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Wyoming's Kenny Sailors Selected to the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2012

Laramie, Wyo. (March 6, 2012) -- Kenny Sailors, the inventor of the jump shot, the 1943 National Player of the Year at the University of Wyoming and the oldest living Most Outstanding Player of the NCAA Tournament is one of 10 individuals who have been selected to the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame Induction Class of 2012.

Joining Sailors in the 2012 class of inductees are: Georgetown center Patrick Ewing; Kansas center Clyde Lovellette; North Carolina guard Phil Ford; Winston-Salem State guard Earl Monroe; Grambling center Willis Reed; Kentucky coach Joe B. Hall; Virginia Union coach Dave Robbins; and contributors Jim Host, of founder of Host Communications, and Joe Dean, of Converse and LSU.

Sailors led Wyoming to the 1943 NCAA Championship, while being named the National Player of the Year and the Most Outstanding Player in the '43 NCAA Tournament. He is also credited with creating the jump shot.

"There have been a number of people who have tried to get me in (the Hall of Fame) through the years," said Sailors. "I want to thank all those individuals, and I want to thank all those who were involved in the selection process. Now that it has happened I'm very proud that I've made it. It's probably about the last honor I will receive, and it's probably the biggest.

"Some people think I'm as old as Methuselah. The only thing Methuselah didn't have that I do is the jump shot. I think the jump shot has done more to keep me in front of the people who select these type of honors than anything. I'm honored to be selected, even though I am a little late in years, and I'm honored to be joining Coach (Everett) Shelton in the Hall."

Sailors, who turned 91 on Jan. 14, 2012, and his former head coach, Everett Shelton, are the only two representatives from the state of Wyoming in the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame. Shelton was inducted in the inaugural class of the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame in 2006.

After teaming with Shelton to lead Wyoming to the NCAA Championship in 1943, Sailors enlisted in the Marines and served in the South Pacific during World War II. After being away from the game he loved for two years, Sailors returned to Wyoming for the 1945-46 season and once again earned All-America honors.

The announcement of the class was made by the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) Foundation on Tuesday.

"The Class of 2012 has incredible roots in the game of college basketball – from the player who introduced the jump shot at Wyoming to the domination of a 7-footer at Georgetown," said Reggie Minton, Deputy Executive Director of the NABC and chair of the Hall of Fame selection panel. "This group of coaches, players and contributors will no doubt bring back memories of national championships, All-American performances and the tremendous growth of the sport throughout the years."

The Class of 2012 will be inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame Sunday, Nov. 18, 2012, at the Midland Theatre in Kansas City as part of a three-day celebration of college basketball. The Hall of Fame is located in the College Basketball Experience, a world-class entertainment facility that provides a multi-faceted interactive experience for fans of the game.

On Nov. 19-20, Kansas, Saint Louis, Texas A&M and Washington State will compete at Sprint Center in the CBE Classic.

This year's class of inductees will also be recognized during this year's NCAA Final Four in New Orleans.

In 2006 the first class was inducted into the newly formed National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame. That class included the game's inventor, James Naismith, and possibly its greatest coach in John Wooden. Anyone who was enshrined in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame for men's college basketball prior to 2008 was a member of the Founding Class of the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame.

Former Wyoming head coach Everett Shelton, who died on April 16, 1974, was inducted as a member of that Founding Class in 2006. Shelton was inducted posthumously into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1982.

Since that time, five more classes have traveled to Kansas City for a weekend of festivities. Those classes have included the likes of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Danny Manning, Larry Bird and Earvin "Magic" Johnson.

At the request of Sailors, he has requested to do all media interviews at a designated time to be announced in the near future.

(see attached list of bios on this year's inductees)

TJH