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By JAMES W. WADE III
Staff Reporter

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The presentation came during halftime of the game while the Cavaliers played the Indiana Pacers at Quicken Loans Arena. Former Ohio State legend and 2005 BHC honoree Clark Kellogg hosted the special halftime ceremony honoring the following individuals for their accomplishments and contributions:

The late John McLendon**,** a member of both the Basketball Hall of Fame and College Basketball Hall of Fame, is widely known as the first African-American to become a head basketball coach at a predominantly White institution when he was hired in 1966 by local Cleveland State University. McLendon was also the first African-American to study under the inventor of basketball, Dr. James Naismith, and went on to successful high school and college coaching careers. As head coach at all-Black North Carolina College, he helped integrate basketball when his college played Duke University in what is referred to as "The Secret Game," the first collegiate basketball game where blacks and whites competed on the same floor. McLendon is the person responsible for the integration of college basketball. Throughout the years, he was the head basketball coach at North Carolina Central College (1940-52), Hampton Institute (1952-54), Tennessee State University (1954-59), Kentucky State University (1963-66) and Cleveland State University (1966-69).
This year marks the 50th anniversary of McClendon becoming the first African-American head coach in professional basketball when he was hired by the late George Steinbrenner to coach the Cleveland Pipers.

However, it was his service on the National Athletic Steering Committee, which McLendon

founded in 1949, which had a large impact on the integration of basketball, and eventually, all sports.

Louis Stokes was born and raised on Cleveland's east side and as a congressman for three decades; he served his hometown representing the 21st and 11th districts. He was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1968 and while giving back to Cleveland, also served as chairman on several important committees, including the house select committee on assassinations where he was charged with investigating the murders of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. His brother, former Cleveland mayor Carl B. Stokes, was the first African-American mayor of a major American city.

Each honoree was responsible for picking out their number on the jersey that was presented to them. McLendon picked #1 for being the first Black coach, while Congressman Stokes chose #11 for the District that he served for many years.

The Cleveland Pipers was an Amateur Athletic Association (AAU) basketball team that played in the now-defunct National Industrial Basketball League (NIBL) and American Basketball League (ABL). Coached by McLendon, the Pipers dominated both leagues. This year not only marks the 50th anniversary of the Pipers ABL Championship, Cleveland's first professional basketball championship, but it is also the 60th anniversary of the Pipers National AAU Championship.

The 2011 BHC will continue with Black Achievement Night and a Friday night contest against the Los Angeles Clippers on February 11 at 7:30 p.m. before concluding its signature series with Gospel Night on Friday, February 25 at 7:30 p.m. versus the New York Knicks.