

THE LOCKER ROOM



Earl "The Pearl" Still Shines

By Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

Earl "The Pearl" Monroe is enjoying life to the fullest these days. In fact, Monroe has always enjoyed life and always will. Life is fine in the "Big Apple" these days. Actually, he is still beaming from his induction into the Basketball Hall of Fame (Springfield, MA) and his successful recording company (Pretty Pearl Records, Inc.)

"Pretty Pearl" is an appropriate name for Monroe's company because he was indeed a pretty site to watch on the basketball. From the day he burst on to the college scene at tiny Winston-Salem State College, Winston-Salem, N.C. to being named Rookie of Year with the Baltimore Bullets (1967), Monroe was in a class by himself. Spinning and grinning away from "would be" defenders or fading away for a soft jumper, "The Pearl" dribbled his way into the hearts of fans all over the country.

A four-time NBA All-Star, Monroe said that he is enjoying his life as a music producer because he is helping to create opportunities for young people. "I'm very happy with the job we have done with these young kids," he said. "We try very hard to bring along upcoming kids and it's been very successful so far. We also do management."

In his NBA career, Monroe scored over 17,000 points and dished out a shade under 4,000 assists. He was a member of the New York Knickerbockers NBA title team and played in the same backcourt with Walt Frazier. Together, they formed one of the best guard combinations in NBA history.

A native of the Philadelphia ghetto, Monroe played for the legendary Clarence "Big House" Gaines, the win-

ningest basketball coach in college history. Monroe said that Gaines gave him the chance he needed as a youth and he still holds Gaines close to his heart.

"Gaines had a tremendous impact on me," said the former four-time college All-American. "Being in his company was a blessing in itself. He's the guy, who not only helped me as a basketball player, he taught me about the highs and lows in life. Those things that can't be taught in a school situation. One of the greatest things he has done is instill in young players that you can achieve whatever you want to do as long as you work hard at it. He was very good at coming up with great sayings. I remember one that stands out the most: he said that 'opportunity at every door does knock, but it has never been known to pick a lock.'"



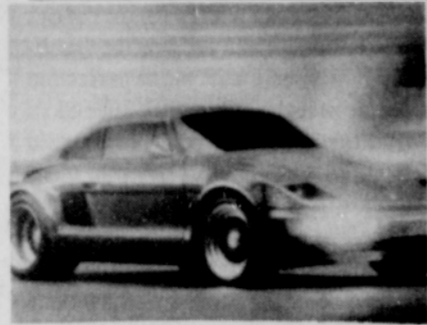
Monroe

Monroe also said that Gaines instilled a sense of social responsibility in him and he will always find a way to give back to the community. When questioned about whether he still gets excited about basketball, Monroe, an announcer for ABC Radio and Madison Square Gardens, says that the excitement will never go away. "I get real excited sometimes," he said.

Monroe's advice to young players chasing the NBA dream is to have something to fall back on just in case. He feels that young players can not hear that advice enough.

"Get all the education you can," he said. Obtain some marketable skills in the process of chasing the pro rainbow and have an ace in the hole. There's nothing wrong with chasing the dream; just keep it in perspective."

PIONEER'S GEMBALLA MIRAGE PORSCHE PROVIDES SOUND FOR THE NEXT FRONTIER



The ultimate in sound and motion was on display at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in the Las Vegas Convention Center where Pioneer Electronics (USA) Inc. unveiled its \$350,000 hand-built Gemballa Mirage Porsche. With a 2100-watt Pioneer sound system featuring the most sophisticated car audio and video equipment available, the Gemballa Mirage represents "Sound For The Next Frontier."

World renowned West German automobile customizer, Uwe Gemballa, crafted the Mirage on a Porsche 911 Turbo chassis, while pioneer Electronics engineered the installation of the state-of-the-art audio/video system. Together the two have created the ultimate in speed and sound.

A total of 24 speakers are driven by six amplifiers, producing 1050-watts of continuous power and a maximum of 2100-watts.

The KPX-990 headunit/controller contains a cassette player and seven-band graphic equalizer which allows all of its functions to be displayed on the glove-box mounted TVM-C6 color monitor. The TVM-C6 can also display the picture from a LaserDisc player or videocassette recorder.

Players, All-Stars, Fans, All-bored

By Aaron Fentress

The best players from the National league versus the best players from the American league. Canseco, Sandberg, Boggs, Strawberry, Dykstra, Henderson and more. How could anything be more exciting? Stop!! I can't do it. I can't write something good about a baseball game that was so boring mother nature got tired of it and tried to rain it out. Lets face it. Watching a grape transform into a reason would have been more exciting than watching baseball's 61st All-Star game.

With reasons-o-plenty Tuesday night's annual All-Star affair turned into the all-dull game. Unlike the NBA All-Star game baseball's is self defeating. What makes an All-Star game potentially exciting is the possibility of a tremendous offensive display. But it so won't happen when 18 of the best pitchers in baseball are allowed to play. It's like allowing the NBA to play Zone defense. It limits the offensive punch. And every fan likes to witness offensive fireworks. Especially in an All-Star game.

By far the most entertaining of professional sport's All-Star games is the NBA's. The players are unrestricted, allowed to run wild, shooting, dunking, passing and entertaining. The most valuable player in an NBA All-Star game could score 20 to 30 points, grab some rebounds and dish out some assists. Each team scores between 125 and 150 points. The MVP of Tuesday night's All-Star game got one hit and

Strawberry after trying to run home after tagging from third on a fly ball to right field. The only thing MVP, Texas Ranger's, Julio Franco, actually did was get his hit when a couple of players happened to be on base. It was the only scoring in a 2-0 ballgame. Wow!

The MVP of an exciting baseball All-Star game should go three-for-five, with a double and a homerun. Knock in four RBI's to lead his team to a 10-9 victory. That would be explosive. Instead we get franco as MVP while the rest of the All-Star bat .147 on nine for 61 hitting. YAWN!

The NBA eliminated the zone defense from basketball because fans were becoming bored with tall guys simply standing around guarding the basket. By making man-to-man defenses mandatory, the NBA opened up the floor allowing a faster paced game to take place which led to more scoring. Right now baseball's All-Star game is trapped in the no-hit zone.

Granted the best offensive players in baseball are facing those 18 pitchers, but what is considered a great offensive player? When you get a hit once out of every three chances and a homerun once every 15 at-bats. The chances for a hit or homerun decrease when you face a fresh pitcher every inning. Which brings me to my first solution for All-Star boredom. Eliminate the number of pitchers allowed for each All-Star team.

let alone a fresh one every inning. Hitters simply need time to get used to a pitcher, to start feeling a groove and know what kind of pitches to expect. It's difficult to achieve that when you face a different pitcher every at-bat. Teams should be allowed only four pitchers. Two starters and two relievers, with the top vote receiver required to pitch at least four innings. The next starter pitches three while the two relievers are saved for the final two. The manager then must decide whether or not to save a pitcher in case of extra innings.

Another annoying aspect about baseball's All-Star game is the fact that the starters only play in the first three or four innings. They are not present during the seventh, eighth and ninth innings when the game is on the line. The starters, which are voted for by the fans, should start the game, play three innings, allow the reserves to play three then return for the seventh-inning stretch. The shouldn't be in the dug-out chewing Tobacco when the game gets exciting. If it ever did.

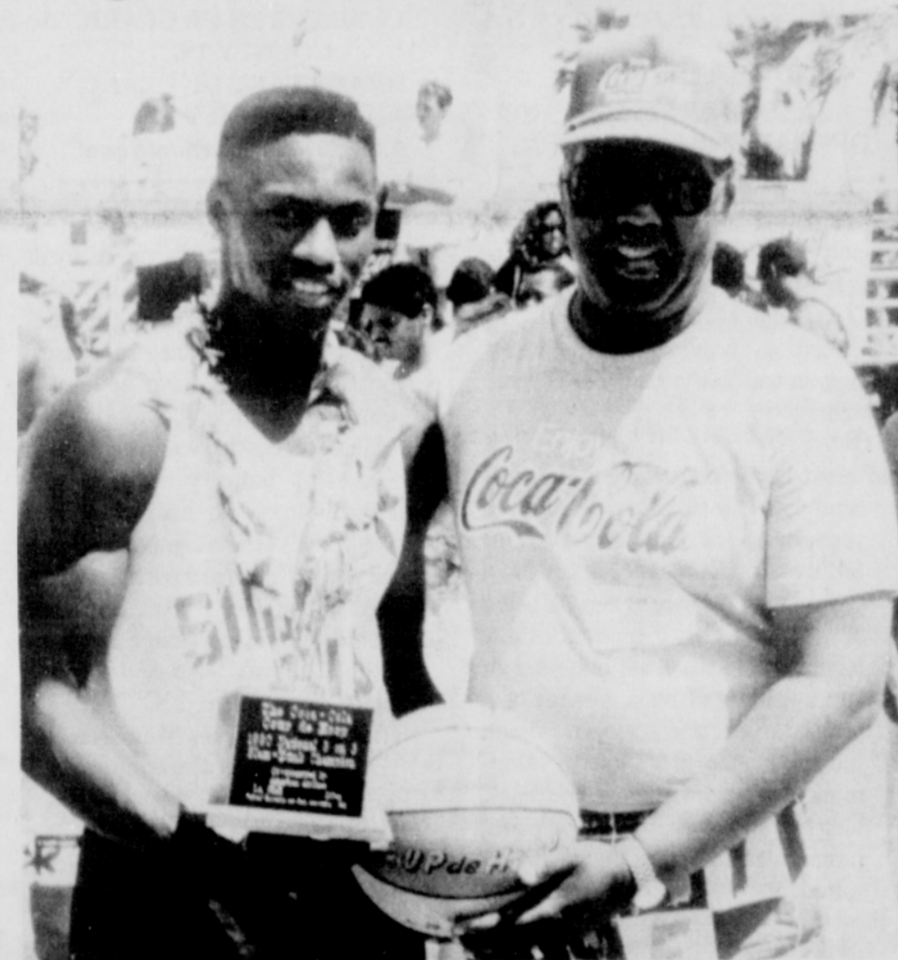
It would be unrealistic for me to hope that baseball officials adopt some of my ideas. But if things continue as they are fans are likely to become miffed. Maybe someday baseball officials will actually change the rules to make the game more exciting. Then fans can really feel like they are watching All-Star's. Not being allowed.

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"Rough and Tumble" Basketball



Playground basketball at its "rough and tumble" best came alive at Venice Beach in Los Angeles for the first national "Coca-Cola Coup de Hoop" 3-on-3 basketball tournament. Regional playground champion male and female 3-on-3 teams from Atlanta, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Jon Stanley (left) of Hawaii won the "Coca-Cola Coup de Hoop" 1990 Slam Dunk contest and a \$5,000 prize for his athletic showmanship. Presenting the championship trophy is Ed Washington, (right) vice president, Coca-Cola Enterprises. (Photo by Arnold Turner)

Uncle Dave is Really my Uncle Dad

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

Uncle Dave--that's Uncle David Lee Tucker--epitomizes the role of a family member during times of trouble or need. After my father died when I was age thirteen, Uncle Dave served as that father figure so many young Black males lack and need today. He is my father's younger brother.

Throughout my life, Uncle Dave has always been supportive and there with encouragement or a pat on the ack. Sometimes, a hard kick in the butt would have been more appropriate considering my decadent behavior as a juvenile. I will spare you the details. During those times of confusion or when I "tightrope" on the edge of good and evil, Uncle Dave was always there to push me further away from the evil streets of Washington, D.C.

When I reflect on my relationship with Uncle Dave, I think about all the times he helped to build my self-esteem and confidence. He has also provided several "firsts" in my life. Uncle Dave purchased my first pair of football cleats, my first big apple hat, my first pair of Converse (Chuck Taylors) tennis shoes, my first stereo to take to college, my first plane ticket to college, my first camera (35mm), and he was the first one to attend my youth basketball games.

Recently, Uncle Dave became my first uncle to visit me out here in Portland, Oregon. A skycap for American Airlines at Washington National Airport (where he has worked for twenty-eight of the forty-eight years he's been living), Uncle Dave finally stopped talking about visiting and decided to see what I meant by "God's Country". He was very impressed with Oregon.

Against his better judgement, Uncle Dave took a small plane ride to Mount Saint Helens (in a 5 seat Cesna) and for a change, I provided him with a first. He loves big planes, but I had to

do some serious talking to get him up in the air. Thanks to some help from Dave Lewis (Lewis Aviation of Hillsboro), Jr., who served as psychologist and pilot in a fun way, my uncle had a good flight. He was impressed with the natural beauty of Oregon and the magnitude of the volcano's strength. Later the same day, we took a drive down

to the Oregon Coast and made stops in Seaside and Manzanita, where we had dinner at Nina's famous Italian Restaurant. We also visited the U. of Portland (where I graduated), attended several cook-outs on the Fourth of July, and I gave him a tour of the KATU-TV 2 studios.

In many ways, it was great to sit down and talk with my uncle about things that happened in the past. We talked about my father, family incidents that caused my great confusion as a youth, future plans for both of us, and a host of other topics. Without a doubt, Uncle Dave said he will be visiting Oregon on a regular basis. He prefers the trees over concrete.

By the way, there's something else that Uncle Dave likes about Oregon. He like the fresh salmon that is such a staple in most diets of Oregonians. In D.C., folks are paying almost eight dollars for a one-pound can and after mentioning to my grandmother (Connie B. Tucker), how I eat it fresh on a regular basis, he volunteered to come get some. He took a cooler full back.

Uncle Dad, thanks for the memories!



David Lee Tucker with pilot David Lewis, Jr.

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