

Desmond Merriweather  
Youth Team Manager/Coach

There is an adage that says people are judged by the company they keep. In the coaching profession, some of the company are the coaches that develop under you — your coaching tree, so to speak. Well, Desmond Merriweather's coaching tree speaks highly about his life and his sports career in Memphis.

However, Desmond's deep roots in the Memphis sports scene began long before his coaching career. Desmond grew up in the Binghampton area of the Bluff City, and he started playing sports at the neighborhood's Lester Community Center. Desmond was drawn to playing both baseball and basketball. Baseball was his sport early on, and because of his positive attitude and competitive nature, other neighborhood kids were drawn to him and wanted to play on his teams.

Desmond carried those same qualities with him as he rose in the different levels of sports in Memphis from recreational to middle school to high school, mostly on the hardwood. He was a member of Lester Middle's first graduating class in 1987. Desmond played at East High School in the early 1990s and then moved to Jackson, Tennessee, for his collegiate career at Lane College.

Desmond's heart, though, was all Memphis, and he returned to the city to make a difference. And boy did he. Desmond took over the boys basketball program at Lester and success soon followed. Desmond led the Lions to 3 City championships and 3 state titles. His care and development extended beyond the court, encouraging his players to excel in the classroom. After his time at Lester, Desmond moved on to coach at East High School.

Desmond poured not only into his players but also those he "recruited" into the coaching profession. One was his longtime friend, Penny Hardaway, who was on Desmond's staff at Lester and East, and he took over the Mustangs program as Desmond dealt with his health issues.

Additionally, before Desmond passed away, he inspired his cousin, Steve Terrell, to coach. Terrell founded the Team Dez youth basketball organization, which led to him landing the head coaching position at Lester. Terrell led Lester to two state championships, carrying the torch for Desmond.

Desmond passed away on February 8, 2015, but not before he made his impact on the young men he coached, the community he was raised in and the entire city of Memphis.

Please welcome to the Hall of Fame posthumously, as a youth team manager/coach — the late Desmond Merriweather. Accepting the honor on his behalf is his mother, Mrs. Nadolyn Smith.