



Raymond Wolford

January 19, 2014

News Article) Raymond Wolford, Jr., a basketball star at Scott High School and the University of Toledo who became a Toledo police officer, died Jan. 19 in Hospice of Northwest Ohio's South Toledo branch. He was 72.

He had multiple sclerosis. Most recently he lived in Ridgewood Manor nursing home in Monclova Township.

Mr. Wolford applied for a disability pension and retired in 1985 as a Toledo detective, said Ron Jackson, a retired deputy police chief who was a classmate and teammate at Scott. Mr. Wolford's assignments included the police and community relations unit, crime prevention, and the juvenile section. He'd been a patrolman in the inner city.

His size commanded respect, Mr. Jackson said, and "he was a nice guy and tried to help people."

Mr. Wolford had a brief encounter with professional basketball in 1965, but left the Detroit Pistons' training camp after two days, saying the poor pay of that time wasn't worth the constant risk of getting cut. He became a police officer that year.

Mr. Wolford, a 1960 Scott graduate, led his team to three City League titles and two state semifinals. He was an-all-state player and the league's leading scorer and rebounder.

"He jumped well. He handled the ball," Mr. Jackson said. "He was like a young LeBron James. He was a man among boys."

He was nonchalant about his stardom, said Mike Smythe, also a teammate, who became a sportscaster and television executive.

"He was one of the greatest centers produced in Toledo," Mr. Smythe said. "He could shoot from the outside. He was 6-6, but he carried enough weight that he was a force to

be reckoned with."

Mr. Wolford was inducted into the City League Hall of Fame in 1986 and the UT Varsity "T" Athletic Hall of Fame in 1987. At UT, he was All-Mid-American Conference for two years and averaged 18.7 points and 11.3 rebounds.

Much was made of the rivalry in those days between Mr. Wolford and Howard "Butch" Komives, who played for Woodward High School and then Bowling Green State University.

"We always were friends and never were enemies, although we were enemies against each other during games," Mr. Wolford told The Blade in 2006.

Mr. Wolford had a bachelor's degree in education from UT and was a substitute teacher in the Toledo Public Schools. He was a few courses shy of completing master's-degree studies, said Heather Blanks Wolford, his former wife, who remained a friend and was his caregiver.

He was born April 26, 1942, to Hazel and Raymond Wolford.

Surviving is his sister, Ila Bryant.

Services will begin at noon today in the Dale-Riggs Funeral Home Chapel, where a family hour is to begin at 11 a.m.

Comments



“ Our thoughts are with you during your time of sorrow. Our deepest sympathy for your loss.

"Once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog"

Jesup W. Scott High School Alumni Asso. - January 30, 2014 at 12:05 PM