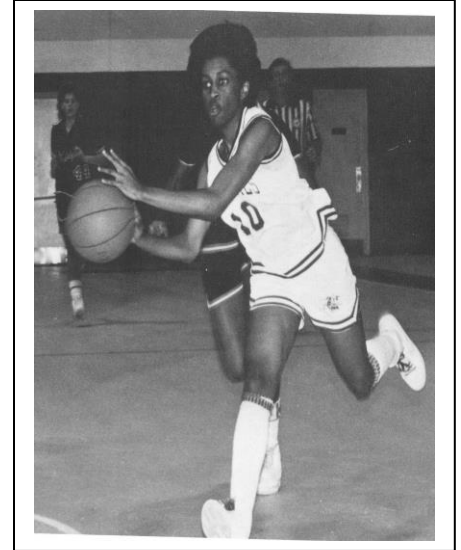


CARMELA FRANKLIN

Over a ten-year period, Carmela Franklin's development in basketball rode a steep trajectory, from practice in her aunt's back yard on a bicycle wheel rim, to participation in the NCAA Tournament semi-finals. That was Franklin's final season as a Virginia Cavalier, under Basketball Hall of Fame Coach Debbie Ryan. She counted among her teammates future Olympic Gold Medalist and U.S. flag-bearer and Hall of Fame player, Dawn Staley, as well as future professionals, the Burge twins, Heather and Heidi.

Franklin's earliest memories of sports involved backyard games – foot races, basketball, football – with her cousins in Madison Heights. Her first exposure to organized sports was through Dixie Youth baseball, as a member of the Dairy Queen team. Chosen as an all-star, she was proud to be the only girl to make the team. She later played Dixie Softball, became an all-star and participated in a Dixie World Series.



Monelison's basketball try-outs afforded the first taste of actual drills and instruction in the game of basketball. Coach Lynette Miles provided the encouragement needed to motivate Franklin, a self-described competitive person, to develop the skills required to take her to lofty places.

At ACHS, she was playing as an undersized forward, and, recognized as the biggest scoring threat, was often targeted by the opposing team. Described by her coach as being a level-headed, confident and encouraging leader on the team, she never shrank from a challenge, never took the bait for potentially unsettling confrontations. Recalling one opponent in particular, both she and her coach conjured images not only of the basketball competition, but also of time spent in the local emergency room with a variety of injuries.

Following a Western District AAA championship at ACHS, with the support of her family and Hall of Fame Coach Barbara Wood and assistant, Mary Mays, she eschewed several Division III college offers and was accepted at the University of Virginia, hoping to secure a basketball scholarship. Making the team as a walk-on her second year, she fulfilled an assertion she had made to Coach Ryan earlier at a summer basketball camp, that she would someday play on her team. Franklin's efforts were rewarded with an athletic scholarship the next year, playing two more seasons with the highly-ranked Cavaliers.

Franklin has continued to provide positive influences for the next generation of athletes with her service as a coach in youth league football and girls' basketball.

Carmela Franklin Tardy – November 11, 1967

Career Highlights

- Dixie Youth: Softball – team represented Virginia in World Series in Alabama (1978)
- ACHS: Basketball – Western District (AAA) championship
- University of Virginia: played for Basketball Hall of Fame Coach Debbie Ryan; walked onto team and earned scholarship; Most Improved Player (1989); Leadership Award (1990); ACC Tournament Championship (1990); NCAA Final Four (1990)