



# The Michigan Banner

Leading in Diversity for over 20 years





**PICS OF THE WEEK**  
Pamela Pugh for Congress  
kickoff party

SUPPORT LOCAL JOURNALISM ▶▶▶

[MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/SUPPORTUS](http://MICHIGANBANNER.ORG/SUPPORTUS)

**FEATURED**

**WILLIAM SONNY HODGES  
CLAIMING HISTORY  
WITH SAGINAW'S  
FIRST BLACK BEER  
TRUCK DRIVER**

COMMUNITY, PG 25

## Remember The Trojans & The Lumberjacks



ARTHUR HILL AND SAGINAW HIGH STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS WERE RECOGNIZED AT THE "FINAL SHOWDOWN" GAME ON FRIDAY, FEB. 16



**A WINNING MENTALITY  
EARNED LIDDELL THE  
POSITION AS FIRST BLACK  
GARBER GENERAL MANAGER**

COMMUNITY, PG 26



**By DAVE SLAGGERT**  
FORMER ARTHUR HILL BOYS  
BASKETBALL COACH

When Jerome Buckley asked me to write a story about my upcoming book, *Remember The Trojans & The Lumberjacks* plus do a recap of the final "Game of Legends" I was both honored and grateful to do so. The Trojans and Lumberjacks rivalry is very near and dear to my heart. My first faint memory of these great battles was 73 years ago at the age of 3, sitting on my Saginaw High Super Fan, Dad's lap watching the legendary Trojan Webster Kirksey work his magic. 46 years later I became Arthur Hill's head basketball coach and had the great honor to coach Jason Richardson, DeeAndre Hulett and many other Lumberjacks greats.

February 16th, 2024 was the final Saginaw High/Arthur Hill regular season showdown, classic game and it didn't disappoint. The Lumberjacks pulled out a convincing 84-52 victory over the Trojans, but the big winner of the evening was the city of Saginaw in the historic finale to honor the Hill and High. The Lumberjacks came out on fire and led throughout in route to victory. The Trojans, however, still finished with a 164 to 114 edge in victories over the Lumberjacks in Michigan's longest running boy's high school basketball rivalry (114-years.) The Hill was led by Lyna Brooks with 16 points, Di'onQuavis Hardy 15 points, 10 rebounds and 8 assists, DeQuavion Terry and Tyler Dorsey each added 10 points with Dorsey also pulling down 9 rebounds. The Trojans were led by Fransco Lee Jr. with 15 points and 6 rebounds and Brandon McCune with 8 points.

It was a great daylong celebration and tribute at a sold-out Dow Events Center.

**CONTINUES ON PG 2,  
SHS/AHHS**

THE MICHIGAN BANNER IS A  
PROUD MEMBER OF:





## Cover Story, SHS/AHHS



The atmosphere was electric and activities included an afternoon celebration in the Red Room for over 500 “special guests.” Later the Lady Saginaw United team defeated Flint Carmen Ainsworth 48-43 in the opener of the historic “Game of Legends” night at the Dow.” Raegen Byrd led the Phoenix with 18 points and Brittany Johnson scored 12 points and had 12 rebounds. Throughout the 2 games there were special acknowledgments and introductions of former great players, coaches,



state champion teams and other dignitaries. The fans showed up and showed out and cheered their lungs out for the, Sweet, Sweet Black and Gold and the Sweet, Sweet Blue and Gold! It gave me goosebumps to see it one last time.

Under the direction of Saginaw Public School’s Director of Athletics Corky Thompson, it was an unforgettable and gala event. He and his planning committee of: Marshall Thomas, Dave Slaggert, Clifton Ryan, Jack Tany, Don Durette and Otis Ray helped make the “Game of Legends” a truly special and unforgettable event!

I’ve decided to share a couple of excerpts from my book to give you a sneak peak before it’s released next month.

*(Excerpt No. 1)*

The 114 year Saginaw High/Arthur Hill hoops rivalry, indeed, does include 18 times when the Trojans or the Lumberjacks won authorized State Champion or State Runner-

up Trophies. It was not, however, just an intense rivalry between two great Saginaw high schools and their five feeder junior highs: Central Jr., Arthur Eddy, Webber, North and South. In the early years it included a deep-rooted rivalry between two sides of the Saginaw River: the “East Side” and the “West Side.”

I grew up an “East Side” kid, living at 2717 Glenwood Street, right around the corner from Webber Elementary and Junior High Schools. My family were rock solid Saginaw High fans with my dad and sister graduating from the “High.” While growing up in the 50’s it was clear that the “West Side” was the more affluent side and the “East Side” was where the majority of the working class, including most minorities, lived. There were real resentments and racial tensions as Arthur Hill was almost 100% white and Saginaw High was diverse with a growing African American and Hispanic population. Saginaw was, for a long time, a racially segregated city with the Saginaw River being the dividing line.

Things, however, started changing in the 1970’s with open enrollment and with some minority families moving to the “West Side.” Saginaw evolved like many other American cities, but had its issues along the way. Those dynamics added to the tension that carried over into the schools and basketball games. How Saginaw was a microcosm of what was going on nationally could be a book in its own right. In keeping “Remember The Trojans & The Lumberjacks” real, however, one couldn’t



**CONTINUES ON PG 3,  
SHS/AHHS**



## Continued from page 2, SHS/AHHS



leave out that part of the story and its significant impact on the rivalry.

*(Excerpt No. 2)*

With the conclusion of “The High” and “The Hill” rivalry scheduled for 2024 when the two schools consolidate, my inspiration was to honor this iconic cross-town Saginaw competition in a special way. What better way to extract the essence and truth in our remembrance than to capture first-

hand accounts from as many of the Trojan and Lumberjack hoop coaches as possible?

In the summer of 2021, I reached out to Marshall Thomas and all remaining living head coaches that had coached in this amazing and memorable rivalry: Gary Lee, Dick Goodman, George Kubiak, Lou Dawkins, Greg McMath, Tony Davis and Julian Taylor. All were enthusiastic to honor and pay tribute to “The High” vs. “The Hill,” Michigan’s Greatest High

School Hoops Rivalry. The results of this historic collaboration are woven into the 672 pages of the book.

*(Excerpt NO. 3)*

In the 1961-62 season Retro Mr. Basketball Ernie Thompson was clearly the leader with a band of totally committed teammates who were willing to play their roles. The chemistry was great, much better than the year before. Playing key roles on that squad included Brian Best, Lovell Humes, Bruce LaBreche, Bob Speer, Woody Kellum, Clarence Jackson and Tom Humes.

When I asked Ernie specifically about the Saginaw High, Arthur Hill rivalry, he said he didn’t see rivalries, he just saw every game, every opponent as individual challenges. Well, that season Arthur Hill represented a huge challenge with an outstanding team led by future (1963) Retro Mr. Basketball Craig Dill, Art Gelow and John Jahnsen. All three of the Hill games were very tough, Ernie recalled, with packed houses but the Trojans prevailed. He did say that because of Saginaw being a very segregated city at the time, that he and his teammates were “quite driven” in their approach to the games against the Hill. Once again, the Trojans finished the regular season undefeated, Saginaw Valley Champs and ranked No. 1 in the state.

Their state tournament run was made more difficult with an ankle injury to starting guard Lovell Humes, who Ernie called “spectacular.” The Trojans were, of course, a great fast break team and Humes was the recipient of countless outlet passes for scores from Ernie. Even with Hume’s injury, the Trojans ran the table in the tournament, defeated Benton Harbor for the State Championship and finished with a perfect 22-0 season!

In my High/Hill Rivalry journey compiling this historic tribute to Michigan’s greatest high school hoops rivalry it’s been exciting, rewarding, humbling and countless other emotions.... With it coming to an end my goal was to keep this epic story alive for future generations to “experience.” The amazing uniqueness and flat out “one of a kind” story just HAD to be recorded and REMEMBERED.

**CONTINUES ON PG 4,  
SHS/AHHS**





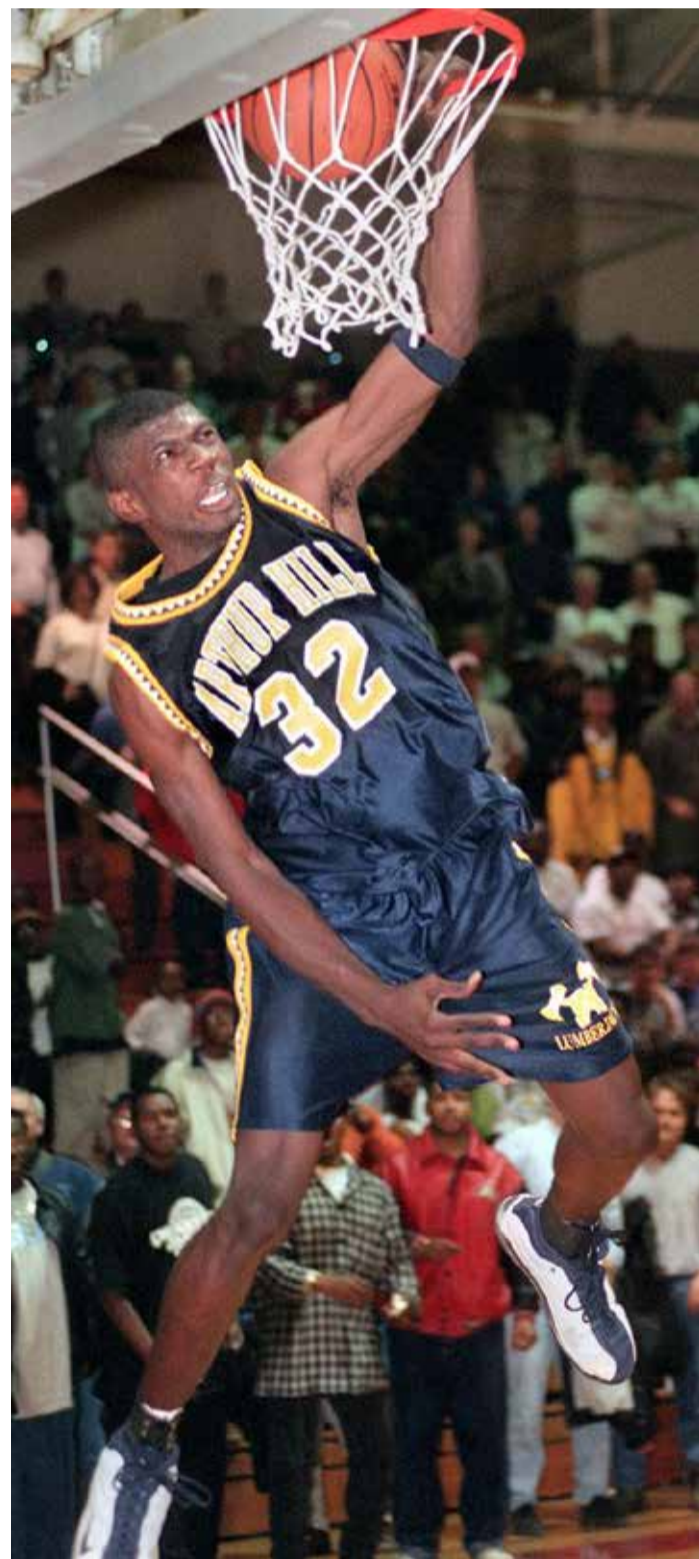
### Continued from page 3, SHS/AHHS

The book is filled with first-hand accounts and behind the scene stories from all the head coaches, many of the outstanding players from both schools and even a chapter from Michigan State’s Tom Izzo! Woven into the historic fabric of the Saginaw community are so many great players, coaches and epic games. There are over 750 priceless photos and news stories that help paint the picture of classic Saginaw High and Arthur Hill battles and bring their stories to life.

My book is a non-profit effort and my way of “giving back” to the community that raised me. It was a 5-year labor of love and I really enjoyed the ride. I didn’t do this for money, just wanted this story to be passed down – people 100 years from now will know about Jason Richardson, Draymond Green, Ernie Thompson, Craig Dill and all the other great ones. Any profits we do clear will be handled by the Saginaw Community Foundation and given to a scholarship fund for students at the

new Saginaw United High School. By the way, I absolutely love the name of our new school and pray we all remain “United” for Saginaw.

To order Remember The Trojan’s & The Lumberjacks Go to Facebook Page: Remember The Trojans & Lumberjacks.... or visit the Saginaw Community Foundation website, click “Give Now” and select the book title as Fund. Cost is \$40 with an option including shipping \$52.



CONTINUES TO PG 5 FOR ORDERING INFORMATION...