

Gary Summers

Inducted into the NLBA Hall of Fame in 2013 as an

“Athlete”



Gary Summers has been a professional magician and hypnotist for 25 years. His magic shows captivate audiences from ages 4 - 104. During his days as a basketball player he created his own magic on the hard court, he was well known for his bank shot from any range!

Gary first laced up his sneakers when he was 12 years old as a grade 6 student at St. Bon's. He played junior ball for two years under head coach Brother Withers and in grade 8 moved on to play Senior Ball. He went to High School at Brother Rice and was coached by Brother Byrne and Brother Withers. Through his exceptional play in the high school league he was named to the city all-star team. After graduating from high school he went to Memorial University of Newfoundland to pursue degrees in Physical Education and Education (1974) and returned to complete his Masters in Physical Education (Exercise Physiology) in 1978.

Gary played both Junior and Senior Varsity while attending Memorial. During his junior varsity years, the team took part in the Senior City League..... During Gary's time with the Junior Varsity team his most memorable game was the 2 out of 3 series against Budget Rent a Car from Halifax. He said it was the largest crowd he had ever seen in the MUN gym! The noise was deafening. They went on to beat Budget in game three to be given the right to attend Nationals in Victoria BC. Gary scored 18 points in each of the first 2 games and that allowed Ron to work his magic to the tune of winning the tournament MVP! The year before they beat Ontario in overtime 92-87 in Edmonton to win the Eastern Canadian Championship and our first win at the nationals!!

Gary played Senior Varsity under coach Ed Browne who was one of Gary's favorite coaches. Ed brought so much to the teams he coached and offered his team many great opportunities to travel and play a variety of teams. While playing varsity Gary had the opportunity to compete in a yearly invitational tournament in Machias, Maine and play various exhibition games against mainland universities like Carlton and UPEI. They also played against Argentinia Seals from the US Army base in Argentinia in Provincial play and exhibition games. One of the trips Ed took the Memorial team on was a 17 day tour of England, Scotland and Ireland (Dec 22nd 1973---Jan 5th 1974). Memorial played 10 exhibition games with a record of 6-4. The highlight of Gary's Senior Varsity years was winning the right for Memorial to be accepted into the AUAA basketball competition for the very first time. Memorial had to play a special playoff game in March 1974 against Dalhousie (the fourth place team in the AUAA) to see if Memorial would be competitive in the league. They defeated "the tigers" in their own gym with no supporters to win the right to play in the AUAA (now called the AUS) for years to come. On Gary's completion at MUN he was named to the Memorial University's Athletic Honour Society, which is one of the highest athletic awards at Memorial University.

Gary played competitive basketball for over 15 years. Included in that time was his years playing Senior Men's Basketball with City Furniture. He played with some of the best players including his childhood friend and teammate Ron Tobin. He played against greats such as Glenn Normore and Glen Taylor. He played for City Furniture from 1974-1981 (8 years) except for 1978 when he played with Glen Taylor and Glen Normore for Black Horse but he said it did not feel right. He missed his buddy Ron and went back to City Furniture the next year. During his time playing senior ball Gary competed in five National Championships.

Gary was fortunate enough to be involved with wheelchair basketball through an organization called Opportunity for Youth. He had the chance to play against Mel Fitzgerald and Joann MacDonald. In 1976 City Furniture won the First Invitational Wheelchair Basketball Tournament defeating the Provincial Wheelchair Basketball team, Silver Rimmers. In 1977 they won a silver medal in Provincial Invitational Wheelchair competition.

Another one of Gary's accomplishments was to represent his province at the 1971 Canada Winter Games in Saskatoon with his two good friends Ron Tobin and Tom Prim. Together they were called the S.T.P. line (Summers, Tobin, and Prim). Gary was a pampered St. Bon's boy whose handshake would never crush an egg, while Ron was a St. Pat's graduate with a healthy handshake and Tom was from Holy Cross and had a very strong and firm handshake. These three Christian Brother schools competed fiercely against one another.

Ironically Gary combined together with Ron and Tom to play for Memorial Jr. and Sr. Beothuk's, the 1971 Canada Games team, City Furniture, 3 L'S (Love Luck and Laughter) and represented their province in many National Junior and Senior Championships. Regardless of Gary's wish washy handshake any person would be happy and proud to shake the hand of Gary Summers.