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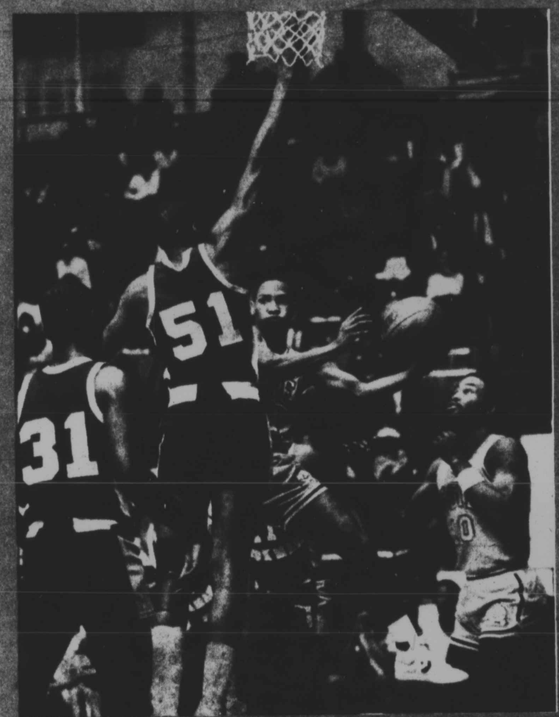

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INTERVIEW

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get the individual attention they need. Having lived the black experience, there is something special about attending a black school.

You always want to pass that experience on to your children. I think it's an experience black students need. Even if they don't attend a black school, they should visit them. To have lived that experience is something special.

Q: Out of all the honors and awards you've received, including your three gold medals, what has been the single most important event in your life?

A: I've had so many, it's really hard to single out one. Just recently, I returned to Germany for the first time since the '60 Olympics. I think it's a highlight to go back someplace 25 years after winning the gold medals and have people standing outside for autographs. I was really overwhelmed by that experience.

Most of the people there were young. Most of them weren't even born when I competed in the Olympics. They were people that had only read about me.

The day I retired from track also stands out. It was at Stanford Stadium in 1963. It was the first standing ovation in an outside stadium that I had gotten in the United States. It was one of the best races I ever ran. Before the race, I didn't know I was going to retire. But after the way things had gone, I decided it was time for me to hang up my spikes.

Q: Do you ever think back on the '60 Olympics and reminisce on what you were able to accomplish?

A: The gold medals and the Olympics -- that's history. You look back and see so many things that could have worked out differently, but I can honestly say that if I could change the way I did things, I would leave everything the way it turned out.

Former CIAA athlete Argle Whitfield, front right, displays his labor of love -- "A Pictorial History of the CIAA Professionals: 1950-1984" -- at the CIAA Tournament. Whitfield is flanked on the left by former NBA and CIAA great Sam Jones, and, in the rear from the left, former CIAA and pro football player Charlie Stukes, North Carolina A&T alumnus and Golden State Warrior executive Al Attles and broadcaster Charlie Neal (photo by James Parker).

INSTANT REPLAYS

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the Year outright in 1985.

Wrote McCallum:

"Three times he (Robbins) has been named college coach of the year in Virginia over men like UVa's Terry Holland and VCU's J.D. Barnett, yet until this season he was overlooked by his own conference. This year he shared CIAA coach of the year honors with David Corley of Livingstone College (12-15 overall for the season) and Warren Reynolds of Shaw University (14-6).

"'There's a kind of resentment about our program because Dave was so successful right away,' says Robbins' assistant and best friend, Jim Battle, who is black, 'but I would think color has something to do with it, too.'"

• The MEAC Tournament showed signs of life this year in Philadelphia's grand old Palestra.

The attendance at the finals between Howard and A&T topped 6,000 and the City of Brotherly Love greeted the affair with open arms, one of the skyscrapers on its skyline even spelling the league's name out in lights.

• Hall of Famer John McClendon said he wasn't the least bit surprised that Winston-Salem State upended top-ranked Virginia Union in the South Atlantic Regional.

"I expected Bighouse to give Union a hard time," said one old master of the other, grinning.

Sports writer Robert Eller, who knows black college basketball and football better than most, on the relative strength of the Division I MEAC and Division II CIAA: "I don't think there's a team in this league (the MEAC) that can beat (CIAA runnerup) Norfolk State."

• Virginia Union fans were so sore that Winston-Salem State upset their beloved Panthers at Richmond that they roundly booed their fellow CIAA member at its next South Atlantic Regional game against Mount St. Mary's.

• The SWAC, in an effort to increase attendance and cut expenses at its basketball tournament, changed the format this year to include only the top four finishers in the conference.

A crowd of 9,203 watched the finals between Alcorn and Southern at Jackson, Miss.

• Former CIAA football, wrestling and track star Argle Whitfield has written a history of CIAA alumni who have gone on to pro careers.

Whitfield's book, "A Pictorial History of the CIAA Professionals," is the first of its kind and culminates several years of research on the part of the author, who attended Elizabeth City State.

The book bursts at the seams with interesting facts and photos.

• *Sports Illustrated*'s Jack McCallum told me at the CIAA Tournament that Virginia Union's Charles Oakley is a sure-fire NBA prospect. He also likes high-jumping sophomore forward Jamie Waller, who let his shirttail out near the end of the Norfolk State game to reveal the neatly-printed word "D-FENSE," which he played to the hilt.

• One thing I'll truly miss about the CIAA Tournament moving to Richmond is Captain Jack's Seafood Restaurant in Virginia Beach.

• Among the well-known faces courtside at the CIAA tourney: Sam Jones, Oscar Robertson, Willie Stargell, Wilma Rudolph and Jerry West.