



he was also an Honor Roll Student.

After graduating in 1973 from ZBTHS, Commissioner McKinney accepted an athletic scholarship to play basketball and baseball at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He was the first African American player to ever start on a Northwestern baseball team, and only the second African American to play baseball at Northwestern. As a basketball player at Northwestern, Commissioner McKinney became the basketball team's MVP for 3 consecutive seasons, an All-Big 10 performer for 3 consecutive seasons, as well as recognized as an All-American by most media outlets. In the last game of his college basketball career, Northwestern honored Commissioner McKinney by establishing the Billy McKinney Award. The award is given annually to a Northwestern student-athlete who exemplifies McKinney's traits of Leadership, 110% Effort, and Positive Mental Attitude. Commissioner McKinney completed his final year of collegiate basketball as the leading scorer in Northwestern University history, a record that stood for 36 years.

After leaving Northwestern University, Commissioner McKinney worked for the National Basketball Association (NBA) for 39 years on various teams and in several leadership capacities. McKinney played in the NBA for seven seasons, and using the same skill-sets of leadership, 100% effort, and positive mental attitude, he transitioned into several leadership roles with the NBA as a respected front office executive for 32 years. His playing career took him to the cities of: Kansas City (Kings), Salt Lake City (Utah Jazz), Denver (Nuggets), San Diego (Clippers), and back to Chicago to finish his career with the Chicago Bulls.

After retiring from playing, McKinney's versatility, likability, professional demeanor, and business acumen catapulted him into the front office management with the Chicago Bulls, where he became the first African-American executive in the history of the organization. While in Chicago, Commissioner McKinney was instrumental in the drafting of Bulls' legends, Scottie Pippen and Horace Grant and assisting then Bulls' General Manager Jerry Krause to build the initial Championship team.

At the age of 32, McKinney was hired to head up the basketball operations of the expansion Minnesota Timberwolves, where he was responsible for establishing personnel management procedures to procure staff and players, as well as establish and manage the team's budget for basketball operations. In addition, he worked with the sales and marketing staff to build a season ticket fan base and help brand the team and its players for marketing and community service.

In June of 1992, McKinney was hired by the Detroit Pistons as their top basketball executive to rebuild an aging team that was in need of an infusion of young talent and revamping its salary structure. In 3 seasons, he drafted two time All-Star, Allan Houston, Grant Hill, Hall of Fame player, 7 time NBA All-Star and Co-Rookie of the year in 1995, and 17 year NBA veteran Lindsey Hunter whom won 2 NBA Championships, while leaving the team 8 million dollars under the NBA salary cap.

Commissioner McKinney's management career also consisted of positions as Vice President of Basketball Operations for the Seattle Sonics whom lost to the Bulls in the 1996 NBA Finals. Later McKinney was promoted to Executive Vice President of Basketball for the Seattle Sonics and Executive Vice President/General Manager of the 2004 WNBA Champions Seattle Storm. Commissioner McKinney spent his final nine years in the NBA as the Vice President of Scouting for the Milwaukee Bucks.

Throughout Commissioner McKinney's 32 year tenure in executive roles with the National Basketball Association, he has successfully developed and negotiated international business contracts and partnered with colleagues, business professionals, and competitors to achieve goals, build solid business relationships, and represent not only his organization, but all of the fans who supported his teams. His experience in working with teams and building organizations has benefited people and organizations at home and around the world. In addition to his position with the NBA Seattle Sonics, Commissioner McKinney served on the Seattle Sports Commission where he worked with business leaders, community activists and citizens to help strengthen local business, kids and local pride by supporting local teams from professionals to amateurs while bringing world class events to Seattle like the annual Boeing Classic Golf Tournament.

Throughout his tenure in college and in the NBA, Commissioner McKinney kept Zion and its residents on his mind and in his heart by returning often to speak with the community's youth and leadership in effort to give back to a community which gave him so much. He's been visible in the community for decades and has been asked to speak at fundraising events for a plethora of organizations, as well as donating his time and money to several organizations throughout the community. Commissioner McKinney has also been active in community affairs for many years and has served on leadership boards of many local and national organizations including: Big Brothers/Big Sisters, The Boys & Girl Club, The Urban League, The United Negro College Fund, Junior Achievement, The Zion Benton High School Board, The Seattle Sports Commission, Boy Scouts of America, Easter Seals, and the Marillac House in Chicago, the BLMA (Black and Latino Male Achievement Group) mentoring group for the Milwaukee Public Schools.

As a high school, college, NBA player and executive Commissioner McKinney has been a sought after public speaker, and has used his vast experience and knowledge as a professional public speaker for many years. He has spoken on a myriad of leadership, life, and professional topics such as: Teamwork, Building the Proper Work Environment, Leadership, Developing New Business Sales, and How to Overcome Adversity, to name a few topics. He has spoken at University of Michigan, General Mills, Honeywell, ServiceMaster, The Waukegan Yacht Club, Ethan Allen, Prudential Life Insurance, Washington Decca Youth Leadership Institute, North Suburban Conference and Minnesota Special Olympics.

In 2013 while working with the Milwaukee Bucks, McKinney moved back to, Zion, IL, his hometown and began to serve on the Zion Benton Township School Board. In 2015, he was appointed as the Commissioner of Building, Property & Zoning for the City of Zion by current Mayor, Al Hill. Through his efforts on the City of Zion Building Department Commissioner McKinney was instrumental in implementing the rental house certification program which ensures that life and safety issues are monitored and repaired to protect the safety of its citizens. In addition, his work with the building department personnel revived the City of Zion Clean Up Days where he partnered with the City to enlist the help of residents and volunteers in effort to restore city wide civic pride and the natural beauty of the city's diverse neighborhoods.

In his spare time, he loves to mentor kids, golf, play tennis, ride his bike, listen to music, go to the movies and play with his Chocolate Lab, Murphy, who he rescued as a puppy.

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