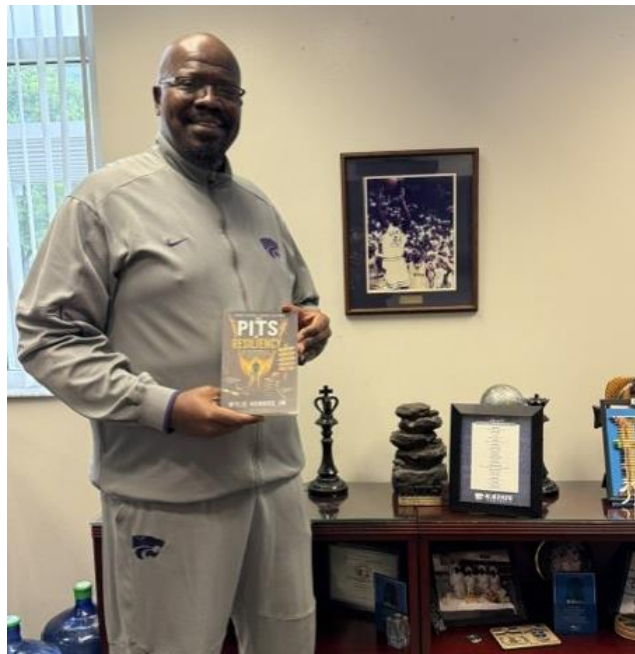


Former K-State basketball standout Wylie Howard reflects on his time in Manhattan

Manhattan Mercury - September 19, 2026

By Jeff Chapman – Contributing Writer

Wylie Howard Jr. is a former Kansas State men's basketball player who competed as a 6'8" forward/center for the Wildcats from 1989 to 1992 after transferring from Washburn University. Originally from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Howard played in 72 games for K-State, averaging 8.6 points and 5.3 rebounds per game while earning the team's Porky Morgan Most Inspirational Award and Keith Amerson Academic Award in 1992. After graduating with a degree in Social Sciences, he went on to earn a Master of Education and dedicated over 30 years to educational leadership, serving as a school principal in Broward County, founding Alt-Ed Consulting Group LLC, and authoring the memoir *The Pits of Resiliency*.



Wylie Howard Jr. In his office in Florida

Wylie and I sat on a virtual video call and had a great conversation about his K-State days.

Chapman: Wylie, let's dive right in. How did you get your start in sports and basketball?

Howard: *In my hometown neighborhood there were two paths you could take, drugs and crime or athletics. I chose sports because it was going to be my only way out. I was taller and bigger for my age, so things started out easy. I got my start in football. My problem was that I was too big for my age group, so they started to ask me to play up a level. While it was better for me competitively, I was also picked on a lot for being younger by the older guys,*

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especially those I was better than. So I got frustrated and quit. Then came baseball, and I was really good again at first, but of course they again made me move up a level to play with kids my same size, and it was a repeat from before. Teasing, hazing and being bullied so I quit that too.

Chapman: About how tall were you by then?

Howard: By 7th grade I was 5'10" and decided to try out for basketball.

Chapman: What drew you to basketball, besides height?

Howard: There was a park near my house call Wade Horn Park, which has since remained. It's where the whole neighborhood would go watch rough and tough ball. It had two side by side courts with chain link nets, concrete and black top and was always surrounded by a crowd of kids and people for entertainment. It's where I learned to appreciate the game.

Chapman: how was your first season of hoops?

Howard: Believe it or not, I got cut. I had always had it easy making teams being the bigger kid, but this really shocked me. I was hurt, and then quickly determined. So I went to the courts at Wade Horn and practiced until the wee hours, in the rain, hot sun and into the night. I knew that to get out of that neighborhood and to help my mom, I was going to have to pay sports. I wasn't really a tough kid or very popular, so whatever I did was going to have to be on my own.

Chapman: You made the team in 8th grade then?

Howard: I did and because my parents were split up then, I had to work extra hard. My neighbors thought I was crazy. I had a bench set up on the sidewalk in front of the house I used for exercises and jumping and I even used an old belt to strap onto my shoulder and make resistance on each arm to build them up. It wasn't a fancy gym. I made do with what we had.

Chapman: What made playing at the next level your goal?

Howard: To be honest, I was a huge fan of Mitch Richmond. When I moved with my father at age 16, there was a park in the city of Lauderdale Lakes we called "The Rec". All of the best players played there. That is where I got exposed to upper-level basketball. Mitch

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Richmond, Tony Massop, and all of the other college recruited players played there when they were home from college. I watched him play and then he went on to play for Coach

Altman at Moberly College in Missouri and then of course at K-State. I also had moved to live with my dad and transferred to the same high school Mitch graduated from Boyd Anderson High in Lauderdale Lakes.



Howard shooting over UMKC and Tony Dumas in KC

Chapman: Did Mitch recruit you?

Howard: Yes, in fact Mitch came down here to play with me and also brought Tony Massop. Those guys were so good and so tough. Crowds of people would be around the court to

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watch him. And I wanted to follow him. Coach Kruger and Altman came down to watch some of my games as did Greg Gensing. I liked the basketball part, but I never thought about going to college initially. I wasn't a great student, school wasn't a priority, but all the attention from Altman and Kruger definitely changed my focus.



Mitch Richmond

Howard: Yes. Why that name?

Chapman: Well for every tv timeout, Greg used to go to the Gatorade cooler around behind the bench, take a cup full and then go to the huddle. Every time. It was funny for us that sat there.

Howard: That sounds like him (hahaha). Coach came down to watch us play against Coconut Creek. They were a HUGE team, and I was only 6'6" at that time. The story is told that after the game Coach Kruger called him to see how I played and Greg says, "I guess he did ok, he only scored 47!" (haha)

Chapman: Wow! Were you recruited anywhere else?

Howard: Yes I got offers from Florida State and Miami of course, but only K-State stayed in regular contact and so I couldn't wait to play at K-State.

Chapman: Let's talk about your first stop in Kansas at Washburn.

Howard: Look man, as I said, my grades weren't too good, so I wasn't eligible to play at K-State my freshman year. Instead of sitting out or going somewhere far away, Kruger kept me close by and helped me go play a year with Coach Chipman at Washburn.

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Chapman: Was Kansas a culture shock for you versus Florida?

Howard: Yes, but not the weather. I actually like the four seasons: the snow, the falling of the leaves and them growing back in spring. The thing that shocked me though was the friendliness. Coach Chipman actually picked me up from the airport in KC and on the way out west passed a bunch of cars and everyone was waving at us. I asked him if he knew all those people, and he laughed and said, no, they are just being friendly. Then we got a flat tire. I have never seen anything like it. We had four or five cars pull over and change the tire for us and I was just standing there talking to people in awe of it all. It was the same in Manhattan too. Everyone there was so genuinely kind, so nice and so helpful.

Chapman: Was that your deciding factor, Friendliness?

Howard: It's the whole K-State ecosystem that makes it an awesome place to go to school and to live. For the first time in my life people were really caring about my success there were systems in place, there were tutors and friends and advisors. And really crazy basketball fans, that camped out for tickets. I had never seen anything like it!. You had to try to fail there, it was really great!

Chapman: You went through a coaching change at K-State. How was that? How would you compare Kruger and Altman?

Howard: Honestly they were a lot alike. Not much difference. Kruger was an awesome play designer. He was always drawing up plays and after we learn a play there would soon be 5 versions of it. Altman was the same. He was always drawing up plays and was really good at the Xs and Os. Us players used to joke around that Altman was trying to be like Kruger, haha!. Kruger was truly the chief strategist. If you wanted to be a true student of the game, those two coaches were really awesome at it.

Chapman: Did they teach you how they do it? Draw up plays.

Howard: Because I was also a dedicated student and always the last guy on the team up studying, one night on the bus after a game my light was the only one on as I was doing my homework. Lon and Dana had their light on too.. drawing plays on the bus. They saw me and said, "Wylie come up here. They showed me how they design plays and make adjustments from it when the defense adapts. It was fascinating.

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Chapman: Was this when you decided you wanted to be a coach?

Howard: Well, not exactly. I still wanted to play and try to play as long as possible, ya know, make money. But Coach Kruger said to me, "You understand this pretty well. "You should concentrate on going into coaching instead of playing." That kinda hurt my ego, but looking back, he was right.

Chapman: You played against some really great guys in practice. Steve Henson, Akia Jones, Carlos Diggins...

Howard: Yes and they were all very tough, but also great guys off the court. Carlos was my roommate and a very close friend. Sadly he's now passed.

Chapman: Year Sorry about your friend. Carlos was a funny guy.

Howard: Thank you yea, unfortunately it's a sign of age I guess, but I have lost a few teammates recently and it makes you think about your own health.

Chapman: Do you have any wild moments at K-State or what's that story you always tell when the fellas get together?

Howard: That's the thing, Jeff. I was very dedicated to school. I wasn't much of a going out guy, so I spent most of my free time studying or working with my tutor. I will say though that one night I jumped in the car with some teammates and as we were driving to Aggieville, I notice at the Ahearn practice gym, the light was on and of course I see Steve Henson's car. He was in there shooting and working on stuff on a Friday night, and that was it for me. My last night to go out, unless the coaches asked me to go along to keep an eye on things with the younger guys, but that was my moment of clarity. To get better, to keep playing basketball well, I needed to be like Steve and do the extra work. Steve Henson was a huge inspiration to me then and it definitely made a difference in my success as a student, athlete and now as a coach.

Chapman: What about Skee? (Askia Jones)

Howard: He was just such a natural talented athlete. He was a gamer. He would step on the court and be awesome, but he wasn't so much into practice, lifting or doing those extra things.

Chapman: Maybe that contributed to his injuries. Wasn't he on the roster for like 7 years?!

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Howard: Haha, maybe so. Back then you could redshirt, medical, etc. multiple times and yes, he was definitely around for a lot of seasons. Great guy though and a real pure shooter, hard to defend.

Chapman: Who was your toughest competition in practice?

Howard: It was Henson for me. Dude was tough as nails. We obviously played different positions, but going up against his team in practice, you really had to bring it. Jeff Wires was just as tough as well. Both of those guys were very competitive. As for going head up with other big guys, I would say Reggie Britt and Tony Massop gave me a run for my money.

Chapman: How was your first semester of K-State? Your welcome to town?

Howard: I was a sophomore and I arrived first, before all of my roommates, including Carlos Diggins. So I get everything set up, pictures on the wall and was all happy about it and in

walks Carlos, an upper classman and he says, "Move your stuff Rookie. That's my side." We ended up wrestling for it. I won but still moved my things due to respect. So, I had to get it out of the way and start over. Hahaha!

Chapman: What was your most fun place to play or opponent?

Howard: I really liked the battles with OU, Billy Tubbs and those guys in Norman. Those were some great games, we beat them while they were ranked pretty high a few times.

Chapman: Was there any mischief? You couldn't have been a perfect angel?

Howard: Haha, Carlos had this weird old Army jacket that he would get out sometimes for a costume party or something. One night we (Ski Jones, Patrick Sams and a couple of other guys) coaxed these sorority girls from the girl's dorm to come sit with us along the sidewalks over by Edwards Hall where we lived. All the while Carlos has put some weird stuff on his face to look scary and is hiding in the bushes. The whole reason we were even talking to them was to set up the jump. As we are walking them back to their place, Carlos jumps out and scares them. Of course they screamed and ran off. What we weren't counting on was that they were all on the track team and WAY faster than us so not only could we not catch them, but they were so mad at us I don't think we ever encountered them again. All in good fun of course.

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Chapman: You can't have that kind of harmless fun these days without a lawsuit.

Howard; Exactly. Anyway that's the story we all get together and laugh about. Mostly about how all of us were too slow to keep up with them!

Chapman: During your time in school K-State football went from nothing to winning ways, did this affect you, the program?

Howard: It was wild when I first arrived. We lost in football to a D2 school, they blew us out. I remember the football players never wanting to go to the weight room and when they did they weren't making much effort or were complaining. It's not normal for the basketball players to be more diligent in the weight room than the football team. We actually used to make fun of them when they complained and say, well that's why you lose and we win! They did have some studs on the team though, like Eric Gallon.

Chapman: Wylie, when you came to K-State you were recruited by Altman and Kruger, but then Altman left to coach at Marshall and the Kruger leaves for Florida. What were you thinking during all of that?

Howard: A lot of things were happening. Jean Derouillere and I were approached at the time by the AD, Steve Miller, who asked if we were going to stay at K-State or not. We said we planned to transfer unless K-State hired our friend and former coach, Dana Altman.



Altman



Kruger

Chapman: I thought for sure you two would have gone to Florida with Lonnie. Did you consider it? Especially you since it was close to home.

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Howard: Well funny thing. He didn't try to take me with him, but I tried to follow him, and I went to see him about it. He made me stay, saying it wasn't ethical for him to take players from K-State and wouldn't accept my transfer or any other guys from the roster. I was disappointed of course but always admired his integrity about that situation.

Chapman: Ultimately, Altman was hired and it happened pretty quickly as I recall. There were a few university people courting Eddie Sutton at the time. Many of us fans assumed he would get the job.

Howard: Really? I never knew that. Interesting. We were all in for Coach (Altman) and so happy we got to stay.

Chapman: You received a couple of team awards, the Porky Morgan and Keith Amerson awards.

Howard: I was always about the team, trying to help guys learn the plays and when on campus I was always in class, always studying and trying to do the extra work. You see a lot of athletes with their headphones on, but I had my Walkman on, only it was a recording of my classes and lectures. I was always studying. I was not a big party guy and by the time I was an upper classman, I was asked by the coaches to be a chaperone of my teammates.

Chapman: I think your era of the 1990's may be the only group of Wildcats that never wore the lavender jerseys. Do you feel left out?

Howard: Well no not really. Hahaha. I'm good.

Chapman: After you graduate you move back to Florida. What happened?

Howard: As part of one of my classes, we were required to make a resume and apply for jobs as an exercise. I had completely forgotten about my application to the local YMCA in

my hometown, but the manager there called me and reminded me that she would have a job for me when I graduated. So I took the job,, moved back and worked there for a year or two.

Chapman: Did you try to play pro ball after college?

Howard: At the end of school in '92, after graduation, during a routine physical they found a heart murmur. Due to that, I didn't get any offers or invitations to tryouts. I was told that they were being extra cautious. I received a called to tryout for the CBA but I declined.

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Chapman: You played over seas though, right?

Howard: Yes, After I got to working in the school system, I had a chance to play in a Pro-Am league, which lead to me getting to play in Turkey for a while. I lead the league in scoring. One weekend my wife and kid came to see me. I was carrying my one year old daughter, Amarius down the stairs in the dark and I fell and messed up my ankle, which sort of ended my career as a professional player. I received a larger offer from a different team to return the following year, but I turned it down. I had already began teaching and coaching and had to consider stability for my young family.

Chapman: Did they try to entice you?

Howard: Yes, they offered me more money, but I asked for the money up front and some additional stipulations after experiencing sometimes not getting a paycheck in the past and they turned it down.

Chapman: How did you get into coaching?

Howard: I started out volunteering, then being assistant coach and finally had my chances to be the head coach and I love it. It's definitely my calling and I would still design, adjust and develop plays like Kruger and Altman taught me to do.

Chapman: Did you start at the high school level right away?

Howard: No, I started at the middle school here and we went 16-0. I had the good fortune of having Keyon Dooling and Clarence Gilbert (Former Missouri stars) on my team.

Chapman: Have you wanted to coach at the college level or just high school?

Howard: I did spend a year with Tim Jankowvich at Hutch Community College, then coached high school here and now I am the principle at an alternative school.

Chapman: You wrote a book. "The Pits of Resiliency" Why?

Howard: I wrote The Pits of Resiliency because I wanted to show that some of the most difficult seasons of our lives can become the very experiences that prepare us for purpose. The book reflects on my journey from growing up in Pompano Beach, Florida, through my years as a student-athlete at Kansas State University and more than three decades in education and leadership. Along the way, I experienced setbacks, uncertainty,

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disappointment, and moments that forced me to grow in ways success never could. I wanted to share those experiences not simply to tell my story, but to encourage others to look differently at their own “pits.” My hope is that readers understand that adversity does not have to define or defeat us; through faith, perseverance, reflection, and the willingness to keep moving forward, the places that challenge us can ultimately help shape who we are called to become.

Chapman: Your son played some hoops too? But not at K-State.

Howard: Yes, Wylie Howard III “Trey” is my son. He played at my same high school, Boyd Anderson in Ft. Lauderdale. He’s just signed with Florida A&M after a stint at Sante Fe State College. K-State did not recruit him.

Chapman: You had a great social media post recently which inspired me to give you a call. Let’s finish up with that:

“When I arrived in Manhattan as a young student-athlete, I came looking for an opportunity. What I found was far greater. I found a family that challenged me to pursue excellence, professors who invested in my future, coaches who demanded my best, teammates who became lifelong brothers, and a university that taught me what leadership, discipline, humility, and perseverance truly looked like.

In 1992, I was humbled to receive the Porky Morgan Most Inspirational Award and the Keith Amerson Academic Award. Those honors meant more than recognition, they represented the values Kansas State instilled in me: character matters, leadership is earned, and excellence extends far beyond the scoreboard.

Today, as an educational leader, future author, consultant, and minister, I often reflect on the foundation that was poured into me during my years as a Wildcat. Every student I’ve encouraged, every school I’ve led, every life I’ve had the privilege to impact carries a piece of what Kansas State first invested in me. The lessons learned in Manhattan continue to guide my decisions, my leadership, and my purpose more than three decades later.

So, to Wildcat Nation, thank you. Thank you for believing in a young man and helping shape the man I would become. Your influence extends far beyond my years on campus, it lives on in every classroom I enter, every leader I mentor, and every student I remind never to stop believing in their potential. Once a Wildcat... Always a Wildcat.”

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Howard: Thank you Jeff. That was a lot of fun and great memories.

Article Link:

https://themercury.com/k_state_sports/former-k-state-basketball-standout-wylie-howard-reflects-on-his-time-in-manhattan/article_7ce13690-43f8-4a17-88d1-48679f4efaca.html



Wylie Howard, Jr. holding saxophone
in KC Holiday Tournament promotional poster from 1991