

## WILLIAM “MUTT” OSBORNE

William “Mutt” Osborne started developing his interest in basketball in his neighborhood in the Coolwell area of Amherst County, where he and his friends would gather every afternoon to play. The first goal they had was a hoop nailed to an oak tree. His father was afraid that they would kill the tree, but the kids were persistent in using their homemade goal with no backboard and the tree survived.

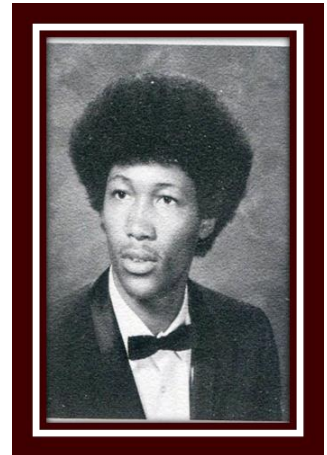
Osborne found formidable competition in Lynchburg, developing fundamentals and toughness. His size and skill were such that he could join in games at the park on Fifth Street, where many of the boys from Dunbar High School would be playing.

His introduction to a truly organized game came at Central High School in Amherst, where his coach, William D. Langhorne, began teaching Osborne and his classmates the finer points of the game. He attributes much of his success in the game to Coach Langhorne from those years. He steadily improved his play on the J.V. team and was promoted to the varsity before the end of the season.

Playing basketball provided Osborne with a great recreational outlet from the hard summer work that he did as a part of the program in the 1960s wherein high school students would become migrant workers in the tobacco fields in Connecticut. Long-time Amherst County educators Maurice Moore and J.C. Moultrie, and Nelson County teacher Leroy Witt, were instrumental in shepherding many Central Virginia teens, including Mutt Osborne, to Connecticut for this opportunity to work, learn about teamwork and discipline, and earn income.

With the joining of Amherst and Central High Schools, Osborne went to Amherst County High School where he provided the basketball team, coached by Don Thompson, with its first true “big man”, playing a strong center position and leading the team in both scoring and rebounding his final two years. He acknowledges that he was surrounded by talented players: Randy Thomas, Wayne and Maurice Davis, and Sampson Tabb. He especially enjoyed playing rivalry games, such as against E.C. Glass. By his senior year, he was 6’7”, and, although not necessarily the tallest man on the court, he was able to use his bulk and athletic ability to take advantage of opponents of greater height. In fact, he especially enjoyed that challenge and “schooled” many of them.

His success in high school garnered interest from the coaching staff at Palmer Junior College (now Midlands Technical College) in Columbia, South Carolina, who recruited him, but Osborne declined the opportunity to follow that route.



William Lewis Osborne – March 12, 1953

### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Central High School: J.V. Basketball (1966-68), Varsity Basketball (1968-69)
- Amherst County High School: Varsity Basketball (1969-72) – Most Valuable Player, Top Rebounder, Top Scorer (1970-71); Most Valuable Player, Top Rebounder, Top Scorer (1971-72)