

SPORT TALK • SPORT TALK

Youngsters tumble at King School

by Robert Lothian

King School has Portland's only tumbling team for elementary age children.

The 31 youngsters from pre-kindergarten through 5th grade get together after school two days a week for practice sessions in the school cafeteria.

With guidance from coach Cheryl Richey, the children practice by running five laps each and then they perform hand springs, somersaults, cartwheels and back twists on long mats stretched across the floor.

With bright blue and red uniforms donated by Nike, the tumbling team will perform Friday at Laurelhurst School and Saturday, April 20th at Lloyd Center at about noon for Teacher's Day.

The team will travel to King's sister school in Cascade Locks for another performance on May 10th. They have also performed during halftime at University of Portland games, and they may soon perform during a Trail Blazer halftime.

Third grader Sabrina Warren, 9, said her favorite moves are "ones that make me go backwards," especially back handsprings. "I like it because I like it," she said about tumbling.

William James Holloway, 7, a first grader, did a back twist off the spring-board followed by a round-off back aerial.

"These are pretty difficult moves, especially considering their age," said Richey. "I have kids in the first grade that aren't supposed to have that much upper body strength, and they are muscling through these moves."

Richey said she started the tumbling program in 1977. This year over 300 children tried out, she said. "I have kids coming to me all the time asking if they can join, but unfortunately there's not enough room for them all."

The program emphasizes "feeling positive and good about themselves," said Richey, rather than competition or expert gymnastic skill.

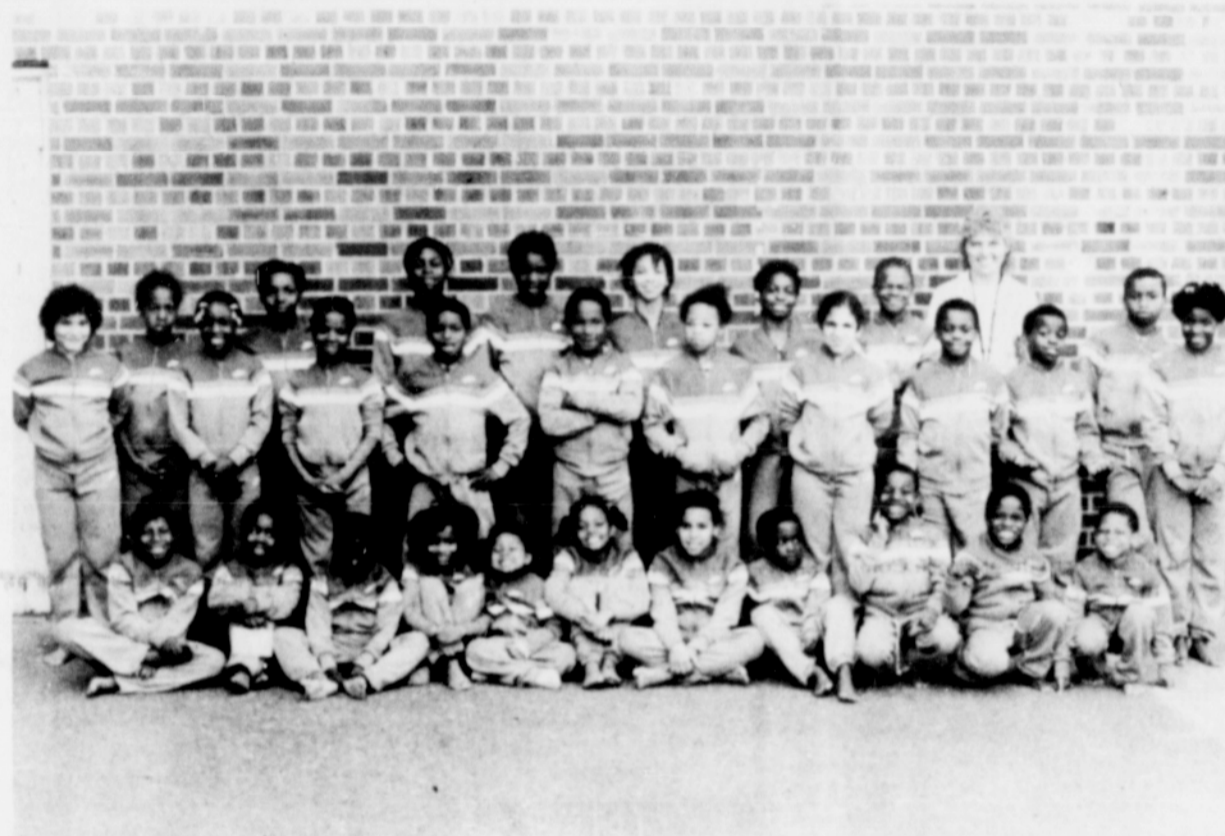
In order to join the team, the children write a contract with their teachers that says they will not neglect their schoolwork, she said.

The youngest tumbler is 4-year-old Quaylaunda Kane. Her three brothers and sisters, "the Kane gang," are "all excellent tumblers," said Richey.

Richey said her first tumbling team had 17 boys and three girls, but now there are more girls than boys. "The girls tend to do more flex moves and the boys tend to do more muscle moves," she said.



Two views of the King School tumbling team. the only one of its kind at the elementary level.



(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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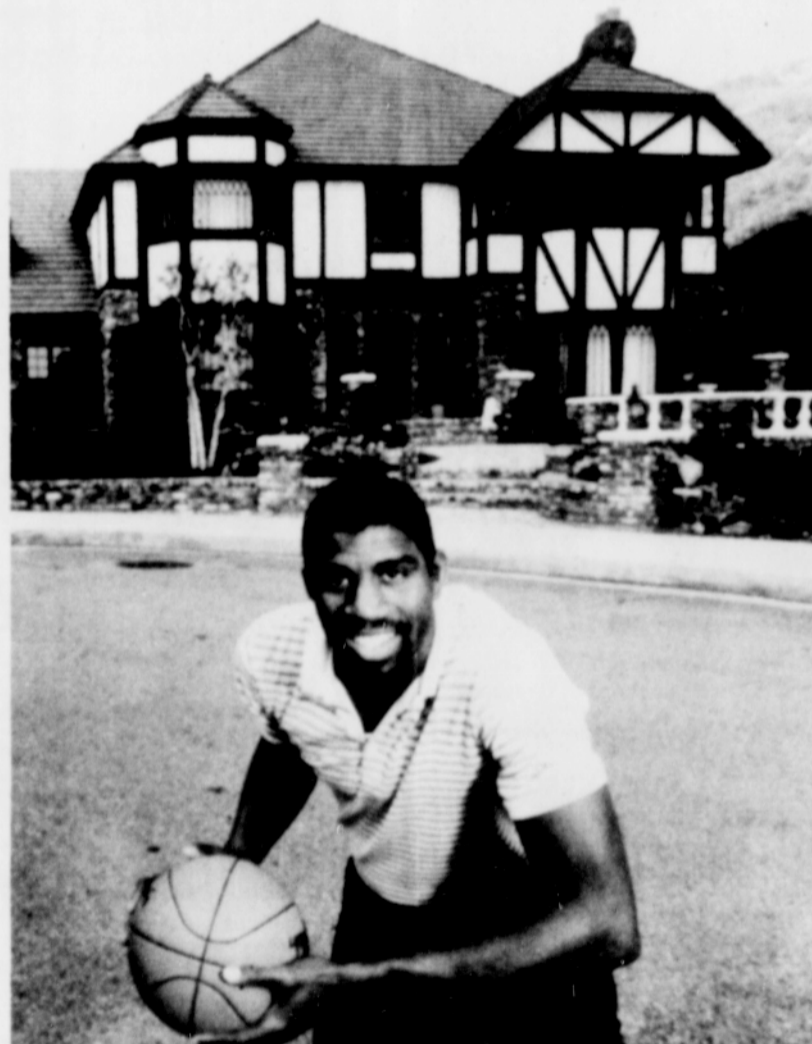
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It took a ten-month long search for the Los Angeles Lakers' \$25-million man to find his ideal home nestled in the hills of Bel Air, an exclusive Los Angeles suburb. Magic's Tudor-style "castle" has five bedrooms, five baths, a three-car garage, a heated pool, a jacuzzi, a sauna, a disco-style party room, and an indoor basketball court that doubles as a racquetball and volleyball court.

Magic has also followed the tradition of the "fancy hotels" by naming rooms in honor of special people in his life. One room is named the Christine Room (after his mother) and another is named the Isiah Room (for his friend Isiah Thomas).

Magic has many more things he wants to put in his dream home. Says the 25-year-old bachelor, "It's the kind of house that's so big, you can do almost anything in, so it's hard to find an end to ideas for it."

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