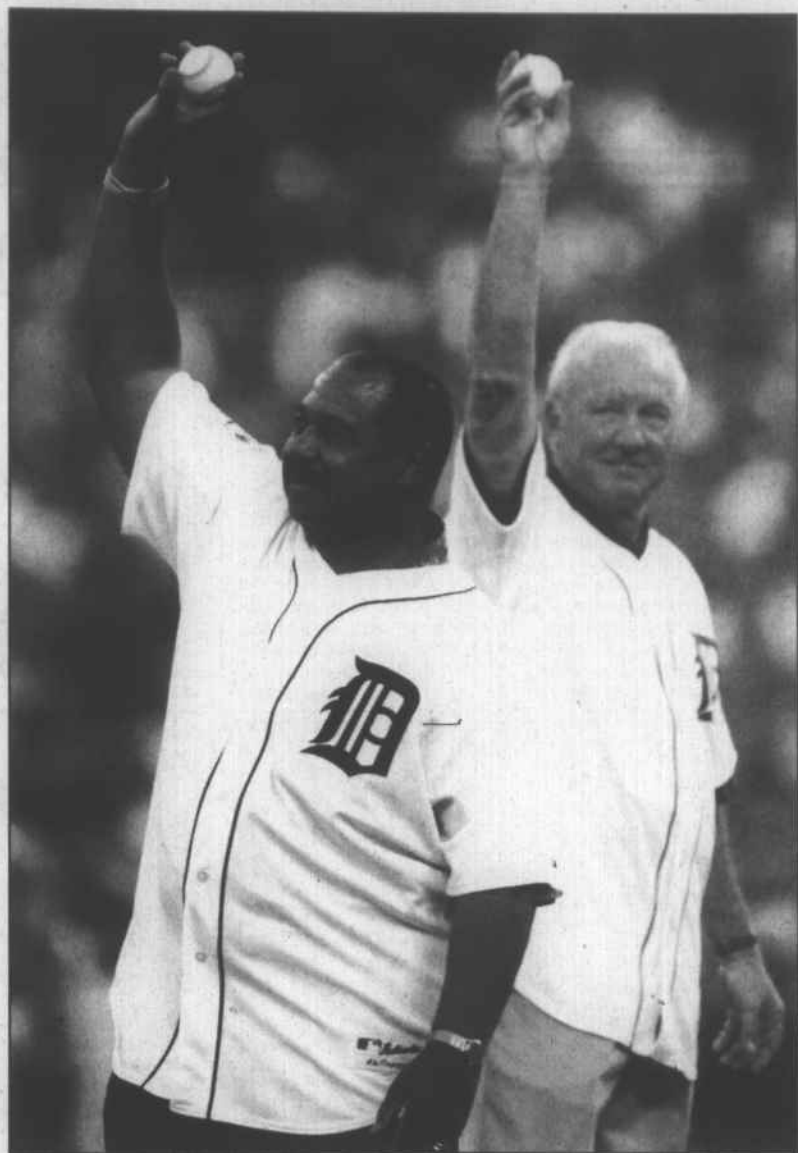


Photo by Julian Gonzalez/KRT  
**Detroit Tiger great Willie Horton (left) and Hall of Famer Al Kaline hold the balls for the first pitch ceremony before the start of the 2005 All-Star game on Tuesday at Comerica Park in Detroit.**

## Speas

from page B1

was also a part of the girls state title the Demons captured in 2001.

"But I really didn't feel like I was really a part of the team then," Speas said. "I was just a volunteer coach, but I did spend a lot of time training Bernadette (Washington)."

He's also the president of the new and successful track club called Next Level.

"But sometimes all I can do is think about what I've actually had to go through to get there," Speas said. "My life has really changed since I was younger. My surroundings has really changed. It's just amazing to know that out of all the things I've done or been involved in, I've never been convicted of a crime. That is a blessing all to itself."

Speas grew up at 1304 Thurmond Street with 10 other family members. He had three sisters, one brother, three cousins and an aunt. He was raised by his grandparents. His grandmother, Margaret Speas (who's now 93 years old), did most of the raising. Speas didn't know his father, and he later lost contact with his mother due to certain circumstances.

"My childhood was very difficult," Speas said. "If it weren't for my grandmother, then I wouldn't be here today. There were times that I'd be in the middle of doing something bad, or about to do, and I'd just hear her voice in my head. She's been the angel over my shoulder my entire life."

That wasn't quite enough to keep Speas away from the allure of the streets, though. He loved money and had a number of ways of getting it early in life.

"Hey, me and my friends used to do so much dirt it wasn't funny," Speas said. "We broke into one place three different times. We sold crack, cocaine and marijuana back in the days, and this was before I was in high school."

But Speas found a way to put that lifestyle behind him when he got involved in sports. Sports becomes the window to help him see his way out of the life of crime, but the view wasn't quite easy for him to see at first. Speas never really gave up crime, at an early age. He simply put it away for a few hours.

Two sports really became important to Speas. He excelled in both track and football in high school. He later went on to play football at Garden City Community College and Kansas State University. Both schools are in Kansas. But track was his first love.



Photo by Anthony Hill  
**Speas takes a moment to look at an old football picture from his days at Reynolds High.**

"It's funny how I got my start in track too," Speas said. "This older white lady came up to me one day after watching me at Speas Elementary during Field Day. She asked me if I wanted to run track. She even offered to pay my fee to run for the Road Runners."

"I really didn't know what to think. This was after segregation, obviously, but it was still odd for a white person to offer to pay for a black person to do anything back then. She asked my grandmother if I could run, and I did."

Speas joined the Road Runners track team. He ended up making quite a name for himself on the track. He carried that reputation to Paisley Middle School and Reynolds High, where he was an instant track star, excelling in a number of sprinting races.

"Derrick was a very good athlete for me," said Trzasko. "He was such a competitor, and he had so much natural ability. He and I really hit our strides together, me as a coach and him as an athlete."

Former Reynolds principal Stan Elrod added: "Derrick was a really good football player, but he was an excellent sprinter. He was just a really good guy. He got into a little trouble, just like everyone else. But I've always liked Derrick and have tried to help him in any way that I could."

Academic troubles kept Speas off the track from his 10th grade year until he was a senior.

"I was on academic probation," Speas said. "That was a frustrating time for me. I became so rebellious after that happened. I was mad at the school system after that, even though it was all my fault. I then let myself become more of a product of my community after that."

He started doing more crimes, hanging in the streets more and also dealing with more of the wrong type of people. One of the guys Speas used to hang out with was later convicted of strong armed robbery. A few others were charged with robbery, possession of a deadly weapon and drugs, grand theft auto and more.

"But those so-called bad people were my friends," Speas said. "I still talk to a lot of them today, but a lot of them have served time in prison and have changed as well. I have an old basketball picture with about 10 of my friends in it. Out of those 10 guys, four of them are either still alive or not in prison. I could've easily been one of them, but God had a different plan for me."

Part two of the series will run next week. The final portion of the series will continue to detail the journey Speas took to turn his life around after dealing with so much negativity. It will also talk about how he got into coaching and becoming a father. Part two will also detail some of the events that led to Speas really-changing his ways.

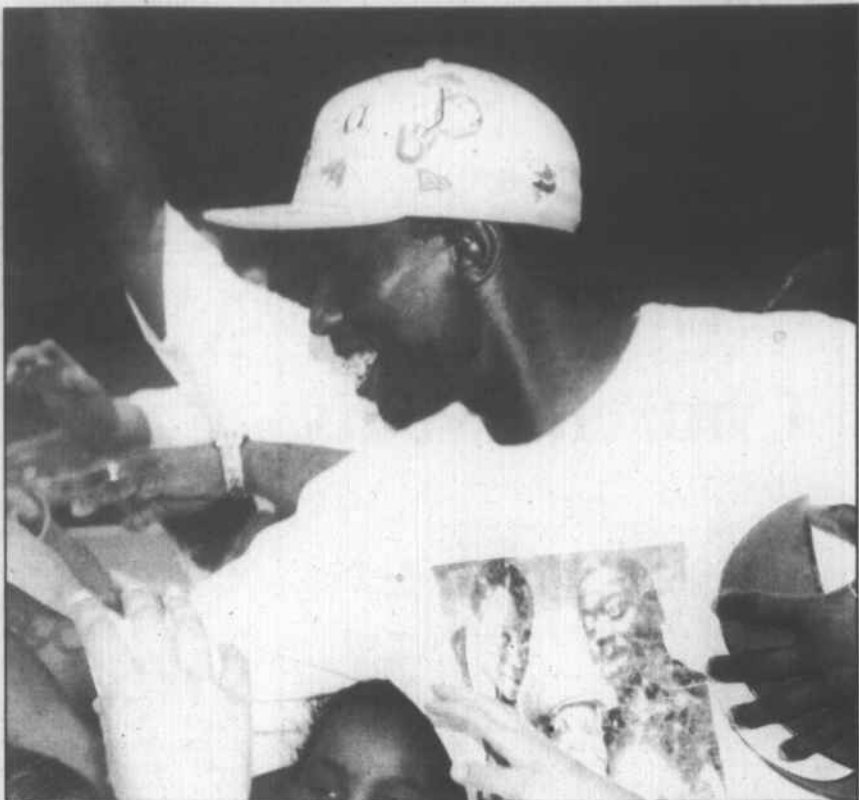


Photo by Anthony Hill  
**Local NBA star Josh Howard breaks down a huddle and shares a laugh with a group of kids during his camp earlier this week.**

## Hill

from page B1

Reynolds ('82-'93 Patriots and Giants).

"You know, I'm all about helping kids get better at the game of football. We're doing the same camp in my hometown of Martinsville (Virginia), and we're going to do the same thing - help kids get better at football."

That's what it's all about. Keep doing your thing, coach Scales - I mean, Lamont.

## Rusty's League

Former NBA and Wake Forest star Rusty LaRue has started his own adult league. It's known as the RLBA (Rusty LaRue Basketball Association) - Triad Pro-Am summer league. LaRue is the head boys basketball coach at Forsyth Country Day, and that's where the games are played.

Right now, it looks like games are being played every Tuesday and Friday at the school's gym. The first game usually begins around 6:30, and the final game starts around 9:15. There are six teams within the first-year

league: the Mercedes-Benz squad (Rusty's team), the Velocity, Norman Stockton, Cobb-Vantress, Cintas and Page Printing squads. The most impressive part of the league may be some of the players within it.

I already mentioned that Rusty plays for the Mercedes-Benz squad. Well, a few current Deacs are also on teams in the league. Trent Strickland, Cameron Stanley, Kevin Swinton and Jon Buck all play in the league. Some of the other noteworthy players are Craig Dawson, Joe Jon Bryant, Ray Edmond, Chris Oliver, Michael Drum and Ray Bristow.

I'd like to see the champions of this league face the champions of the 14th Street league. That would be interesting right there. I don't know if it's even a possibility, but it sure sounds like a good idea right now.

Rob (Little), Rusty (LaRue) - let's see what we can do about that.

## Camp J-Ho

For the second-straight year, One on One basketball has teamed up with Dallas

Maverick player Josh Howard to put on the Josh Howard camp. This year the camp had more than 140 participants. Howard had the camp for kids between the ages of 6 and 17, at Mt. Tabor. The camp began on Monday and ended yesterday.

Working the camp were a number of local stars, such as Winthrop sophomore Chris Gaynor and former ECU point guard Travis Holcomb-Faye. The camp was spearheaded by Monte Gray. One on One basketball regional director and Mt. Tabor assistant coach. He also put on the Brendan Haywood camp last month.

"I like working with Josh and Brendan because they're such good individuals," Gray said. "Plus, they're from this area, and the kids know and respect them, especially Josh. We just want to continue to do what we can do to provide a fun, educational and memorable environment for kids to learn."

Anthony Hill is the sports editor for The Chronicle. He can be reached at 722-8624 (ext. 111) or ahill@wchronicle.com.

WE DON'T JUST PROVIDE  
 FOOD FOR HOMELESS  
 INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.



WE PROVIDE JOB TRAINING  
 AND PLACEMENT SO THEY  
 CAN BUY GROCERIES.

Emergency Shelter • Educational Services  
 Job Training and Placement

The fact is, many homeless people today have the desire and ability to take care of themselves and their families. They just need some help.

Volunteers of America is a national organization that, for over 100 years, has provided programs and services that allow people to overcome their challenges and become vital members of their community.

Find out how you can support the programs that are working in our community. Contact Volunteers of America, today.

Volunteers  
 of America

There are no limits to caring.®

1-800-899-0089  
 www.VolunteersofAmerica.org