



Leonard Lenny Rhodes

October 18, 2014

Leonard Rhodes, 87, passed away October 18, 2014, at Lakes of Monclova. Leonard "Lenny" Rhodes was born in Richmond, Indiana, on May 8, 1927. In high school, he was the starting center on the Richmond High School basketball team that went to the Indiana State sectional tournament. Then, in 1946, The University of Toledo offered Lenny a scholarship. Lenny played football and basketball his first year at UT; but it was basketball where Lenny won all the accolades. He lettered in basketball in 1947-48-49-50 and started on teams that were 18-6, 21-5, 13-2, and 23-6. Rhodes scored 811 career points but was best known for his rebounding and aggressive defense. Lenny had a great run with the Rockets, seeing the country and making lifelong friendships. He was a Rocket fan until the end. After his senior year, 1949-50, Lenny was drafted by the Baltimore Bullets of the NBA and a variety of semi-pro teams around the country. He played several years in Industrial League, one year with the semi-pro All-American League; and one year with the world famous Harlem Globetrotters. Historians focus on the three black players that made the MBA in 1950, however it's been said that Rhodes was good enough to play in the MBA too. In 1951, Leonard married educator Lanelle Howell a native of Cleveland, Ohio. Lanelle and Lenny had no children, but they crossed paths with so many young people who saw them as parents. Lenny could tell you where so many kids from Toledo went to school and graduated school, and he kept a mental diary of what company they were working for and what positions they held. Lenny started his business career with Dana Corporation, in 1955, as a machine operator. In 1968, Lenny was chosen by Dana to represent them in a business sector (JOBS) program of the National Alliance of Businessman. Lenny's positive attitude and community standing made him the perfect man to train young black men for future employment at Dana. It was a very unique jobs program at the time; and he is credited with making it a viable program. Lenny was selected for the Dana sales team and was quickly promoted to district sales manager, a position from which he retired in 1989. Lenny has been an active member of his college fraternity Omega Psi Phi, and has served as a trustee on the Alumni Association board. He will be missed by his family, his Stone Oak neighbors, and the many friends that had the honor of knowing him. He is survived by his wife, Lanelle Rhodes; sisters, Birdella Dunson of Dayton, OH and Julia Eileen Phelps of Inglewood, CA; nephew, Dr. Ronald

Motley of Beckley, WV and other relatives and many friends. Services will be held at the Dale-Riggs Funeral Home on Thursday, October 23, at 3 p.m. In lieu of flowers, Lenny can be remembered with a donation to The University of Toledo - The Rocket Fund.

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Comments



“ Lenny was a good man loved and respected by everyone who met him. I was a better person and the world was a better place because of this great man. We will miss you but are grateful for having known you. Mike Larsen U of T 1976

mike larsen - October 24, 2014 at 09:04 PM



“ Lanelle, We hope the memories that you have will help you through this loss. Lenny was such a sincere and positive person. We enjoyed seeing him at the UT basketball functions and events. He was a great role model for the team members. We will miss his great smile and warm personality. God Bless Lenny and his family.

Mark and Eileen Schreiner

Mark Schreiner - October 23, 2014 at 08:03 PM



“ My prayers and sympathy are with you, Lanelle and the Rhodes family. I am a UT Alumni and had the pleasure of meeting Leonard at many UT games and alumni activities. His presence will be strongly missed. He was the ultimate Rocket alumni, always there for the students and UT supporters. My husband and I will miss his smile and positive uplifting demeanor. God Bless. Andrea and John Loch

Andrea - October 23, 2014 at 11:16 AM



“ Please accept my deepest sympathy to his wife & family on Lenny's passing.. I knew Lenny from Dana/Spicer Transmission Div. He was always up beat & such a hard worker. I believe he started on 2nd shift & worked for my Dad, the 2nd shift superintendent. My Dad always spoke highly of Lenny. I got to know him in the Toledo plant when I worked in Tool Engrg. & then at the Management Assn. & Quarter Century dinners.

I always enjoyed talking to Lenny. He had a smile that was a mile wide.

I will keep you in my prayers.

Tom McGannon

Tom McGannon - October 23, 2014 at 12:17 PM