

JEFF CUMMINGS

*Note: This is the **first** in a series of two articles on this year's inductee into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame and the LABC's Mr. Louisiana Basketball award recipient. The 2013 inductee will be former Tulane University player Jeff Cummings. Mr. Louisiana Basketball for 2013 is former long-time McNeese State University sports information director Louis Bonnette.*

CUMMINGS MADE MOST OF SHORT TIME AT TULANE

By: Bill Bumgarner
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Written for the LABC

NEW ORLEANS, LA – Sandwiched between a stellar prep career at Archbishop Rummel High School in Metairie and a professional stint in Europe, Jeff Cummings established a lasting legacy in just two seasons at Tulane University.

Upon graduation from Rummel in 1972, Cummings opted to attend Southern Methodist University, after being recruiting by other colleges such as Texas, Tennessee, LSU, Louisiana Tech, Jacksonville, Vanderbilt and, ironically, Tulane.

After a pair of seasons in Dallas, he transferred back home to Tulane where he would average 19.5 points and 11.6 rebounds for the Green Wave over his two years on Willow Street from 1975 to 1977.

For his accomplishments in college basketball in Louisiana, Cummings has been elected to the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame. He will be inducted during the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches' 39th Annual Awards Banquet on Saturday, May 4, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge. The banquet is sponsored by SportsCare and the Baton Rouge Orthopaedic Clinic.

"It is indeed an honor to be inducted into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame," Cummings said. "I am so proud to become a member of an elite group of players to have ever played the game of basketball in the state of Louisiana. I am indeed honored."

The wiry 6-foot-10, 215-pound center held his own in the pivot against major-college competition, playing one year each for coaches Charlie Moir and Roy Danforth at Tulane.

Cummings completed his stay at Tulane as its eleventh leading career scorer with 1,052 points and sixth leading rebounder with 625 rebounds. He also set school records with 38 career double-doubles and 27 games of 20 or more points.



As a senior in 1977, he led the Metro Conference in scoring (19.2) and rebounding (12.0), earning honorable mention All-American, first team All-Metro Conference and second team All-Louisiana honors.

During Cummings' junior season in 1976, in which he led Tulane to an 18-9 record while averaging 19.7 points and 11.1 rebounds, the Green Wave played one of the most memorable games in college basketball history before a crowd in excess of 20,000 fans at the Louisiana Superdome against national powerhouse North Carolina. The Tar Heels prevailed in four overtimes 113-106.

"The North Carolina game was probably one of the greatest games I ever played in, up until that time," said Cummings.



But the Wave would achieve a measure of redemption the next season when the Greenies upended No. 1-ranked Cincinnati behind an 18-point, 12-rebound effort from Cummings. "The win against Cincinnati that year put Tulane on the national scene," said Cummings. "I was so proud of our team that night never to give up and keep fighting until we secured the victory."

Upon the conclusion of his collegiate career, Cummings was selected by the Boston Celtics in the fourth round of the 1977 NBA Draft. However, he opted to play in the European League instead, where he met his future wife Donella in Italy.

"Going to Tulane gave me a great opportunity to continue my career after college, being drafted by the Celtics and also to continue with the opportunity to play abroad in the European League," said Cummings. "Tulane also allowed me to make great friendships along the way, and it has been a great help in my career after my basketball days ended, especially in my current job in the financial services industry."

Cummings currently serves as the Senior Vice President of Investments for Wells Fargo in New Orleans. He and Donella have one son, Jeffry, who works at Louisiana Tech in the athletic department.

At Rummel High, Cummings helped the Raiders reach the 1972 Class 4A state championship game at the Top 20 Tournament in Alexandria, where he would duel in the finals against 7-foot center Robert Parish of Woodlawn-Shreveport.

Rummel managed to foul Parish out of the game in the fourth quarter, but misfired on a game-winning shot at the buzzer and fell 50-49. Cummings was named to the All-State first team as a senior after averaging 15.9 points per game for the Raiders, who finished 31-3. He was also cited as the district MVP in the Catholic League.

Parish, the 1972 All-State MVP who averaged 30.3 points, went on to star at Centenary College in Shreveport and later played on NBA championship teams with the Boston Celtics, who ironically would one day draft another center who wore green, one named Jeff Cummings.

In addition to Cummings' induction into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame, the May 4th awards banquet will include recognition of Louisiana's major college, small college, junior college and high school players and coaches of the year, the top pro player from the state, and the presentation of the LABC's Mr. Louisiana Basketball award to former long-time McNeese State University sports information director Louis Bonnette.



A limited number of tickets for the banquet are available for \$25 and can be reserved by contacting the LABC at labball@gmail.com.

The Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame is sponsored by the LABC. The Hall of Fame was created in 1975 to honor former great basketball players and coaches from Louisiana colleges. More information about the LABC and the Hall of Fame can be obtained by visiting their website at www.labball.com.

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