**Sterling Wright**

Sterling Floyd Wright (born November 22, 1951) and raised in Yellow Springs, was an African American professional athlete, Coach, National Technical Director, and International Olympic Instructor. He was the youngest of three children born to Gregg and Ruth Wright. His mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother were all natives of Yellow Springs being direct descendants of the Conway Colony Group who installed in the village in the 1800's. His parents, both who were Second World War Army veterans met during their time in service. They were married, and a few years after the war they decided to return to his mother's hometown to build a family.

Sterling attended Yellow Springs public schools from kindergarten to his graduation in 1969. Growing up in the village he participated in school and social civic activities as the majority of students of his generation. His interest in basketball led him to trying out for the Junior High School team which consisted of seventh and eighth graders. His first attempt as a seventh grader was unsuccessful. The following year he was successful, and even though he was taller than his teammates, he had limited playing time staying basically on the bench. His High School basketball-playing career resembled his Junior High School experience. It was not until his senior year that he played on the Varsity Team, started, and had a major role in the team's success. Basketball was the only sport that he participated, but was a participant in other activities.

He played the trumpet in the High School band, which won multiple state championships. Along with several of his classmates started a school club, The United Society, which had as the main objective the advance social and civil problems through community service. This school club lasted more than 40 years and organized many forums both in and outside the school system working towards those goals. Through a internship with the local radio station WYSO, Sterling was able to pass his FCC broadcasting license and had his own radio show in his final High School years. Upon the completion of High School the school guidance counselor, who was also the Basketball Coach, suggested that he join the military. The counselor's reasoning was that Sterling didn't have the intellectual level or athletic availability to play basketball on the next level, or get a college diploma. Unfortunately this advice was not unique to him, but the general perception for students of color at that time was that they didn't have the capacity to excel in institutions of higher learning. He applied and was accepted to Lincoln University Pa., which is one of the first African American Universities in the US founded in 1854. He was also awarded a full academic scholarship and enrolled majoring in International Economics.

During his four years at Lincoln University he was awarded varsity letters in track, basketball, worked on the campus radio station WLIU FM, and started a mentoring program for local underprivileged local youth. His first year he used his previous broadcasting experience to get his own radio show on the campus station. He advanced from having his own show, to Program Director, and ending as Station Manager during his college years. He also participated in track, and basketball, but his first attempts resembled his previous scholastic athletic experiences in being good enough to make the team but not good enough to play, or receive a varsity letter. It was after his first year he decided that if he was going to continue sports participation, and other activities, he would do the maximum efforts possible to be a major player, or not do it at all. He got a summer job as a counselor at a basketball camp in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania and worked there every summer for the rest of his playing career. This gave him a chance to practice every day, and play in the evenings against some of the best college players in the country who worked in neighboring area camps. The results were immediate for his basketball career as he went from starter, to team captain, to becoming the first Basketball All American in the University's history during his Lincoln years. He was also was the first player in the school's history to accumulate more than 1000 points and 1000 rebounds in a career, and also the first ever to be selected by the NBA as the sixth player picked in the 1973 draft by the Philadelphia 76'ers. He graduated in 1973 with honors in International Economics. He received the Lincoln University Decosta Award for Citizenship, Scholarship, and Community Service. His service to the University both as a student and his career was recognized in 2013 being named "Outstanding Alumni for the last 50 years", then 2016 entering the Lincoln University Athletic Hall of Fame.

After graduating even though drafted by Philadelphia 76'ers of the NBA, he signed his first professional contract with the New York Nets in the rival American Basketball Association (ABA). After his short period on the team he was released, and he returned to the Philadelphia 76'ers the team that he was initially selected. The same results that accompanied him through his basketball career in being good enough to make the team but not good enough to be a major player. He was released, then decided to accept an offer to play professionally in France. It was abroad that his professional career finally took off and expanded. He signed with Stade Clermontois which is the professional team in Clermont Ferrand, France. He stayed with the team for 9 years, which is rare as pro teams are limited to 2 foreign players per team. Foreign players usually stay one to three years as they are replaced by better or younger imported players. As a player he had success becoming one of the top players in the French Professional League becoming a 6 time all star, led the league 4 times in rebounding, and was the league leader in scoring in 1979. He was named 3 times to the All Europe team, which is the 12 top foreign professional players on the continent, and participated 3 Continental Tournaments with the European Team (1980 PBA Open Manila, Philippines; 1981 Jones Cup Taipei, China; 1982 Hepp Cup Budapest, Hungry) in which he was named on the all tournament first team in all three competitions. He finished his 11-year French professional playing carrier with his final two seasons in Toulouse, France in 1986.

His coaching career started in his second year in France. His pro team needed someone to coach their High School youth team. Since he had experience working and coaching children from from basketball camps he volunteered. At this point he had learned to speak French fluently, he felt that he could do a good job. Two years later his team won the French High School National Championship (1978), and several of his High School players were named to the French National Youth teams. Both feats, National Championship and players being selected to the National team were the first in the team's history. It was shortly after that Sterling was named player-coach of his professional team which he did for 6 years. When he retired as a player he went to coach JDA Dijon, France. After coaching Dijon for two years he was offered a position coaching a professional team which he accepted in Casablanca , Morocco.

He coached the professional team "Tabac Sports" Casablanca, Morocco for 8 years and won 6 National Championships along with the National Kings Cup 3 times. His club team competed in several International Tournaments with success around the World. This success led to the Moroccan Basketball Federation to restart their National Team which had not competed for several years and asked him to coach it. He qualified the team for the African National Championship in (1988) Luanda, Angola, (1990) Alexandra, Egypt, and (1992) Algiers, Algeria for a competition that is held every 2 years with the winner going to the Olympic Games, or World Cup. His team's were never able to do better than sixth place but played well, and it was at this time he was approached by the International Basketball Federation to do coaching clinics for them during his free time. He was also named National Technical Director by the Moroccan Federation which has the responsibility for the development and supervision of the sport on all levels Nationally. He was also asked to coach the National Women's National Team to compete in the first "Jeux de Francophone or French Games" (1989) held in Morocco. The last few years in Morocco he was hired by the national cable TV station 2M to do technical commentary for the NBA game telecasts. Sterling married Agnes Borg, a French Professional Basketball player in 1988, and in 1989 the first of their two daughters Melodie was born. After a few years the family decided to return to France and he coached a pro team in Troyes, France for 2 years, then the team in Fos sur Mer, France for 6 years. It was during this time his youngest daughter Shanice was born.

In 2001 he returned to Morocco to coach "WAC" a professional team in Casablanca, and was named National Coach, National Technical Director, TV commentator for NBA telecasts as before. His National Team won the 2001 Maghreb Championship, which is a North African Regional Tournament. He was named Maghreb Coach of the year. The National Team also qualified and competed in the 2002 African National Championships in Cairo, Egypt. As National Technical Director he founded and developed for the Moroccan Federation the National Basketball Institute. The Institute provides sports studies program for some of the best talented youth around the country to get a education, develop their basketball skills, and housing for free at the Federation's installation that was constructed for that purpose in Rabat, Morocco. 2004 Sterling was recruited do the same programs in Libya as his reputation had grown internationally. He coached the Libyan National Team to a bronze medal in the 2005 Arab Games in Algeria. This was the first metal in International competition the country had won in 65 years. He also started a National Basketball Institute in Tripoli, Libya on the same principles of the one that was developed in Morocco. After 2 years in Libya Sterling worked only for the Olympic Committee doing clinics and projects around the world.

From 1988 when he conducted his first clinic in Dakar, Senegal for the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) to when he retired, he worked his way up to the position of master instructor which qualified him to do long term sports development programs for FIBA or the International Olympic Committee. He was sent by the Olympic Committee in 2004 to develop the basketball section for Olympic Africa Institute in Somone, Senegal. He was named Director of the National Sports Development Project specializing in basketball as an Olympic International expert for Barbados in 2005. In Barbados he was responsible for the organization of basketball on all levels from formation of coaches, implementing basketball in the schools, to coaching the National Team which participated in the 2005 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia. 2006 he was assigned to direct the National Sports Development Project of Seychelles. He installed basketball in the schools which previously didn't exist, and coach the National Teams both Men and Women at the Indian Ocean Island Games in Madagascar. The men finished fourth and the women won the bronze medal. This was the second medal ever in the country's history of International Competition. It was also Sterling's last competition as he retired of all basketball actives and returned to his hometown after living abroad for over 30 years. His career took him to over 80 countries on 4 continents as a player, coach, or instructor. His work with the Olympic Committee, various Federations, and Professional teams gave him the platform to help develop hundreds of players and coaches around the world.

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