



TEXAS SPORTS HALL OF FAME



2020-2021

INDUCTION BANQUET



OFFICIAL MEDIA KIT

ABOUT THE TEXAS SPORTS HALL OF FAME



Home of more than 300 Texas legends, the Texas Sports Hall of Fame was the idea of the sports editor at The Beaumont Enterprise. Thad Johnson spoke to the Texas Sportswriters Association during the 1949 Texas High School Coaches Association All-Star Games in Beaumont about starting the Hall of Fame. The sportswriters unanimously agreed with Johnson and in 1951 baseball great Tris Speaker was the inaugural inductee and Texas became the first state to honor its athletes with a hall of fame. The Texas Sports Hall of Fame under the guidance of Texas sports entrepreneur Lamar Hunt was opened in Grand Prairie on Saturday, May 23, 1981, but was closed in 1986. The Hall of Fame remained dormant until several prominent members of the Waco community created a plan in 1990 to have the Hall of Fame moved to Waco.

Their plan was realized on April 16, 1993, when Waco had its grand opening for the Texas Sports Hall of Fame. The museum also houses the Texas Tennis Museum and Hall of Fame and Texas High School Football Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame expanded in 2010 to include the Health, Fitness, and Education Center and Texas' preeminent college conference, the Southwest Conference (SWC). The Southwest Conference was a national power conference for most of the century until it broke up in 1996. The Southwest Conference exhibit displays the grand history of college athletics in Texas.

The Texas Sports Hall of Fame is now truly representative of the athletic history in Texas as it sits at 35,00 sq. ft.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

August 28, 2021



Media News Conference

Time: Doors open at 3:30 p.m., News Conference 4 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Location: Southwest Conference Gallery at the Texas Sports Hall of Fame

- Only media with credentials, inductees, and reception ticket holders will be allowed.
- There will be NO interviews after 4:30 p.m.

Kira Haney will serve as moderator for the news conference and will ask each inductee questions. At the end of the conference, we will take questions from the floor.

Please Note: For this event, there will be no live television allowed anywhere in the building at any time. Television crews are welcome to do “live shots” or “b-roll” after 6 p.m. or any time from the BASE at Extraco Event Center. You may interview former inductees who are in attendance or other special guests, but not the following: Leroy Burrell, Michelle Carter, Derrick Johnson, Francie Larrieu-Smith, Shane Lechler, DeMarcus Ware, Charlie Waters, Teresa Weatherspoon, and Sophia Young-Malcolm; they will be involved in the private reception with our guests.

The reception will follow shortly after the news conference in the Great Hall at the Texas Sports Hall of Fame

Banquet

Time: Doors open at 5:30 p.m., Banquet will begin at 6:15 p.m.

Location: The BASE at Extraco Event Center
4601 Bosque Blvd., Waco, TX 76710





SELECTION PROCESS

Criteria for selection of athletes into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame

Any athlete, coach or administrator, male or female, living or deceased, is eligible for induction into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame. Nominees will be selected who have brought lasting fame and honor to Texas sports.

Number of people on the selection committee

There shall be at least 21 members on the selection committee. The committee shall be comprised of sportswriters and electronic sports media members who live in the state of Texas. One member of the committee shall serve as the chairman.

Number of Athletes Selected Each Year

Up to 10 inductees may be honored each calendar year. Primary Ballot - every year six nominees shall be selected from the Primary Ballot. No more than three nominees from the same sport shall be selected on the Primary Ballot. Veterans Ballot – every year two nominees shall be selected from the Veterans Ballot. To qualify for the Veterans Ballot a nominee must be 20 years removed from the competition. There are also two at large selections each year selected from the ballot by the Texas Sports Hall of Fame Board of Trustees.

Nominations

Nominations are open to the public and can be submitted online at the bottom of this page. If your nominee is fortunate enough to be placed on the official ballot- be sure that you are able to help vote them into the museum by becoming an Official Voting Member. The deadline for nominations is June 1st.

Ballot

The selection committee shall meet every year to determine who is placed on the official Texas Sports Hall of Fame nomination ballot. The ballot is comprised of a primary and veterans section. The Primary Ballot will have 20 names and the Veterans Ballot will have 12 names. The top five vote-getters on each ballot who are not selected will automatically be placed on the ballot the next year. Texas Sports Hall of Fame staff will prepare the bios once the ballot has been selected, mail ballots, and tabulate the votes.

Acceptance Process

If a nominee declines induction for two consecutive years without a legitimate reason for not being able to attend the enshrinement ceremonies, that individual is then removed from the ballot and is not again eligible for nomination for five years. Nominees, unless deceased, must attend the banquet to be officially inducted into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame.



MEET THE CLASS OF 2020 - 2021



**LEROY
BURRELL**

**MICHELLE
CARTER**



**DERRICK
JOHNSON**

**SHANE
LECHLER**



**FRANCIE
LARRIEU
SMITH**

**DEMARCUS
WARE**



**CHARLIE
WATERS**

**TERESA
WEATHERSPOON**



**SOPHIA
YOUNG-
MALCOM**

2020

Michelle Carter
Francie Larrieu-Smith
Shane Lechler
Teresa Weatherspoon

2021

Leroy Burrell
Derrick Johnson
DeMarcus Ware
Charlie Waters
Sophia Young-Malcom

QUICK FACTS

- Tris Speaker is the first inductee - 1951
- Following this year's induction ceremony, there will be a total of **393** athletes in the Texas Sports Hall of Fame
- **Michelle Carter** will be joining her father, Michael Carter (Class of 2002) in the Texas Sports Hall of Fame... They will be the first father-daughter duo in the Hall of Fame.
- **Shane Lechler** is the first punter to be inducted into the Hall of Fame
- **Leroy Burrell**, Olympic Gold Medalist who set the world record for the 100m sprint, twice
- **Derrick Johnson** is currently the Kansas City Chiefs franchise leader in tackles (1,262)
- **DeMarcus Ware** is the Dallas Cowboys leader in sacks (117)
- **Teresa Weatherspoon**, 2x Olympian and part of the inaugural WNBA season.
- **Sophia Young-Malcolm**, WNBA player and 2005 NCAA National Champion
- **Charlie Waters** had five Super Bowl appearances, won two, and is ranked third in interceptions in Dallas Cowboys franchise history with 41.
- **Francie Larrieu-Smith** is a 5x U.S. Olympic runner and the 1992 Olympic Flagbearer.





LEROY BURRELL

Leroy Burrell is arguably one of the most successful athlete and coach combos in sports history. Despite being one of the greatest sprinters of all time, Burrell grew up wanting to play another sport. After his high school baseball coach knew that Burrell's poor eyesight would hinder his baseball abilities, he saw potential in his speed and encouraged him to run track. During his final three years, he ran the men's 100-meter, 200-meter, long jump, and triple jump. He was named Eastern Track Athlete of the Year High School Track & Field All American (1985) and completed the PA Class 3A State T&F Championships winning 1st in the 100m, 200m, long jump, and triple jump.

Originally recruited as a long jumper to the University of Houston (1985-1990) Burrell broke Houston's freshman record at 26'-9" in his first year (1986). After tearing his ACL in 1986, he came back in 1988 to become an NCAA All-American. At the SWC Championship, he finished 2nd in the 100m, 3rd in the long jump, and at the NCAA Championships, he finished 5th in the 100m and 7th in the long jump. In 1989, he won 1st in the long jump at 26'-5.50" at the NCAA Indoor Championship and set a meet record with a personal best of 27'-5.50" at the NCAA Outdoor Championship. At the USA Outdoor Championship, he placed 1st in the 100m with 9.94 seconds and helped Carl Lewis, Danny Everett, and Floyd Heard set a world record in the 4x200m relay. In 1990, Burrell won: 1st in the long jump at the NCAA Indoor Championship, 1st in the 100m & 200m at the SWC Outdoor Championship, and 1st in 100m at the NCAA Outdoor Championship. That same year, he received the Jumbo Elliott Award, an award that is only given to the nation's top collegiate track and field athlete. From 1990-91 he won 19 of his 22 races in the 100m.

In 1991, Burrell competed in the USA Championships where he set his first individual world record in the 100m with a time of 9.90 seconds and beat that record at the World Championships with 9.88 seconds. In the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, Burrell along with Mike Marsh, Dennis Mitchell, and Carl Lewis won gold and set the world record in the 4x100 relay with 37.40 seconds. He also placed 5th in the 100m. At the 1991 USA Championships, he earned the title of "World's Fastest Man" with a world record time of 9.90 seconds in the 100 meters. He qualified to run for Team USA in the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia but was forced to withdraw due to an injury.

Fast forward to today, Burrell is going into his 24th season of being the head coach of track and field at the University of Houston. He has coached over 150 NCAA All-Americans and earned a combined 41 team conference titles. He is a 23-time C- USA Coach of the Year recipient and a 12-time winner of the AAC Coaching Staff of the Year.

Burrell was inducted into the University of Houston Hall of Honor in 2000, the Philadelphia Sports Hall of Fame in 2008, the Texas Track and Field Coaches Hall of Fame in 2014, the USATF National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 2017, and the Southwest Conference Hall of Fame in 2019.





MICHELLE CARTER

Olympic gold medalist and the most successful female shot putter in American history, Michelle Carter has etched her place in the history books. At Red Oak High School, she won eight-shot put state championships, four indoor and four outdoor respectively. Aside from her stellar high school accomplishments, she placed second at the World Youth Championships in 2001 and first at the World Junior Championships in 2004. In 2003, she not only won gold at the Junior Pan American Games but set the National High School Girls record with a distance of 54 feet and 10 inches.

She earned a full track scholarship to the University of Texas in 2003 and went on to become a seven-time All-American and won five Big 12 Conference titles. In 2005, she placed second in the National Collegiate Athletic Association outdoor championship and helped the Longhorns win the NCAA team title. She won the NCAA indoor championship and helped the women's team claim another NCAA team title the following year in 2006. Her senior year she received a second-place finish in the NCAA indoor championships. Carter is one of the most successful tracks and field athletes in the University's history.

After having one of the most successful careers at the University of Texas, she continued that legacy in her professional career. Over her career, she accumulated seven USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships, five USA Indoor Track and Field Championships, and one Olympic gold medal to name a few. In 2008, she placed first in the USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. That same year she qualified for Team USA and would go on to compete at her first Olympics in Beijing. For the next three years she competed at the USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships, finishing 1st place in 2009 and 2011, and 2nd place in 2010, respectively. Another first-place medal would come in 2011 at the USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships and a third-place at the Pan American Games. Her second Olympic appearance came in 2012 in London after finishing second at the USA Olympic Trials. She placed second in the World Indoor Championship and then finished fourth in London. For the next five consecutive years, starting in 2013, she claimed first place in the USA Indoor Track and Field Championships. Her performance during those years followed into the USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships where she placed first every year from 2013 to 2016. In 2016, she won gold in the USA Track and Field Indoor Championships, World Indoor Championships, USA Track and Field Outdoor Championships, and the Rio Olympics. During her third Olympic appearance she finished at the top of the podium and set an American record with a throw of 67'-8.25". This marked the first time an American woman had won gold in the shot put at the Olympics. In 2017, she placed third in both the World Outdoor Championships and USA Track and Field Outdoor Championships. She finished second at the 2019 USA Track and Field Outdoor Championships.

Outside of her professional career, she is the founder of her non-profit You Throw Girl Sports Confidence Camp. This camp is a way to empower young female athletes' confidence in their athletic and personal lifestyles. Carter's legacy will not only live on in the record books but through her camp. To this day, she still holds the USATF Outdoor Championship Record with 66'-5" set in 2013 and the USATF National Junior Olympic Track and Field Championships, 15-16 girls division, with 45'-10" set in 2001. Carter was inducted into the University of Texas Hall of Honor in 2016 and the Texas Track and Field Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2018.





DERRICK JOHNSON

Derrick Johnson is a Texas product born and raised in Waco. As a linebacker for Waco High, Johnson led the Lions to the 5A quarterfinals both in his junior and senior season. In the course of his last two years with the Lions, he finished with 357 tackles, 34 tackles for loss, 11 sacks, 10 forced fumbles, and four interceptions. His senior year brought more success and established him as the top linebacker recruit in the state. As a result, he earned a spot on the Texas Football Super Team and played in the inaugural U.S. Army All-American Bowl in 2001. During his time at Waco High, he accumulated honors being named a two-time Parade All-American, three-time All-District team, and two-time All-state pick.

As a true freshman at the University of Texas (2001-'04), Johnson played 13 games and finished with 83 tackles, 57 solo tackles, 13 tackles for loss, and 5 sacks. He was awarded UT's Outstanding Defensive Newcomer Award, Big-12 Co-Defensive Freshman of the Year, and Freshman All-American honors from The Sporting News and Football Writers Association of American. The awards piled up over the next three years as he was a First-team All-Big 12 pick in 2001, '02, and '03. His senior year, Johnson racked up more honors with a consensus first-team All-American selection, Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year, Dick Butkus Award, and Bronko Nagurski Trophy winner. Johnson's name is in the UT football record books as he still holds the record for tackles for loss (65) and interceptions by an LB (9). Some of his career stats like 458 career tackles (3rd), 11 careers forced fumbles (t-3rd), 195 career return yards (3rd), and 281 solo tackles (4th) still rank in the record books.

Johnson's career then took him to Kansas City after being taken in the 1st round, 15th overall by the Chiefs in the 2005 Draft. From 2005-'17, he was a part of four Pro-Bowl teams (2011-'13, & '15) and was selected First-team All-Pro in 2011 & 2013. In 2018, he played one season for the Raiders before signing a one-day contract with Kansas City and retiring as a Chief. In 2015, Johnson helped secure Andy Reid's first playoff victory during the wild card round with six solo tackles against the Houston Texans. They would advance to the playoffs for the remainder of Johnson's career with the Chiefs. During his time with Kansas, his talents were recognized throughout his career as he received the club's Mack Lee Hill Award, given to the team's top rookie, and the Derrick Thomas Award, team MVP, in 2011. Through his 182 games with the Chiefs, he started 169 of those games. He is the Chiefs franchise leader in tackles with 1,262 total and finished his career with four defensive touchdowns, 14 interceptions - four of these being returned for touchdowns, 23 forced fumbles, 27.5 sacks, and 40 quarterback hits.

He was inducted into the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame in 2015, the University of Texas Hall of Honor in 2019, and the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame in 2020.





SHANE LECHLER

Shane Lechler, one of the best punters in NFL History, started off his football career as a standout punter and quarterback at East Bernard High School, where he passed for nearly 5,000 career yards. The Sealy, Texas native averaged 41.6 yards per punt with a best of 85 yards and led East Bernard to the state quarterfinals.

Lechler signed and played with the Texas A&M Aggies from 1996-'99 primarily as their punter and additionally their kicker. While at A&M he set an NCAA record with a career average of 44.69 yards, now second overall and finished with 11,977 total punting yards and was 3rd in the nation for punting ('97 and '99). He was named a two-time All-American (1998 and '99) and a three-time First-team All Big-12 pick ('97-'99). Lechler still holds the NCAA FBS record for most games with a 40-yd average or more with 37 games.

After a stellar collegiate career, Lechler brought his talents to the Oakland Raiders after being selected in the 5th round of the 2000 Draft. During his 13 seasons with the Raiders, he became their all-time leading punter and made three playoff runs. After appearing in 206 games for Oakland, he punted a total of 1,014 times for 48,215 yards and holds the Raiders record for the longest punt with an 80-yard punt in 2011. He was selected to the Pro Bowl seven times ('01, '04, '07, '08, '09, '10, and '11) and was named First-Team All-Pro six times ('00, '03, '04, '08, '09, '10).

From 2013-2017, Lechler joined the Houston Texans as a free agent, where he took part in 80 regular-season games. In his five seasons with the Texans, he punted 430 times and averaged 47.6 yards per punt. In 2014, he set his longest punt with 71 yards. Lechler also led the league in punting yards with 4,507 yards on 92 punts in the 2017 season, which was his final season before retiring.

During his 18 season NFL career, he totaled 286 games played, 1,444 punts (T2 in NFL history), 68,676 total punt yardage (T2 in NFL history), 47.6-yard punting average (1 in NFL history), and led the NFL in punting average five years. He was also in the NFL's top two in punting average 12 times in his 18 seasons. Lechler was named to the 2000 All-Rookie Team, the Punter of the Decade for the 2000s, a member of the 2010-2019 All-Decade Team, and was voted on the NFL 100 All-Time team. He was inducted into the Texas A&M Athletic Hall of Fame in 2006 and the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame in 2014.





FRANCIE LARRIEU SMITH

One of the most versatile runners in US Track and Field history, Francie Larrieu Smith made a name for herself as a runner and a coach. Born on the west coast in Palo Alto, CA, high schools in the '60s did not offer track and field to women, only basketball, swimming, and field hockey. As a result, she trained and worked out with the boy's track and field team and focused on competing at the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) meets. She joined a girls AAU team, the San Jose Cindergals, then attended college at Cal State University, Long Beach, and UCLA.

In 1970, at the age of 17, Larrieu won the AAU national title in the 1,500 meters in and went on to win 22 national titles over her career. Her success only continued after becoming the AAU 1500m - 1-mile national champion in 1972, '73, '76, '77, '79, and '80, as well as the AAU indoor mile champion in '75, '77, '78, and '79. In February 1975, she became the first U.S. woman to run a sub-4:30 mile indoor with a time of 4:29:0 and just a month later set a new world record of 4:28:5. Larrieu Smith is also the first woman to run the outdoor sub-4:30 mile with a time of 4:28:2. Over the course of her 30-year professional career she set the U.S. Mile outdoor record six times, the U.S. indoor record four times, established a total of 36 U.S. records, and set 12 world bests in distances ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 meters. Larrieu Smith made five U.S. Olympic teams (1972, '76, '80, '88, and '92) and had the honor of being the flag bearer for Team USA in the opening ceremony at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

In 1999, she began her coaching career at Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX as the Head Men's and Women's Cross Country and Track and Field Coach. In May of 2018, after almost two decades, she retired from coaching. During her coaching career she led three athletes to the NCAA Cross Country Championships, 29 athletes to Individual conference championship titles, coached 21 athletes with Regional honors, and 24 athletes with All-Conference honors. In 2009, she served as the USA Track and Field Junior Women's Team Leader at the IAAF World Cross Country Championships and in 2011 she was selected as an assistant coach for the Pan American Games. As a volunteer and top spokesperson for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, she has saved lives by educating women on the early detection of breast cancer. In 1992, she served as the National Honorary Chair of the Race for the Cure series, which includes 35 races.

Francie is a member of the RRCA Distance Running Hall of Fame (1987), Cal State Long Beach Hall of Fame (1992), Texas Women's HOF (1994), National Track and Field HOF (1998), San Jose Sports HOF (2000), California Community College Athletic Association HOF (2003), Running Specialty HOF (2012), Texas Track and Field Coaches HOF (2017), and the National HS Track and Field Hall of Fame (2020). She crosses another finish line, this time into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame.





DEMARCUS WARE

One of the most intimidating pass-rushing threats in NFL history totaled 508 solo tackles and 138 sacks throughout his 12-year professional career. Born in Auburn, Alabama, Ware took his talents to Troy University. During his time at Troy, he had an important role in the transition to the Football Bowl Subdivision in 2001. He collected awards like the 2004 Sun Belt Defensive Player of the year and was a two-time All-Sun Belt Conference selection. His senior year he was a finalist for the 2004 Hendricks Award (nation's top defensive end) and helped the Trojans compete in their first-ever bowl game at the Silicon Valley Football Classic. He finished his collegiate career as Troy's all-time leader with 55.5 tackles for loss and ranked among the best in Trojan history with 27 sacks for a loss of 198 yards.

After a stellar collegiate career, Ware was drafted 11th pick overall by the Dallas Cowboys in 2005. He played nine of his 12 seasons and 141 games as a Cowboy and finished as the franchise all-time leader in forced fumbles (32) and multiple sack games (28). Ware averaged 13 sacks and 48 solo tackles per game while with the Cowboys and gained the nickname "Sack Master" as he is the all-time leader in sacks with 117. While he was with the Cowboys he led the league in sacks two years ('08 and '10) and three years in tackles for loss ('08, '10, and '11). He went to the Denver Broncos for three seasons ('14-'16) where he helped them win a Superbowl Championship. He finished his career in the NFL playing 178 games and recorded 508 solo tackles, 171 tackles for loss, 229 QB hits, 35 forced fumbles, and is currently ranks #9 in the league for sacks.

During his time in the NFL he was a four-time First-team All-Pro (2007-'09, and '11), no other defensive end or linebacker has been selected more, and a nine-time Pro-Bowl selection (2006-'12, '14-'15). In 2008, Ware was named NFC Defensive Player of the year and also won the Dick Butkus Award the first year they began awarding it to professional linebackers, and again in 2011, both as a Cowboy. Ware was named to the NFL All-Decade Team for the decade of the 2000s and inducted into the Troy University Sports Hall of Fame (2012) and the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame (2021).





CHARLIE WATERS

Born in Miami, Waters played football and baseball at North Augusta High and after earning a spot on the 1965 Shrine Bowl roster, he received a football scholarship to Clemson. From 1966-'69 Waters started out as a quarterback in '66 but by the end of his collegiate career in '69 he finished as a wide receiver. He helped lead the Tigers to become the 1967 Atlantic Coast Conference Champions. Waters' senior year was his standout year as he caught 44 passes for 738 yards, setting a Clemson record at the time before being broken by Jerry Butler in 1977, and being named a First-Team All-ACC selection. As a wide receiver he finished with four touchdowns, 68 catches for 1.196 yards, good for 17.1 yards per reception. He ranks ninth in all-time yards per reception, ahead of Clemson greats Bennie Cunningham, DeAndre Hopkins, Perry Tuttle and Sammy Watkins.

Drafted in the third round by the Dallas Cowboys in 1970, Waters played for the Cowboys for 12 seasons under legendary Head Coach, Tom Landry. In his rookie season, he started as a defensive back and was a backup to Cliff Harris at safety. Waters had five interceptions that season, good enough to land him on the NFL all-rookie team. He spent the next four years as cornerback before being moved to strong safety, the position he would play the rest of his professional career. As a strong safety, Waters and teammate Cliff Harris formed one of the strongest and fiercest safety duos of that era. During his time with "America's Team" he became one of the top defensive players in the decade. As one of the most admired and respected players in Cowboy history, Waters was named to three Pro-Bowls (1976-'78) and named All-Pro twice in 1977 and '78. Throughout his time as a Dallas Cowboy he never experienced a losing season and only missed the playoffs one time in his 12 seasons. He reached nine NFC Championships and played in five Super Bowls where he went on to win two (1972 and '78). After retiring in 1981 he tied for the most career interceptions in the playoffs with Bill Simpson, Ronnie Lott, and Ed Reed, all with nine. Three of those nine interceptions came in the 1977 Divisional playoff game win against the Chicago Bears, where the Cowboys went on to win the Superbowl. Overall, he is ranked third in interceptions in Dallas Cowboys franchise history with 41. His 25 playoff game appearances ranks at the top of the career leaders at ninth.

From the years of 1988-94 he worked in various coaching positions with the Denver Broncos, starting out as a special teams coach and working his way to defensive coordinator. In 1995, Waters moved to coaching at the college level with the University of Oregon as a defensive coordinator where he would retire from coaching. He spent one year as a commentator for Cowboys Radio Network in 2006. He is a member of the South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame (1980), the Clemson Hall of Fame (1981), the North Augusta Sports Hall of Fame (2008) and the South Carolina Football Hall of Fame (2020).





TERESA WEATHERSPOON

Pineland, Texas native, Teresa Weatherspoon is a true pioneer of women's basketball. The all-state basketball player from West Sabine High School committed to play for Louisiana Tech University and became a true freshman. From 1984-'88 her passion, charisma, and drive helped lead the Techsters to four straight NCAA Tournament appearances, two Final Four appearances, and two National championship game appearances. She finished her collegiate career with a record of 118-14 and took the state player of the year, the American South Conference Player of the Year, and the National Player of the Year her senior year. In 1987 and '88 she was a Kodak All-Americana and Wade Trophy winner in '88. Weatherspoon's defensive was one attribute that made her stand out from other point guards and helped lead them to win the 1988 NCAA Championship. Her success in college made her an obvious pick for international teams, winning gold medals at the 1986 World Championships, 1986 Goodwill Games, and the 1987 World University Games.

Before starting her professional career overseas, Weatherspoon won a gold medal with Team USA in the 1988 Olympics and during her overseas career won a bronze medal in the 1992 Olympics. She was a six-time all-star in Italy from 1989-'94 and a two-time Russian League champion in 1995 and '96. Weatherspoon returned back to the states for the inaugural WNBA Draft in 1997 and was drafted 10th overall by the New York Liberty (1997-2003). She is a two-time WNBA Defensive Player of the Year recipient, led Liberty to four WNBA Finals and three WNBA championship appearances. One of the most iconic moments in the early years of the WNBA came in Game 2 of the 1999 Championship game against the Houston Comets when Weatherspoon sank a half court shot to win the game with 2.4 seconds left on the clock. Her success on the court led to her being a five-time All-Star and four-time All-WNBA Second Team. Throughout her career with Liberty, she started every game and is still their all-time leader in assists (1,306) and steals (453).

In 2007, Weatherspoon began her coaching career as head coach for the Westchester Phantoms of the American Basketball Association. From 2009 to 2010, she was named the women's head coach at Louisiana Tech, her alma mater. Weatherspoon led the Lady Techsters to a pair of regular-season conference titles in 2009 and 2011 and a conference tournament title in 2010. After serving as a consultant with the New York Liberty during the 2014 WNBA season, she joined the coaching staff as the first Director of Player Development in franchise history for 2015 and was named Director of Franchise Development from 2017 to 2019. She made the move up to the NBA as a two-way player development coach for the New Orleans Pelicans in the 2019 season and is currently an assistant coach for the Pelicans.

She is a member of the Louisiana Tech Athletics Hall of Fame (1996), Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame (2010), Women's Basketball Hall of Fame (2010), New York Liberty Ring of Honor (2011), and Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame (2019).





SOPHIA YOUNG-MALCOLM

One of the great names in the history of women's basketball, Sophia Young, a native of the St. Vincent, The Grenadines, didn't touch a basketball until jr high at the age of 15. After becoming an exchange student in Shreveport, Louisiana, Young only played basketball a year before falling in love with the sport and had the drive to want to be better. Coach Kim Mulkey took a chance on Young after seeing her eagerness to learn and ability to take direction.

After moving to Waco, Texas, Young started making her legacy with the Lady Bears in 2002. During her rookie season she averaged 14.2 points and 10 rebounds per game and had 28 double-figure scoring, 17 double-figure rebounding, and 17 double-double games. As a freshman she led the Big 12 in rebounding, ranked fourth in steals and made the All-Big 12 honorable mention selection. In the 2004-'05 season, Young averaged 23 points and 8.5 rebounds per game. She helped lead the Lady Bears to the 2005 Big 12 Tournament title, earned Big 12 Tournament MVP, and led them to a NCAA Championship appearance. Young scored 26 points, nine rebounds, and four assists against Michigan State to help win Baylor's first ever NCAA Championship title. She racked up accolades from Final Four's Most Outstanding Player, first-team All-America honors from both Kodak and U.S. Basketball Writers Association of America. In her final season for the Lady Bears in 2005-'06, she ranked second nationally in scoring average, second in the Big 12 in defensive rebounds per game and steals per game. She graduated as the Big 12's all-time leader in points (2,480), rebounds (1,316) and double-doubles (61) and made 120 consecutive starts while playing in every game of her collegiate career (139). In her last season, she earned All-America honors from the Associated Press, United States Basketball Writers Association of America and Kodak, as well as Big 12 Player of the Year honors. She is one of seven to have reached 2,000 points and 1,000 rebounds in her career and became the fourth player in NCAA history to reach 2,000 points, 1,000 rebounds, 300 assists and 300 steals.

Her talent flowed into her professional career as she was Baylor's highest-ever draft pick in the WNBA with a 4th overall selection to the San Antonio Silver Stars in 2006. In 2008, Young helped lead the Star their the Western Conference championship and advanced to their first WNBA Finals. Over her nine seasons with the Stars, she played 301 career games, scored 4,300 points and 1,807 rebounds in her career, and averaged 14.4 points, 6.1 rebounds and 1.59 steals overall. Throughout her professional career she was a four-time All-WNBA, two-time WNBA All-Defensive team, four-time WNBA All-Star, and was a part of the San Antonio Stars All-Decade Team in 2012. During the off-season she went abroad and helped lead Galatasaray in Turkey to the EuroCup title three times and the Turkish Cup title in 2009-'10. She also played for teams in Italy and China.

After her retirement in 2015, Young led an AAU basketball program called Sophia Young Elite where her program produced multiple Division 1 student-athletes. In addition, she also coached at a local Christian school in San Antonio collecting winning records in the 2018-'19 and 2019-'20 seasons. This year, Young is returning back to her alma mater to take on the role as Assistant AD for Player Development for the Lady Bears.

