



# Jerry West

An American Icon

Gallery 2

West Virginia Day Exhibit, 2016

West Virginia and Regional History Center

WVU Libraries

# JERRY WEST



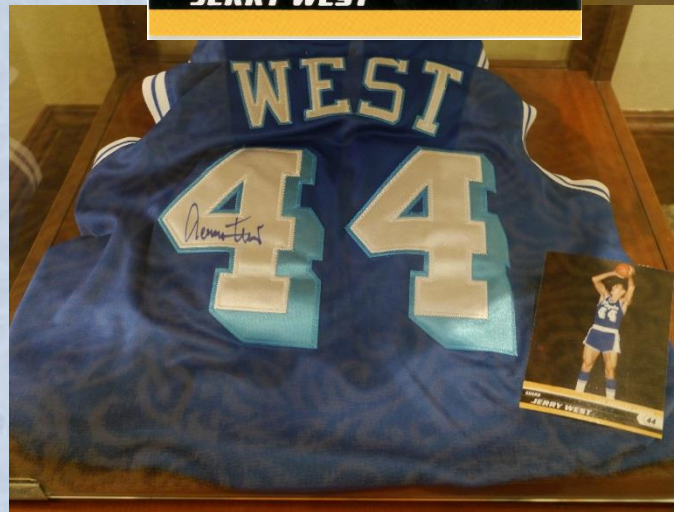
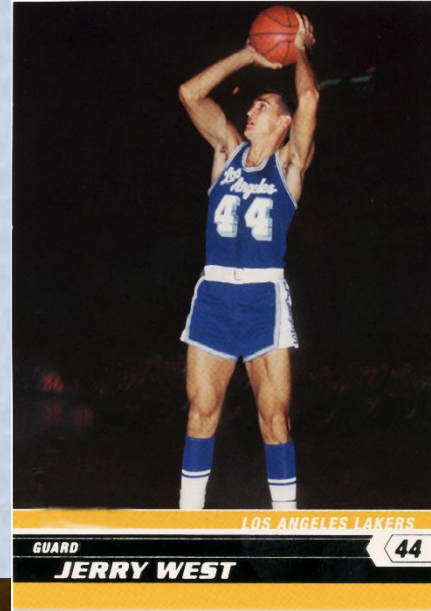
## An American Icon

Gallery 2 - West Virginia Day Exhibit, 2016



# Joining the Lakers

In 1960, after winning the Olympic Gold, Jerry West was drafted by the Lakers just as they were moving from Minneapolis to Los Angeles. Over the next fourteen years, Jerry played in 932 games averaging a remarkable 27 points, 5.8 rebounds, and 6.7 assists per game.



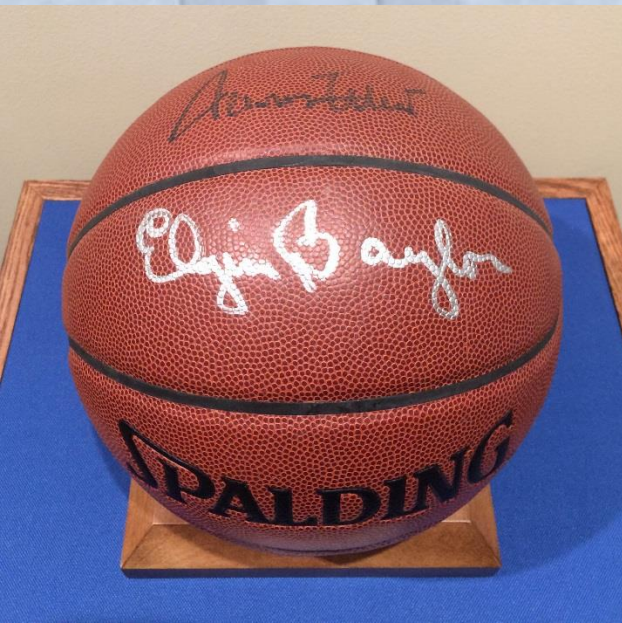
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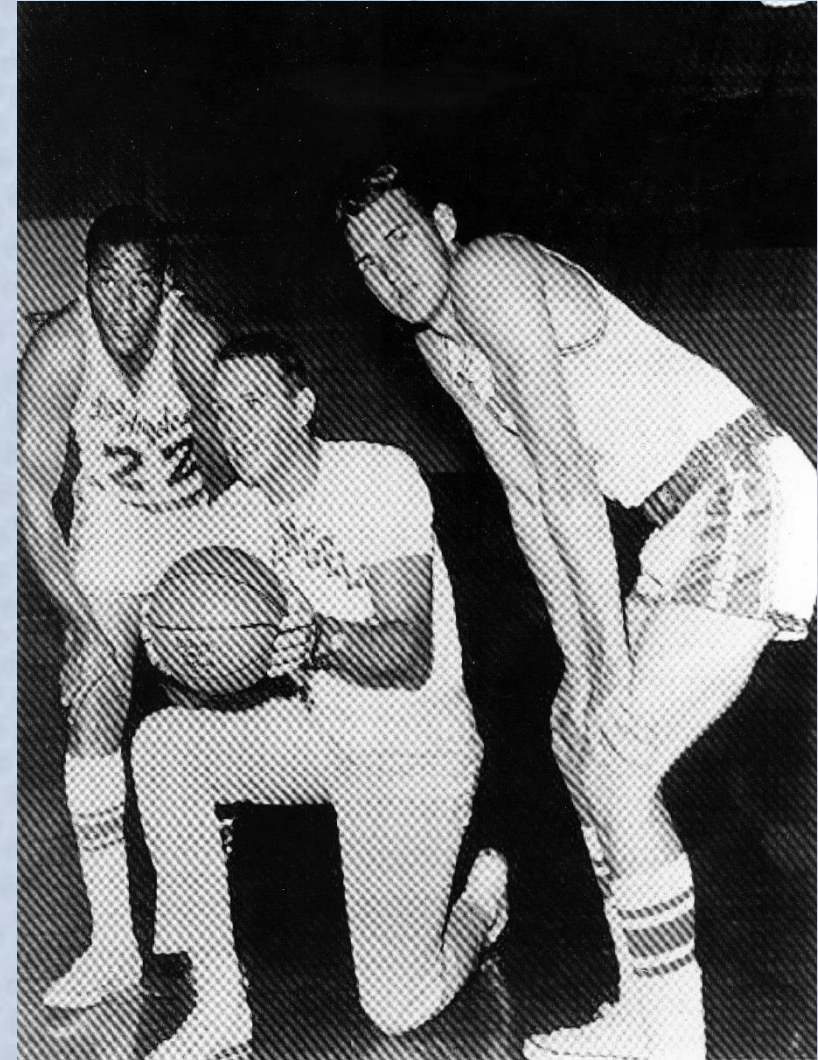
# Elgin Baylor, Coach Fred Schaus, and Jerry West

Following the 1960 season, WVU Basketball Coach Fred Schaus left college basketball to become head coach of the LA Lakers. He reunited with Jerry West in Los Angeles where he also coached another talented young shooter, Elgin Baylor. Baylor won Rookie of the Year in the 1958-1959 season and was known for his trademark hanging jump shots.

Regarded as one of the game's all-time greatest players, Baylor retired from the Lakers during the 1971-1972 season and went on to coach the New Orleans Jazz. He also served as an executive for the Los Angeles Clippers for 22 years.



Authentic NBA basketball signed by Baylor and West







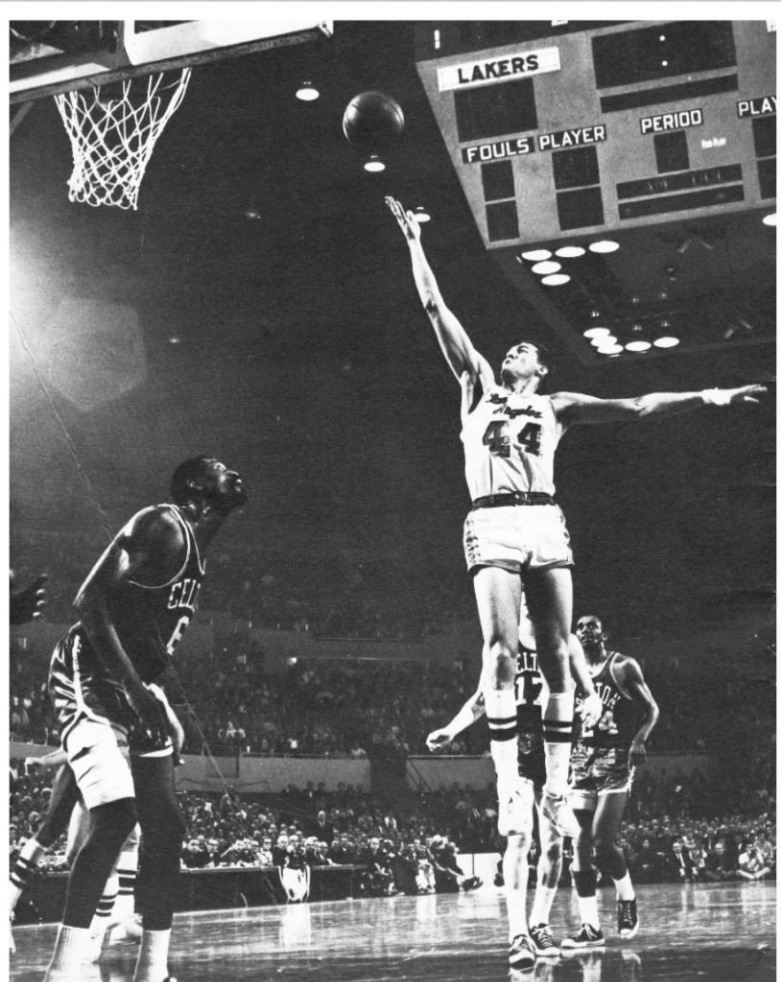
# Jerry West Basketball Cards

Jerry West's popularity is evidenced by highly collectible basketball cards dating from the 1950s through the present which number in the hundreds if not thousands. A Jerry West NBA rookie card in mint condition can fetch \$20,000 or even more in today's market. The vintage cards reveal West's physicality and impressive statistics.

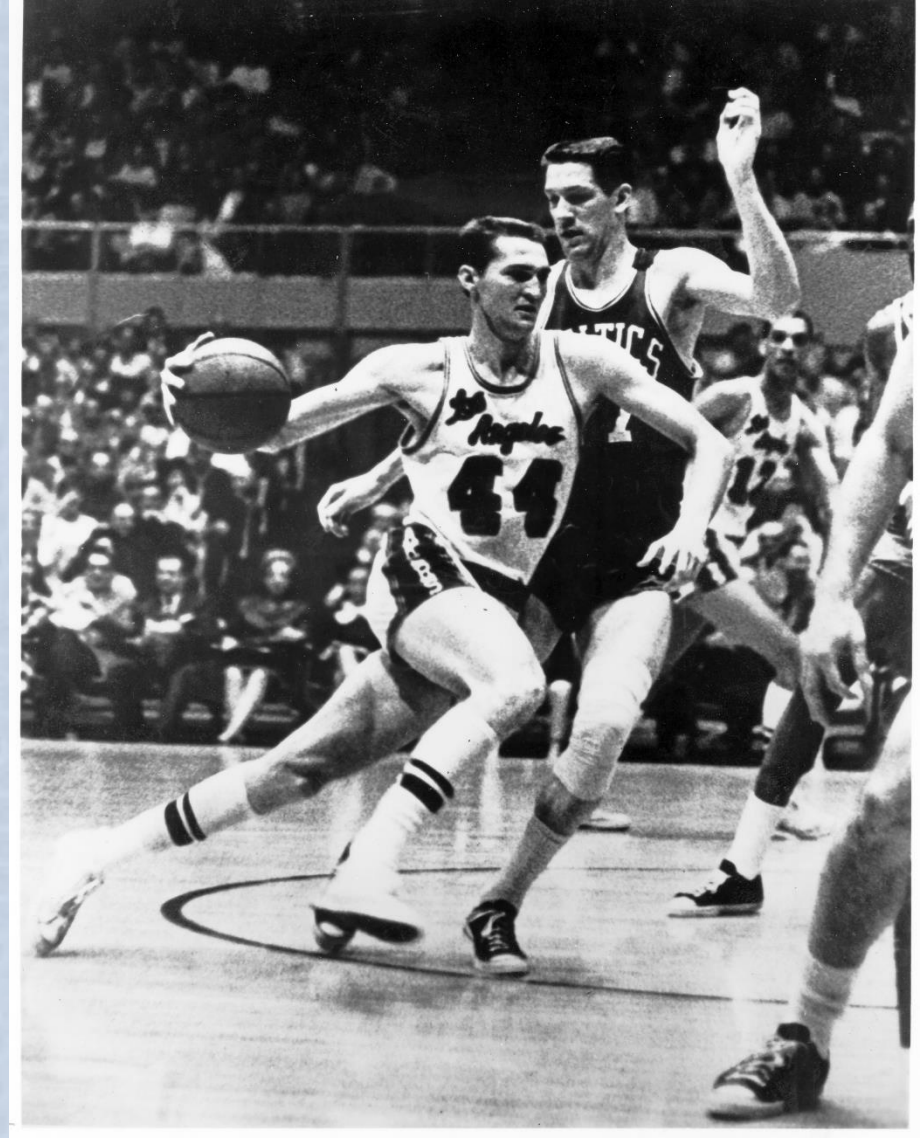


# Rivalry

The LA Lakers and the Boston Celtics rivalry is considered to be one of the greatest in NBA history. The two teams have faced each other twelve times in the NBA finals and both teams dominated the game in the 1960s and 1980s.



Left: Celtics Bill Russell and Sam Jones watch Jerry West in midair with the ball, ca. 1960s.



Right: Jerry West powers by Celtics defender, John Havlicek, ca. 1963.





## 25,000 points

In 1974, Jerry West became the third player in NBA history to reach the 25,000 point milestone. He was preceded in that feat by Wilt Chamberlain and Oscar Robertson.

# “Mr. Clutch”

Video available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/aqUXXuFf5k>

## One of the Finest NBA “Clutch” Players of All Time

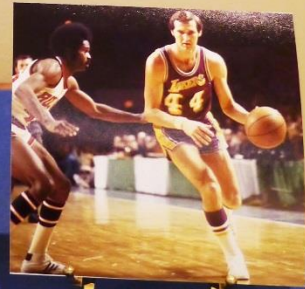
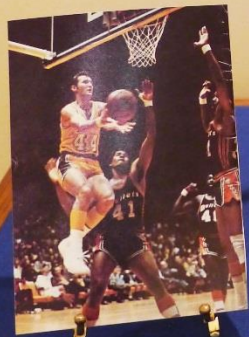
Jerry West earned the nickname “Mr. Clutch” for his ability to make big plays at the crucial moment between winning and losing. He was invigorated at the end of the game when others were tired. His teammates knew Jerry was the one you wanted to have the ball when the clock was ticking.

In 1970, in Game 3 of the NBA Finals against the New York Knicks, West made one of the most famous buzzer-beater shots in basketball history – a 60 foot shot that tied the game and sent it into overtime. After the shot, Knicks coach, Red Holzman, told his demoralized players, “Don’t go back out there thinking we’ve had some bad luck. This is just routine stuff from Jerry West.”



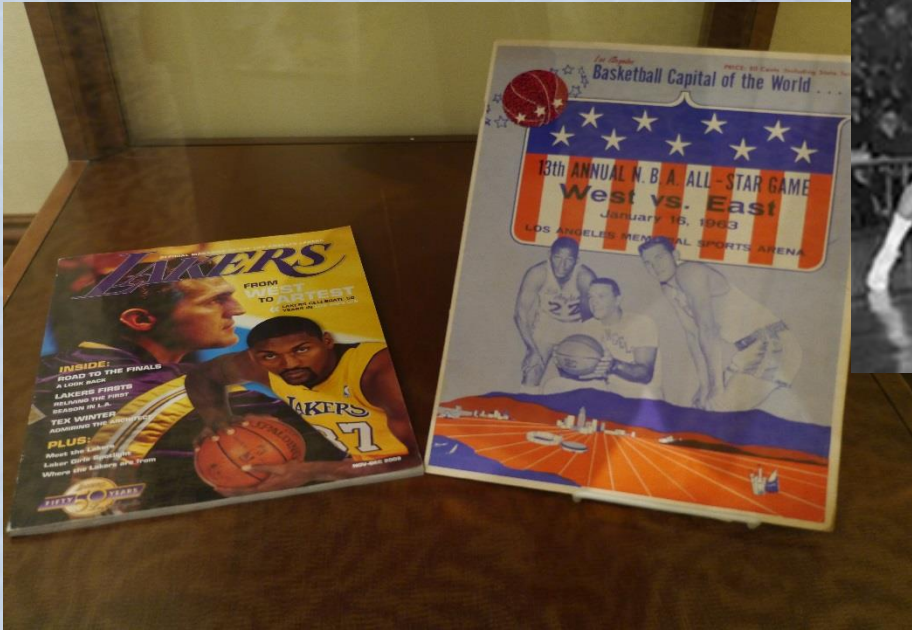
# Gillette Cavalcade of Champions Award

In the early 1970s, the Gillette Company sponsored “champions” awards to recognize achievements in all fields of athletics. Nominees of the Champions Award were determined by a nationwide ballot and the winners were selected by sports writers and sports casters. Bob Hope hosted the awards show during prime time on NBC. Jerry West won the award for excellence in basketball in 1972. Other winners of the prestigious award included Mark Spitz and OJ Simpson.





# All-Star



## Original Jerry West All-Star Game Uniform

Jerry West was selected as an All Star every year he played for the Lakers, a total of fourteen times from 1960 to 1974.





# Jerry West “Cover Boy!”

Jerry West’s amazing athletic prowess, competitiveness and popular appeal made him a darling of the media during his heyday as a player and coach. In addition to appearing in advertisements for products ranging from Chapstick to swimwear, his image graced the cover of dozens of magazines including *Sports Illustrated*, *Sport Scene*, *Sport*, and *Dell Sports*.



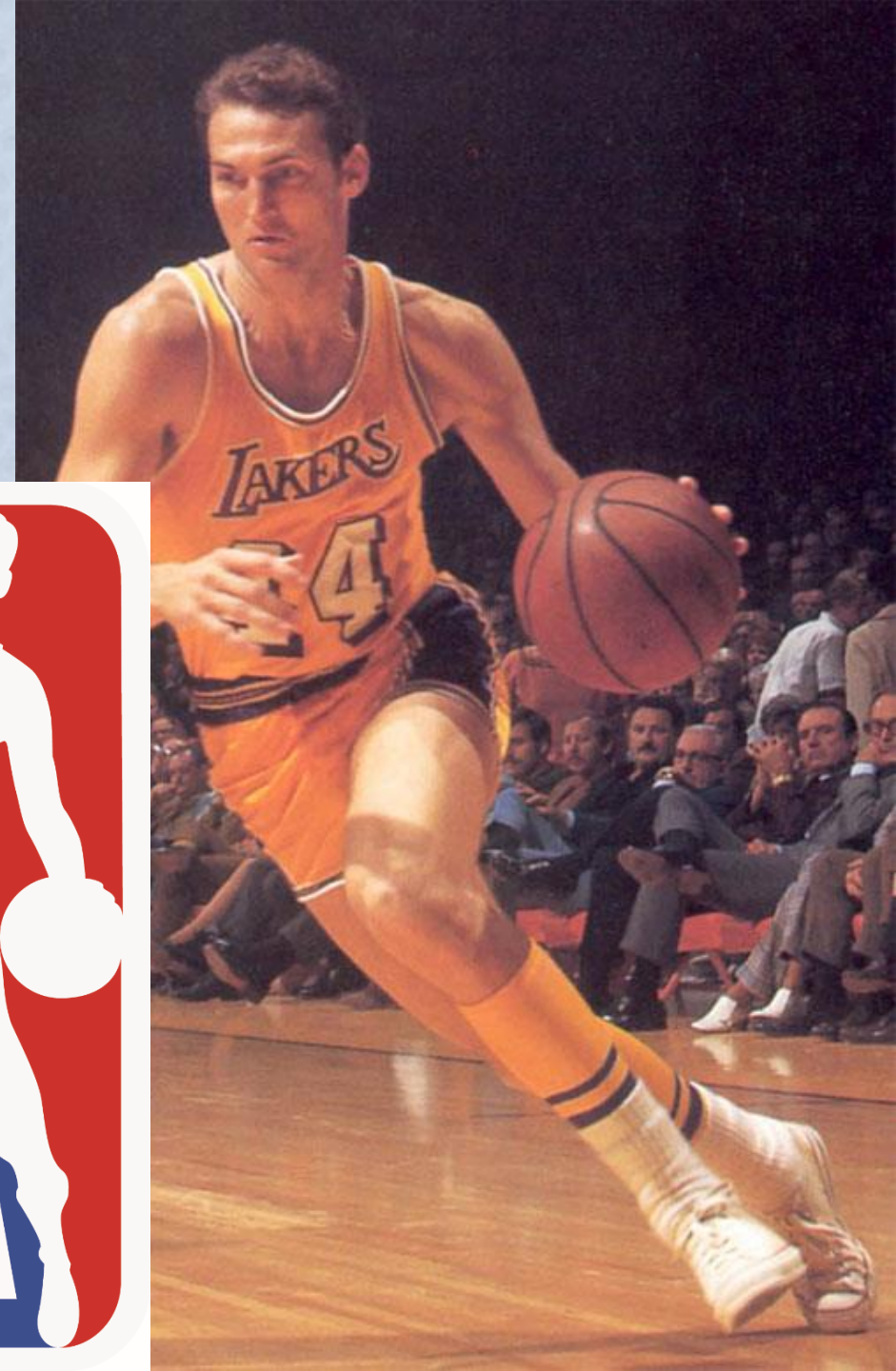


# The NBA Logo

In 1969, facing fierce competition from the newly formed American Basketball Association, Commissioner J. Walter Kennedy felt that a new and prominent identity was needed to make the NBA stand out as the nation's premiere basketball league, as Major League Baseball (MLB) was to baseball. Development of a new iconic and patriotic logo was part of his plan.

Designer Alan Siegel of Seigel+Gale had recently supervised the creation of the red, white and blue MLB logo, so Kennedy turned to him for a design. Looking for inspiration, Siegel was reviewing the photo archives of *Sport* magazine when a shot taken by photographer Wen Roberts of All-American Jerry West caught his attention. The vertical image displayed action and captured the spirit of the game. Siegel and his partner Bob Gale proceeded to transform West's silhouette into a white shape in front of a blue and red background, similar to the look of the MLB logo. The addition of "NBA" to the bottom of the logo cemented the abbreviation in the public lexicon.

Today the NBA logo is one of the world's most recognizable sports symbols generating more than \$3 billion in revenue each year through licensing.

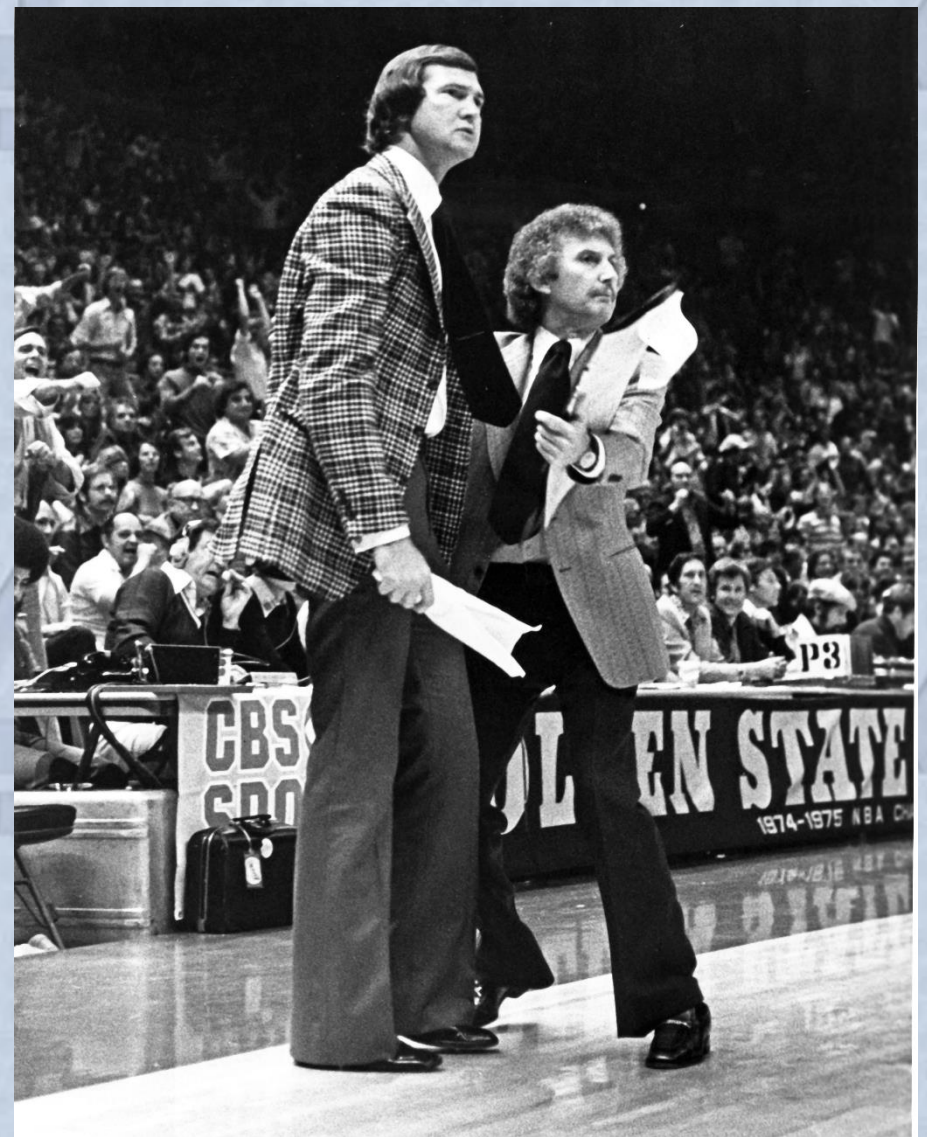




## Game Ball from First Victory of Coach Jerry West



Jerry West achieved his first victory as coach of the Lakers when they defeated the Washington Bullets on October 22, 1976.



### Courtside

Coach Jerry West and Assistant Coach Stan Albeck courtside during a Lakers game, ca. 1977.



## Lakers Scrapbook

This scrapbook documents the Lakers' domination of NBA basketball during the 1980s when Jerry West was the team's General Manager. West is credited for molding the team through trades, drafts, and free agents into the franchise that would go on to win five NBA titles.



In the “Nest” with Announcer Chick Hearn

Jerry West and Lakers’ announcer Chick Hearn in the broadcast booth at the Los Angeles Forum.



# Success as a Manager and Executive

Jerry West is known as an iconic player but is also lauded for his skill as a manager and executive. During his tenure with the Lakers, West formed a legendary franchise with players that included Kobe Bryant, Vlade Divac, A.C. Green, Shaquille O'Neal, Byron Scott, Mychal Thompson and Orlando Woolridge.

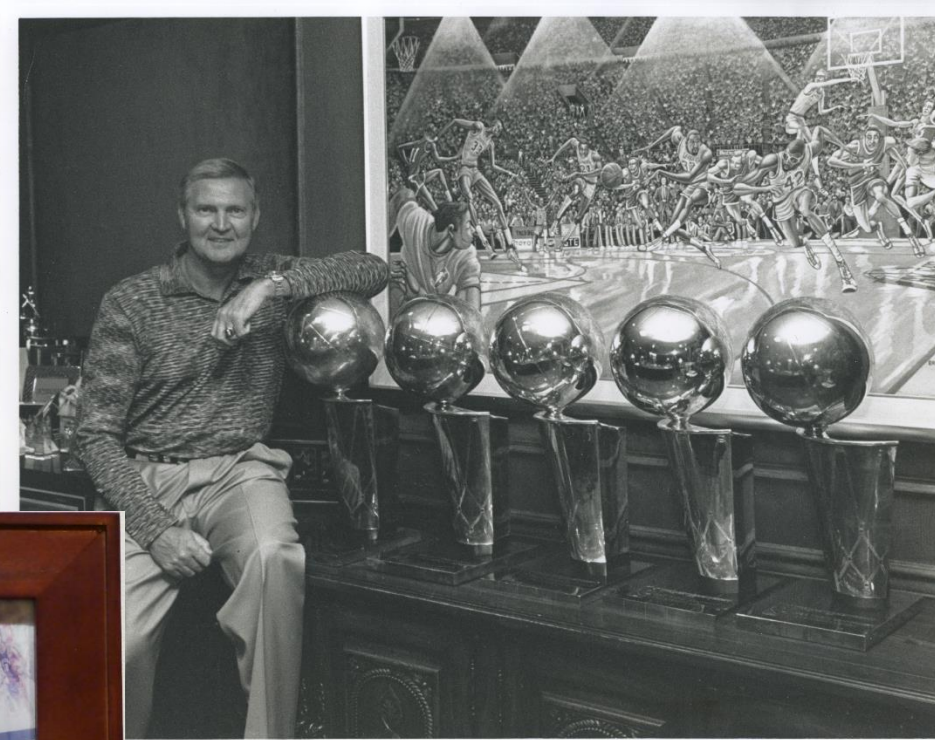
Under Jerry West, the Lakers went to the playoffs seventeen times and his stewardship brought home five championship rings:

- 1980
- 1982
- 1985
- 1987
- 1988



**In the Office**

Jerry West, flanked by awards, sits in his Lakers' office.



**NBA Championships**

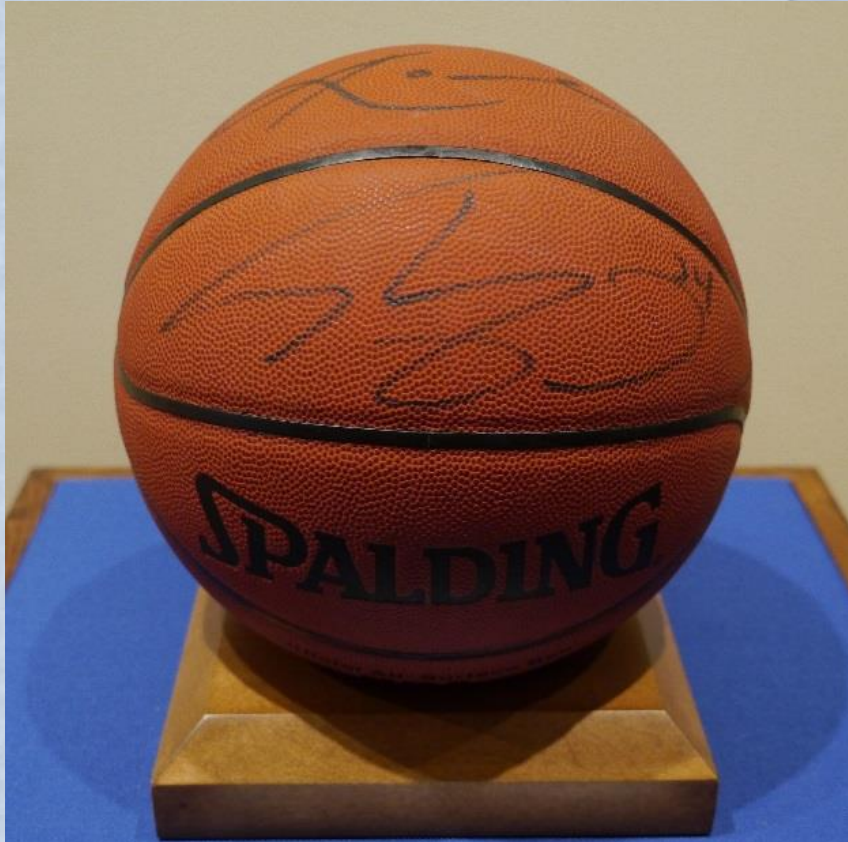
Jerry West sits with five Lakers NBA Championship trophies.





# Lakers Stars Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant

In July 1996, Jerry West showed the brilliance of his executive decision making by signing both Shaquille O'Neal (top) and Kobe Bryant (bottom). The basketball in this case bears the signatures of both Lakers superstars





## 2002 NBA Championship Ring

Jerry West's Lakers

2002 NBA

Championship Ring bears a dedication to broadcaster Chick Hearn who passed away that year. The Lakers defeated the New York Nets to win the title. Note that the name "West" appears on the left side of the ring above the NBA logo derived from West's profile.



## National Basketball Retired Players Association Founder Award

The National Basketball Retired Players Association was founded in 1992 by NBA stars Dave DeBusschere, Dave Bing, Archie Clark, Dave Cowens, and Oscar Robertson. Jerry West received this trophy in 1974.



# Once a Mountaineer, Always a Mountaineer

On November 26, 2005, West Virginia University officially retired Jerry West's number, 44. Two years later, a statue of Jerry West designed by Morgantown sculptor Jamie Lester was dedicated at the WVU Coliseum to honor one of WVU's all-time greatest athletes. A "maquette" (miniature scale model) of this statue is included in the exhibits in Gallery 1.

Videos of both events are available on YouTube:

- Number Retirement: <https://youtu.be/TNJM2tv8I40>
- Statue Dedication: [https://youtu.be/YwPKj\\_tj0mo](https://youtu.be/YwPKj_tj0mo)





# After the Lakers

After a forty year career with the Lakers, in 2002 Jerry West assumed an executive role with the Memphis Grizzlies, remaining until 2007. He is presently affiliated with the Golden State Warriors for whom his son Jonnie West serves as Associate General Manager. His retirement years have enabled him to devote time to assorted pastimes including being a “scratch” golfer!





# “Roll Out the Carpet!”

One of the outstanding traditions in college basketball takes place before Mountaineer basketball home games. A courtly, blue and gold carpet runner with “WEST VIRGINIA” print down the middle is rolled out to center court for the introduction of the each member of the WVU team. The idea was the brain child of Head Coach Fred Schaus and Mountaineer supporter Alex Mumford in 1955 as promotion idea to fill the seats.

The custom continued until the mid-1960’s when Coach Bucky Waters replaced the carpet as the center piece of pregame introductions with a paper covered hoop the players ran through to the their bench.

The popular carpet tradition was brought back in 1978 by former Mountaineer player and new head coach, Gale Catlett. It remains today as much a symbol of West Virginia University Athletics as the fight song, “*Hail West Virginia.*”

So “Let’s Roll Out the Carpet and Bring on the Mountaineers!”

