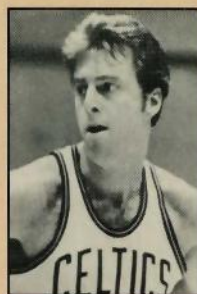
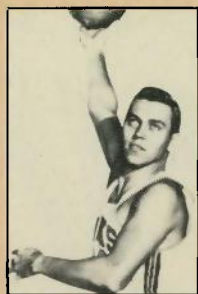


Kentucky Living

FEBRUARY 1992



Kentuckians



In The



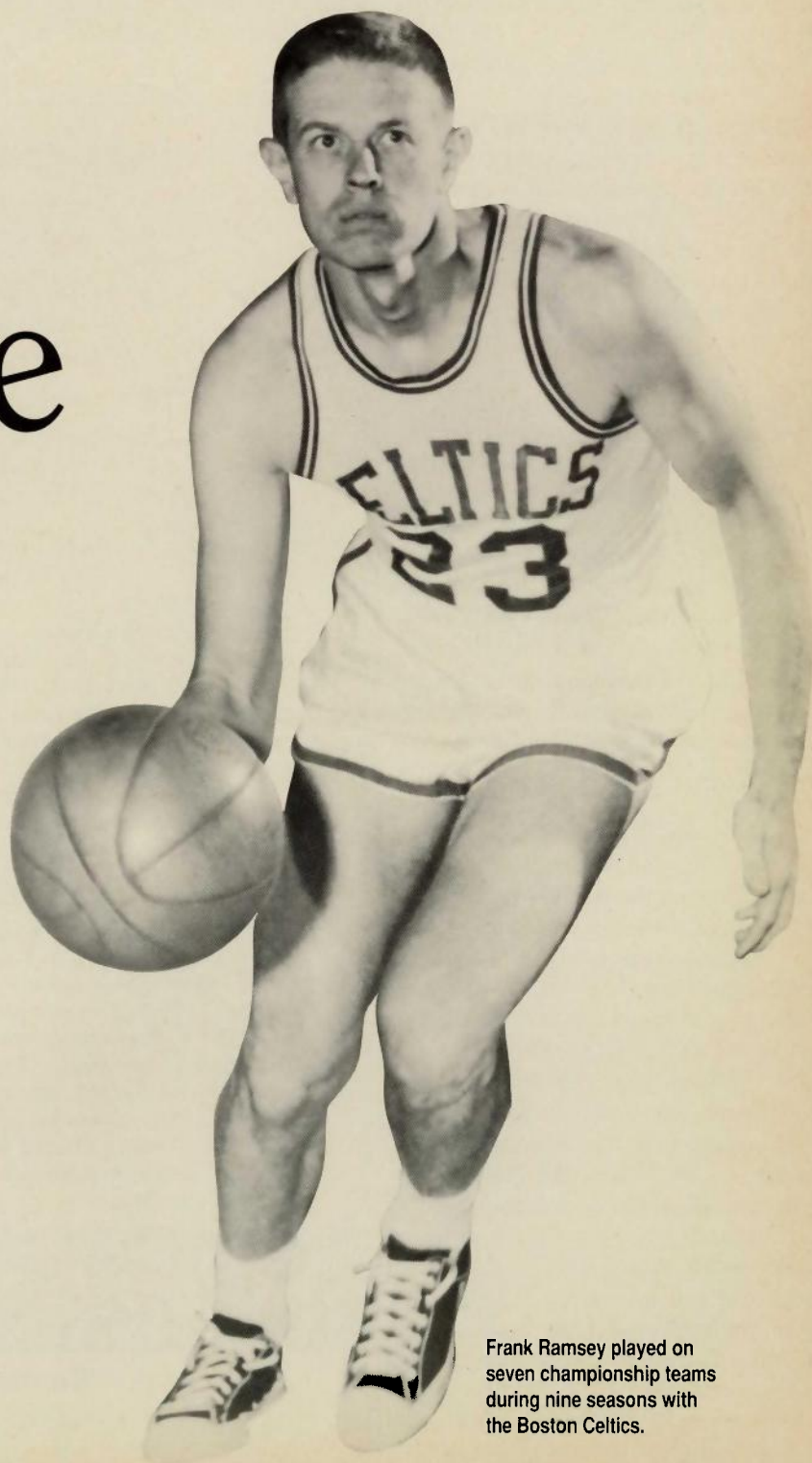
Halls of Fame



Kentuckians In The Halls Of Fame

BY MIKE EMBRY

Native sons have left their marks on baseball, football and basketball, and earned their places among the games' all-time stars



Frank Ramsey played on seven championship teams during nine seasons with the Boston Celtics.

To the right of the entrance to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, stand life-size wooden statues of Babe Ruth and Ted Williams. Inside the front foyer at the Professional Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, is a seven-foot bronze statue of Jim Thorpe. At the start of the tour of the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, is a bronze bust of Dr. James Naismith, inventor of the game that was 100 years old last year. They are among an elite group who have excelled on the playing field or contributed significantly to their respective sports and, in so doing, have earned the sports' highest recognition.

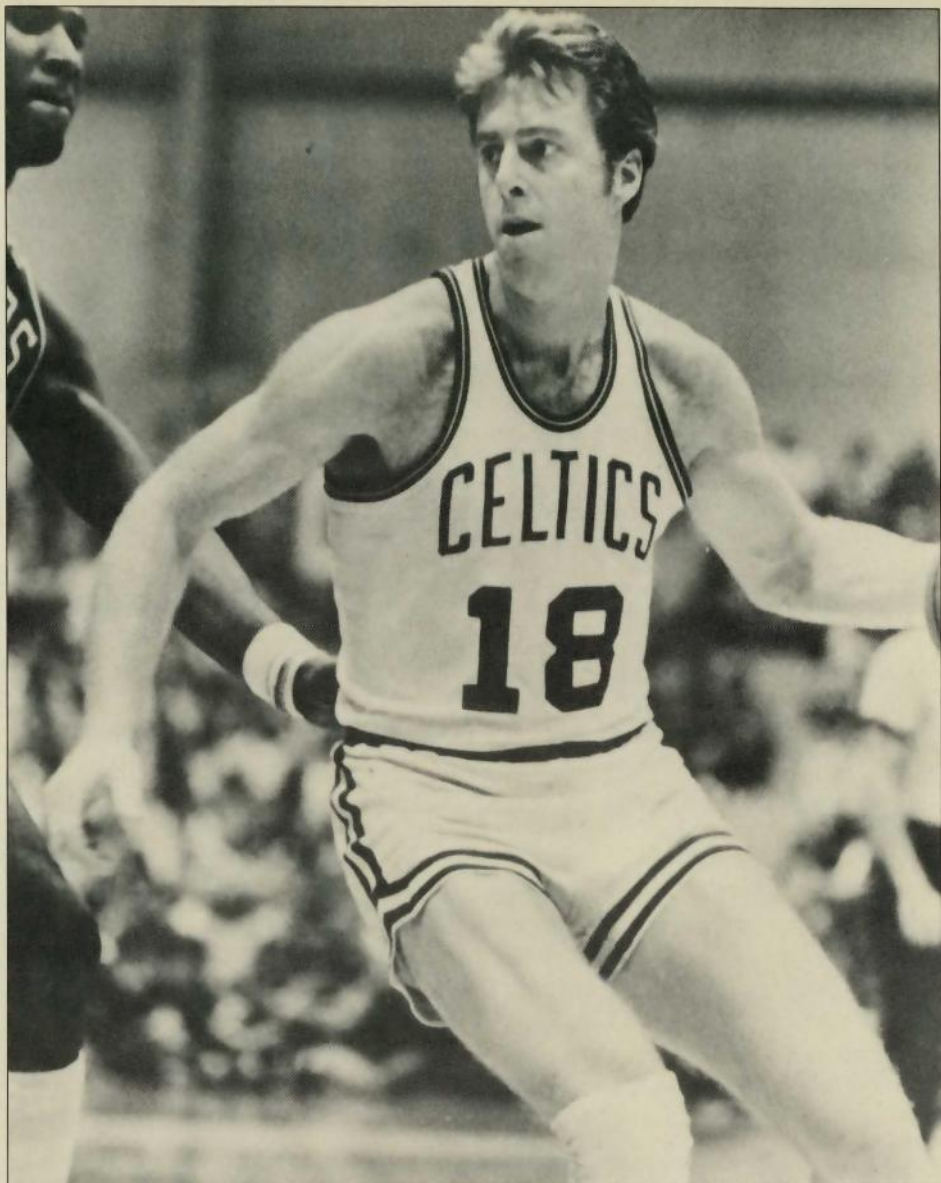
Kentuckians are represented in all three halls. Among native sons enshrined in these select galleries are Harold "Pee Wee" Reese, Earle Combs and A.B. "Happy" Chandler in baseball, Paul Hornung in football and Ed Diddle, Joe Fulks, Frank Ramsey, Cliff Hagan, Wes Unseld and Dave Cowens in basketball.

"Of all the honors that have come to me, I expect that was the greatest one," said Chandler, who was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982.

Chandler, who grew up in Henderson County, served as baseball commissioner from 1945 to 1951, following terms as Kentucky's governor and U.S. senator. Those were crucial seasons that included the debut of Jackie Robinson as the first black player in the major leagues. "I felt that if black men could fight on the beaches of Okinawa and Iwo Jima, they certainly shouldn't come home to be told they couldn't play the great American game," Chandler said at his induction ceremony.

Reese, born in Meade County, was the captain and shortstop of the Brooklyn Dodgers in the 1940s and '50s. He batted a respectable .269 in his career and was one of the best fielders in the game. But it was his competitive drive and leadership that made him such a standout performer. He, too, helped Robinson, a fellow hall-of-famer, break the color barrier. He was elected in 1984.

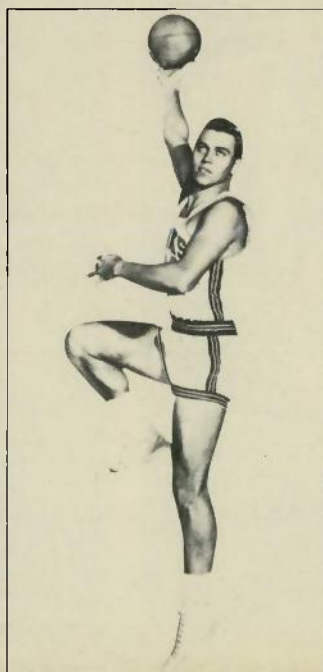
Combs, an Owsley County native, was a center fielder for the great New York Yankee teams in the 1920s and '30s. He was the leadoff hitter in a lineup that featured Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. Although his career was shortened because of an injury suffered after he collided with an outfielder



Basketball Hall of Fame



Basketball Hall of Fame



Basketball Hall of Fame

(clockwise from top) Dave Cowens, Kentucky's newest hall of fame member, was an NBA All-Star seven times in 11 seasons. Cliff Hagan scored more than 15,000 points in 10 seasons with the St. Louis Hawks. Joe Fulks, one of the NBA's early stars, scored 63 points in one game in 1949.

wall, Combs finished with a sparkling .325 average. He was inducted in 1970.

Hornung, a Louisville native, was the "Golden Boy" of football with his curly blond hair and movie-star blue eyes. He was a two-time All-American at Notre Dame and won the Heisman Trophy in 1956.

During a nine-year career with coach Vince Lombardi's powerful Green Bay Packers, Hornung was one of pro football's great all-purpose players able to kick, run and throw. He was the National Football League's leading scorer from 1959 to 1961, amassing a phenomenal 176 points in 1960. He was also named most valuable player in the 1961 championship game. He was elected to the Football Hall of Fame in 1986.

Ed Diddle, born in Adair County, was one of the most colorful men ever to grace college basketball. His trademark was waving a red towel on the Western Kentucky University bench, a tradition still practiced on the Bowling Green campus, which is known as "Red Towel Territory."

Diddle was captain of the Centre College team in 1920, earning All-Southern recognition. He coached Monticello to the state high school tournament in 1921 and Greenville to the regional finals in 1922. He took over the Western Kentucky program in the fall of 1922 and turned the Hilltoppers into a nationally recognized team during 42 seasons at the helm. His teams won 759 games, the fourth highest



National Baseball Library



Pro Football Hall of Fame



Basketball Hall of Fame

As commissioner, Chandler helped break baseball's color barrier. Hornung was pro football's leading scorer from 1959 to 1961. Only three college coaches won more basketball games than Diddle.

total for a college coach, and played in every major collegiate event. He was elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1971.

"Jumping Joe" Fulks, of Marshall County, became one of the first stars in professional basketball with his patented jump shot. He amazed the nation when he scored 63 points in a game in 1949, an astonishing output considering there was no 3-point shot or shot clock at the time. Fulks led the Philadelphia Warriors to the pro basketball title in 1947 and three times was named to the all-league first team during his eight-year career. He was elected to the hall in 1977.

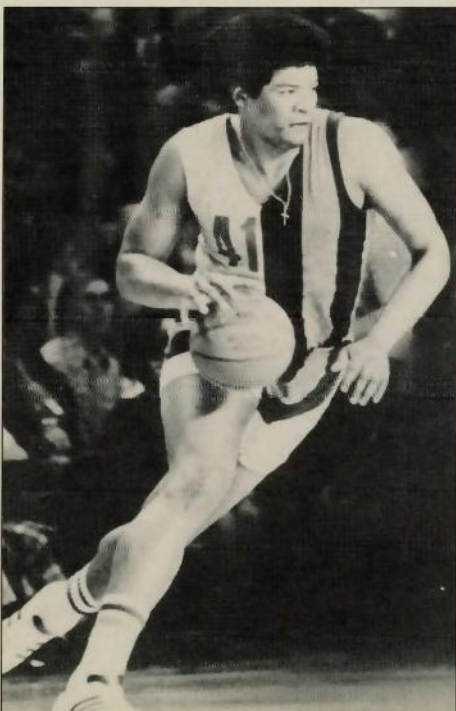
Ramsey, another product of Henderson County, was the celebrated "sixth man" of the Boston Celtics in the 1950s and '60s. He was known for his versatility coming off the bench.

Ramsey, inducted in 1981, was an all-

state player at Madisonville High School and an All-American at Kentucky in 1952 and 1954. He played on seven NBA championship teams in nine years with the Celtics.

Hagan, of Owensboro, had a picture-perfect hook shot when he played at Owensboro High School, Kentucky and later with the St. Louis Hawks of the NBA and the Dallas Chapparalls of the old American Basketball Association. He led Owensboro to a state title in 1949 and was a member of Kentucky's national championship team in 1951. In his 10-year career with the Hawks, he teamed with Bob Pettit to help St. Louis win the NBA title in 1958. Hagan, who became athletics director at Kentucky, was elected to the basketball shrine in 1977.

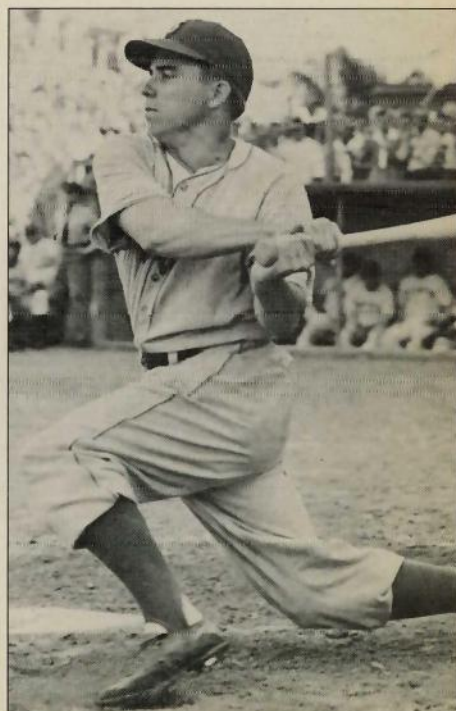
Unsold, perhaps the best basketball player ever produced in Louisville, led Sen-



Basketball Hall of Fame



National Baseball Library



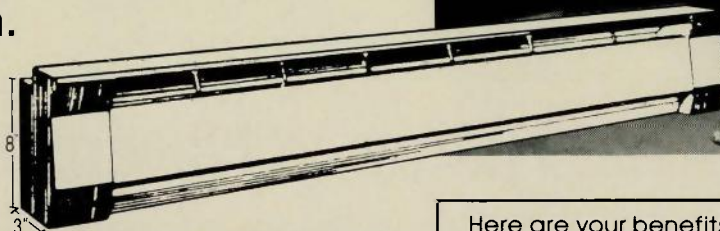
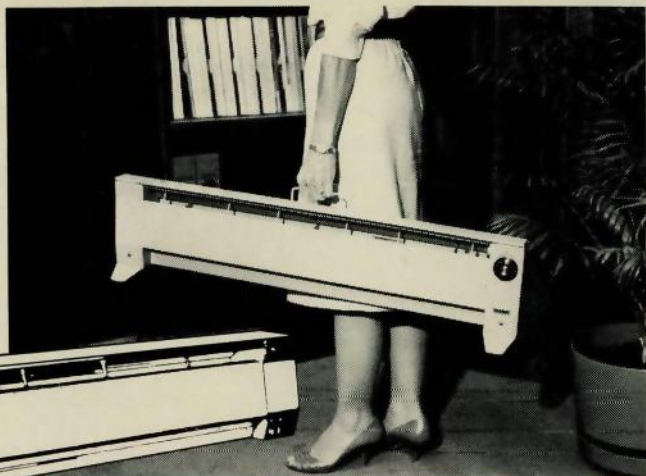
National Baseball Library

Unsold was the NBA's most valuable player as a rookie. Combs held his own against Ruth and Gehrig. Reese captained the Dodgers of the '40s and '50s.

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eca High School to consecutive state titles in 1963 and 1964. He was an All-American at the University of Louisville in 1967 and 1968. In his first season with the Baltimore Bullets, he was named the NBA's Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year, one of only two players (Wilt Chamberlain is the other) who can claim that distinction.

Although Unseld was only 6-foot-7, short by NBA standards for a center, he averaged 10.8 points and 13.9 rebounds in

his 13-year career with the Bullets. The consummate team player, he was inducted in 1989.

Cowens, elected to the hall of fame last year, was a diamond in the rough during his prep days at Newport Catholic High School. He was passed over by Coach Adolph Rupp at Kentucky and went on to have three productive seasons at Florida State, where he averaged 19 points and 17 rebounds.

The husky, 6'9", 230-pound center was

drafted in the fourth round of the 1970 NBA draft by the Boston Celtics. He shared Rookie-of-the-Year honors with Geoff Petri, and led the team to titles in 1974 and 1976 during his 10 seasons with the Celtics. He was player-coach in 1978-79.

After a two-year layoff, Cowens played one season with the Milwaukee Bucks before retiring in 1983. He averaged 17.6 points and 13.6 rebounds in 11 seasons, and was a member of seven NBA all-star teams. □

Sports Halls Are Hallowed Havens For Fans

Cooperstown is a quaint village of 2,300 in central New York. Before the Baseball Hall of Fame was founded in 1939, its most famous resident was James Fenimore Cooper, the 19th century novelist. The town was named after his father.

The three-story, brick building houses artifacts of baseball from its believed beginnings with Abner Doubleday in 1839. There are original paintings and photographs of baseball heroes and scenes that adorned such magazine covers as Saturday Evening Post and Sports Illustrated.

Exhibits touch every facet of America's pastime, from umpires and pre-1900 equipment to radio broadcasts from the golden years of Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb. One wall is dedicated to what has become one of America's fastest growing hobbies — collecting baseball cards. Special sections tell the history of the great black players, All-Star games and various parks where baseball was played. Towns such as Madisonville, Hopkinsville and Hazard are listed in an area dedicated to minor league teams.

The highlight is the Hall of Fame Gallery, where plaques of all the men enshrined there line the walls. Its reverential atmosphere has most people whispering as they view the sport's immortals.

The pro football shrine in Canton is easy to recognize. The main building has a dome shaped like a football.

Canton has a rich history in football. The American Professional Football League, which became the National Football League, was established there

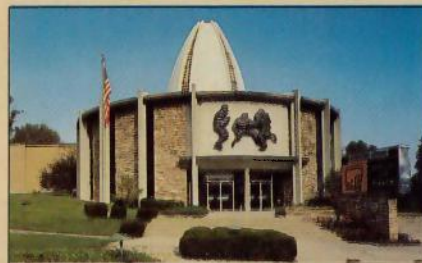
in 1920; the Canton Bulldogs were the first two-time champs of the NFL in 1922 and 1923; and the city was designated as the site for the hall in 1961.

Memorabilia from the game's early years in the late 19th century reveal the rugged nature of the sport in the uniforms and equipment. The three-building hall chronicles the game's evolution to the present day. Great teams, players and coaches are recognized through ex-



Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, NY

National Baseball Library



Pro Football Hall of Fame, Canton, OH

Pro Football Hall of Fame



Basketball Hall of Fame, Springfield, MA

Basketball Hall of Fame

hibits, photographs and movies. There is a Super Bowl room displaying the trophy for the world champion and telling the story of each championship team.

As with baseball, the most impressive area is the enshrinement gallery, where each hall of fame member is honored with a bust.

Springfield is the undisputed home of basketball. It is where Dr. James Naismith, an instructor at the School for Christian Workers, had two peach baskets nailed to a gymnasium railing and used a soccer ball to invent the game of "basket ball."

The three-story structure, which opened in 1968, touches all phases of the game from inner-city schoolyards, to rural settings with goals nailed to barns, to the glitter of the NCAA Final Four and National Basketball Association championships.

The size 21 shoes of Bob Lanier are bronzed, uniforms over the years are displayed and the evolution of equipment is presented. Action photographs of coaches such as Louisville's Denny Crum and Kentucky's Adolph Rupp are prominently presented with others in the college game. The high school game is also showcased with photos of the current high school All-Americans and notes on where former college and pro greats first developed their skills.

The Honors Court is the main attraction, where the hall of famers are recognized on framed plaques. A basketball court is set up at the end of the tour with goals at various heights for fans to get in a few minutes of shooting practice. □