



Most Valuable Players Kevon Powell, left, and Nathan Cathcart stand with head coach Lester Nowlin.

Coach Lester Nowlin poses with his team as they display their trophies in front of Tony's Lounge, where the banquet took place.

## Coach holds banquet for championship team

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY  
THE CHRONICLE

Early last month, the Winston Lake YMCA crowned the Spurs champions of their 13-14 age group. Head coach Lester Nowlin told his team if they won the championship, he would do something special for them. Last Sunday, coach Nowlin followed through on his promise and held a banquet for his team at Tony's Lounge, 117 Walkertown Ave. in Winston-Salem.

Nowlin, who has been a longtime coach at the

YMCA, has always had his awards banquets for his team at Tony's Lounge, where he has also worked for nearly three decades. Nowlin, who pays for the trophies out of pocket, says he is happy to be able to provide this celebration for the kids and their parents.

"I feel great and it makes me feel even better to get these young men off the street and in the gym to win a championship," Nowlin said. "It makes me feel good to be able to set a positive image for these young men and the community."

Nowlin not only provided each team member a trophy but also provided rings for every player. He also had two specially made Most Valuable Player (MVP) trophies for Kevon Powell and Nathan Cathcart. He says he has been blessed in life and doesn't mind spending money on the young men who fought so hard to win the championship trophy.

Tony Couch, owner of Tony's Lounge, provided the venue and food to everyone free of charge. He said it made him feel great to see all the smiling

faces of the kids and parents.

"I think as a local business owner we sometimes need to step up and help the youth," Couch said. "I've always been one to work with the community and the young people because they are our future. We have to do more to help them. We are treating them special because that was a special feat by them winning the championship and hopefully we inspire them to continue to do great things."

The two MVP's of the team, Cathcart and Powell,

were totally surprised and honored to have been named MVP by Nowlin. They said they weren't expecting all of what Nowlin did for them.

"This feels great and I have to thank God because without Him I would not have been able to make it this far," Cathcart said. "I'm just going to continue praying to Him because I could have been injured or something but God saw fit for me to win this instead. I want to keep working hard and do the best I can."

Powell added, "I am so

happy to have been named MVP, especially after all the hard work I have put in this season. I am really just so proud of myself and my team for winning the championship. Going forward, I just want to do the best that I can by keeping my grades up and staying out of trouble."

Nowlin says he would love to have the kids who are eligible to return on his team next year. For those players who are moving on, he wishes nothing but the best for them.

## 2017 RiverRun offers documentary on HBCUs

SPECIAL TO  
THE CHRONICLE

This year's RiverRun festival is packed full of events and educational offerings for the Winston-Salem community. In its 19th run, the annual festival is being held on through April 9.

During the run of the Festival, RiverRun creates an inspired environment in downtown Winston-Salem featuring a dynamic combination of talent, film-loving audiences and industry heavyweights. A hotbed of discovery and interactivity, this cultural event offers screenings of yet-to-be released films, opportunities to interact with artists and immersion into the art and business of the independent film world.

This year the festival will feature a film titled "Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Historically Black Colleges and Universities" - USA, directed by Stanley Nelson. It chronicles the 150-year story of historically black colleges and universities (HBCU). It will be shown 2 to 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 9 at the Babcock Theatre on the campus of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, 1533 S Main St. in Winston-Salem.

In addition to its international submissions, the



This photo comes from the film "Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Historically Black Colleges and Universities," which is part of the RiverRun festival.

festival will present stories from North Carolina. This section boasts North Carolina filmmakers using their talents to creatively render compelling tales. Some of the films will include:

"Chairman Jones," which tells the story of a self-educated farmer who disregards racism and lack of education and emerges as a trailblazer during the

tense 1969 school desegregation crisis in Northampton County, leading the fight to end nearly a century of inequality in education.

"Purple Dreams," which tells of a three-year journey that serves as an inspirational window into the lives of inner-city, at-risk students in Charlotte, who succeed at their passion while embracing the

transformative power of their arts education.

"Truth Underground," which tells of how three spoken word poets struggle through poverty, discrimination, PTSD and abandonment to illuminate what fellow North Carolinian poet Maya Angelou called "a brave and startling truth."

RiverRun's year-round education program (Films

with Class) gives area educators the opportunity to expose their students to Festival films. During the festival, students attend and participate in private screenings with the filmmakers and special guests. This is opportunity is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Founded in 1998, RiverRun was inspired by the French Broad River near Brevard, North

Carolina, where the festival was originally held. Each year since its inception, RiverRun has grown substantially, boasting over 18,000 tickets sold in recent years.

For the RiverRun's entire schedule, go to <http://riverrunfilm.com/#rdv-calendar>.

## Ellis inducted into the NCAE Educational Hall of Fame

SPECIAL FOR  
THE CHRONICLE

The North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) inducted Rodney N. Ellis Sr., former NCAE president from Forsyth County, into its Educational Hall of Fame. Each year, NCAE names an educator or staff member posthumously to the Hall of Fame in recognition of an outstanding career in public education or service to the Association.

In addition to the Hall of Fame Induction, Ellis received posthumously the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, which is among the most prestigious awards presented by the governor of North Carolina. It is

awarded to persons for exemplary service to the State of North Carolina and their communities that is above and beyond the call of duty and which has made a significant impact and strengthened North Carolina. Some notable recipients of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine include Maya Angelou, Rev. William Barber II, Andy Griffith, and Charles Kuralt.

The dream to become an educator began for Ellis while a student at Winston-Salem State University, where he served as president of the Student NCAE. Once in the classroom, he served as a building representative, as vice president of the Forsyth County Association of Educators

(FCAE), and as president for two terms. A life-long learner and someone who excelled in everything he did, Ellis ran for and was elected to the NCAE Board of Directors. He then ran for NCAE vice president, serving two terms (2008-2012), and won the seat of NCAE president, serving from 2012-2016.

A native of Mocksville, N.C., Ellis was the oldest of five siblings. As a student educated in public schools, he loved English and social studies, and credited his eighth-grade health and physical education teacher with piquing his interest in teaching. He described him as "a mentor and an inspiration."

Ellis was recognized



Ellis

extensively for his work as an educator and community leader during his career. He was twice voted as Middle School Teacher of the Year while still in the classroom. In 2010, his alma mater Winston-Salem State University bestowed

upon him the Alumni Achiever Award for the School of Education and Human Performance. A member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., he was honored by the organization with the Delta Sigma Chapter President's

Officer Appreciation Award, the Spirit of Sigma Award, The Centennial Legacy Award, and the Man of the Year Award.

After leaving the NCAE presidency, Ellis returned to Winston-Salem to teach at Philo-Middle School in Winston-Salem. The school recently named a classroom in his honor, which is now occupied by his daughter and teacher Gabrielle Ellis. "It's unique that I'm able to be right in his

classroom, doing something that was important to him," she said. "I know he'd be proud."

Ellis was married to wife and best friend Lisa for 23 years. His legacy will live on through the couple's five children.

A special presentation was made at the NCAE Convention and Representative Assembly in Raleigh on Saturday, March 25, to recognize Ellis. His family was present to accept the awards, which were presented by NCAE President Mark Jewell.

NCAE is the state's largest education advocacy organization for public school employees and represents active, retired, and student members.