



Jerry West

An American Icon

Gallery 1

West Virginia Day Exhibit, 2016

West Virginia and Regional History Center

WVU Libraries

JERRY WEST



West Virginia & Regional History Center
West Virginia University Libraries

An American Icon
Gallery 1 - West Virginia Day Exhibit, 2016

Jerry West

by Jamie Lester

Jerry West looms large in WVU sports history, and indeed in the history of sports in America. His name is a household word and his image is figurally and literally iconic.

In 2006, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of West's enrollment, West Virginia University dedicated a life-size statue of West created by the nationally known Morgantown sculptor Jamie Lester. This case holds a "maquette" (a scaled down model) made by Lester of the sculpture which was installed and dedicated at the WVU Coliseum in February 2007.



Jerry West, by Jamie Lester
Jerry West, large sculpture, WVU Sports History
at Sports in America. The statue is a "maquette"
replica of the life-size statue.
In 2006, the 50th anniversary of West's enrollment,
West Virginia University dedicated a life-size
statue of West, created by Morgantown sculptor
Jamie Lester. The statue was installed and
dedicated at the WVU Coliseum in February 2007.

Early Life

Jerry West was born on May 28, 1938 in Cabin Creek, West Virginia, and raised in nearby Chelyan. This case includes childhood portraits including his middle school basketball team. Jerry is number 12 in that photo.



Cabin Creek, WV

The Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad Depot at Cabin Creek in Kanawha County, West Virginia.



West Family



Parents

Jerry's parents, Cecil and Howard West.



Siblings

The West children, left to right, Patricia, Charlie, Hannah, Jerry and Barbara, in October of 2010 in St. Albans, W. Va.

David L. West, 1928-1951

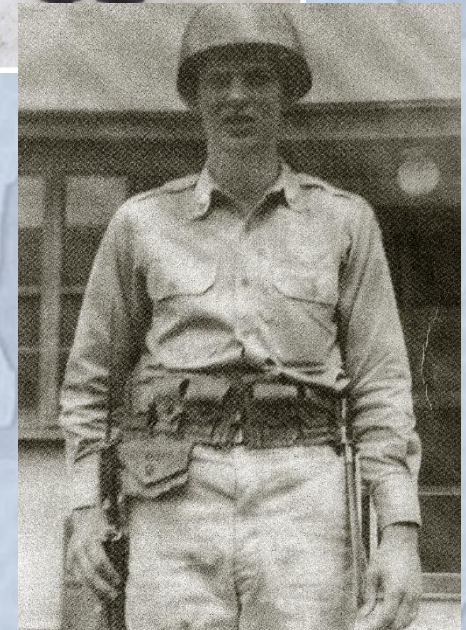
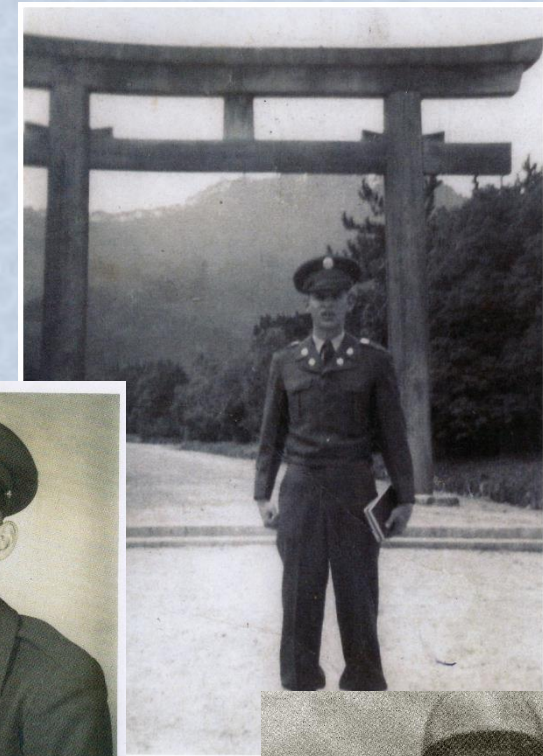
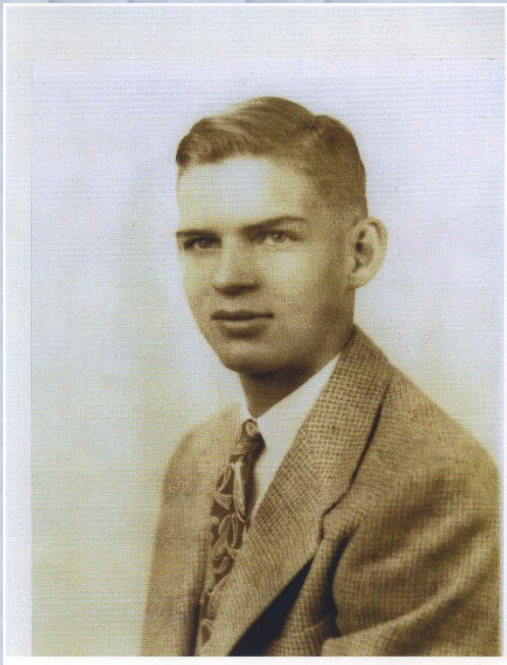
Family and friends referred to David as kind, thoughtful and “a very decent young man.” He was looked up to at East Bank High School as a responsible student leader and popular athlete. His brother Jerry described him simply as “the glue” that held the West family together and “our shining light.” Nine years older than Jerry, the younger brother found comfort in the feeling that David was looking out for him.

When the Korean War broke out, David enlisted in the Army and served in the Heavy Mortar Company, 35th Infantry, on the frontlines. Strong in his faith, David’s army buddies tagged him with the nickname, “Deacon.” His company medic declared “Deacon was the most well liked boy we will ever have in our company.” His selfless nature translated into acts of bravery during battle, which included pulling a badly wounded comrade to safety under heavy fire. David earned the Bronze Star for “Meritorious Service.”

David regularly corresponded with his family in Chelyan. Several of his letters are displayed in the case below. He always asked about each member of his family, “How’s Charlie’s baby; How’s Grandma, fine I hope; How is Jerry doing in basketball? Do you think he’ll make the team? Tell him he had better score some points.”

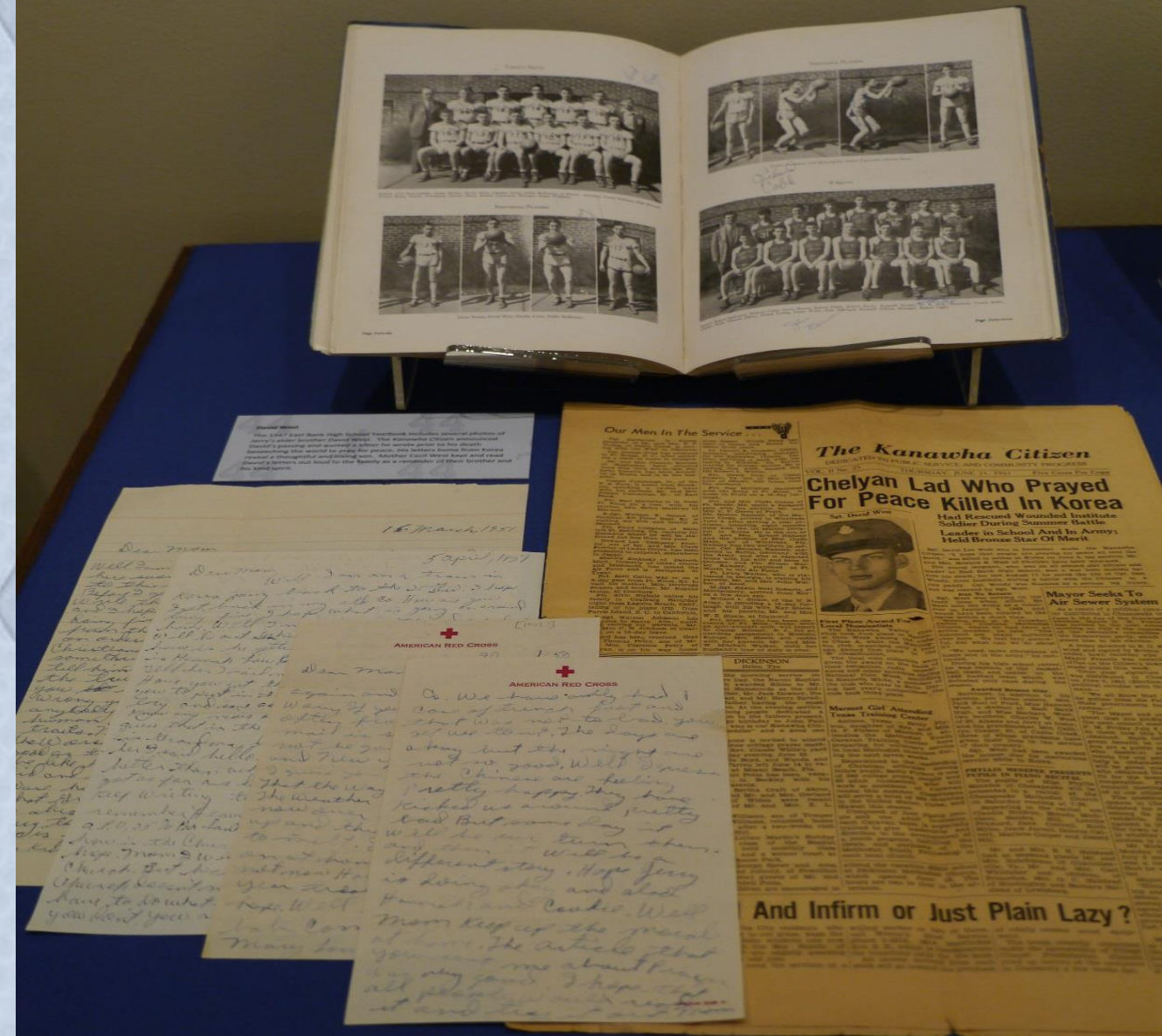
In December 1951 David wrote a letter to the pastor of his church back home that was published in a local newspaper. In it he said, “I hope people are praying for peace all over the world . . . the innocent are really suffering over here. We are very sorrowful...”

Six months later, David West was killed in action. His death was a crushing blow to his family, leaving lifelong heartaches.



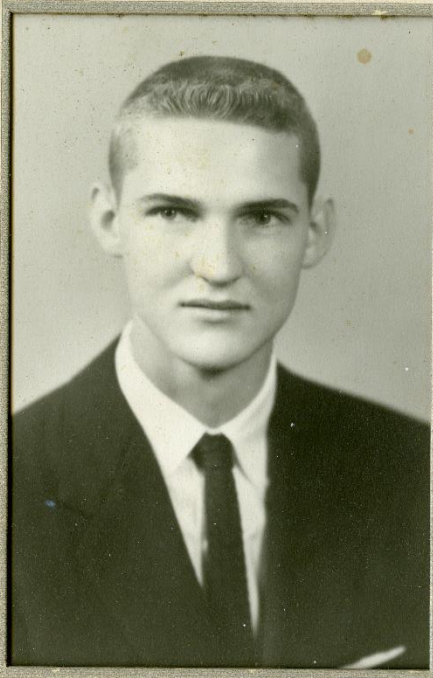
David West

The 1947 East Bank High School Yearbook includes several photos of Jerry's elder brother David West. The *Kanawha Citizen* announced David's passing and quoted a letter he wrote prior to his death beseeching the world to pray for peace. His letters home from Korea reveal a thoughtful and loving son. Mother Cecil West kept and read David's letters out loud to the family as a reminder of their brother and his kind spirit.



East Bank High School

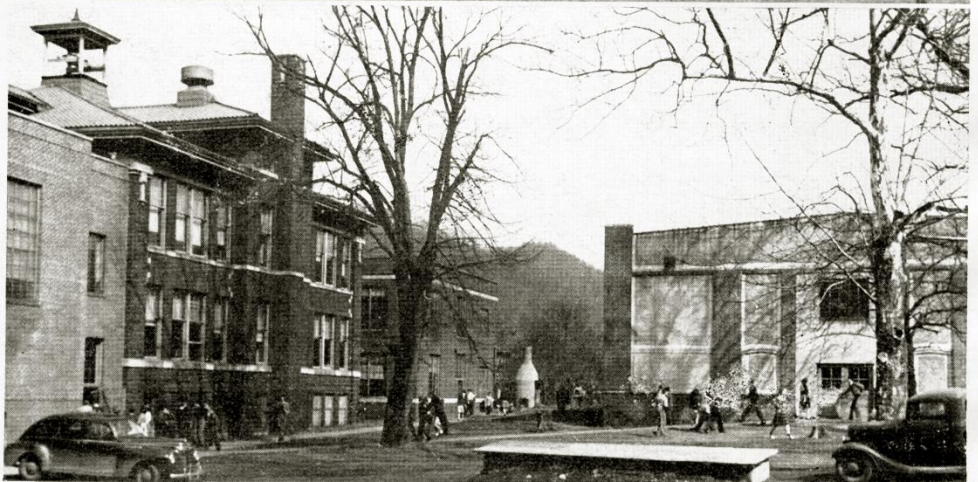
Jerry West and his siblings attended East Bank High School. These images from the 1947 East Bank yearbook show a typical day at the school.



*De Luxe Studio - Charleston, W. Va.
710 1-2 Lee Street*

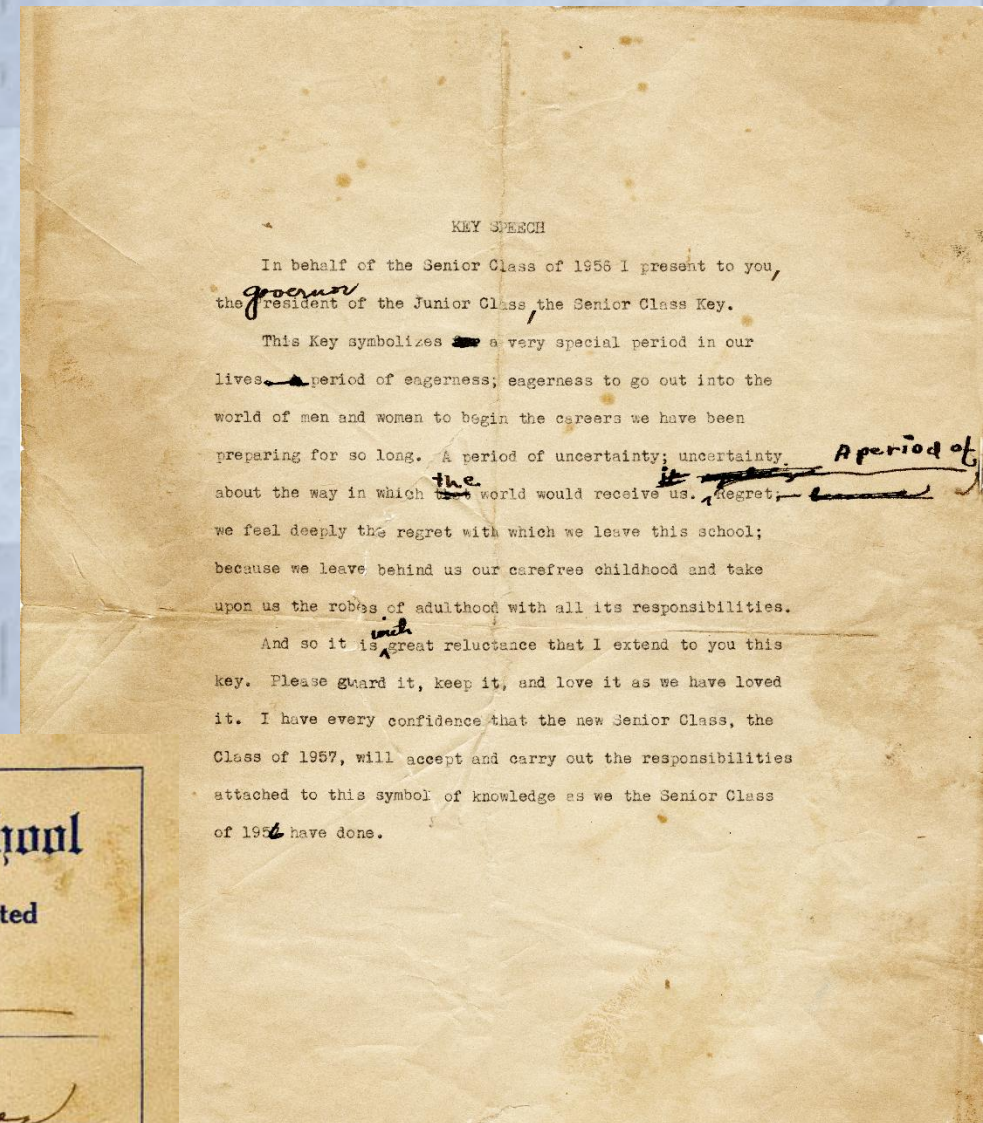
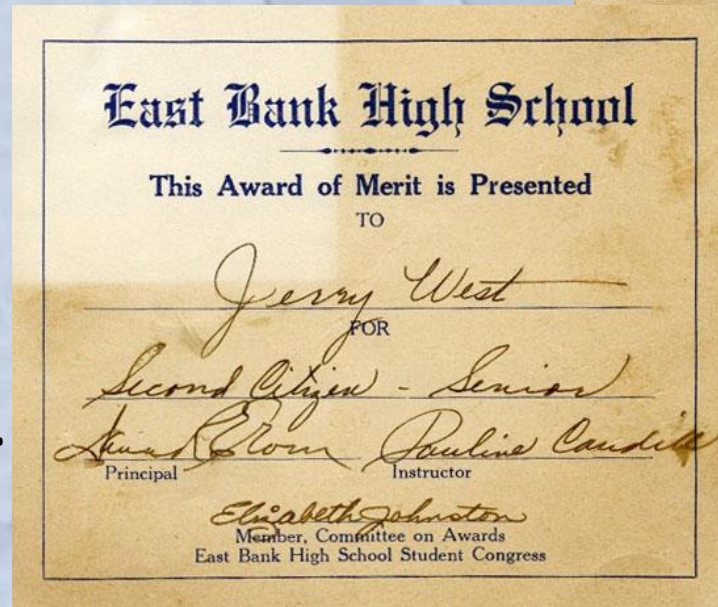
Jerry West High School Portrait

A portrait of Jerry West during his school years at East Bank High School.



Academic Excellence

Jerry West was a good student in addition to being a gifted athlete. He received this Merit Award certificate his senior year. West was part of the student government and delivered the “Key Speech” passing on the class key to members of the incoming senior class.



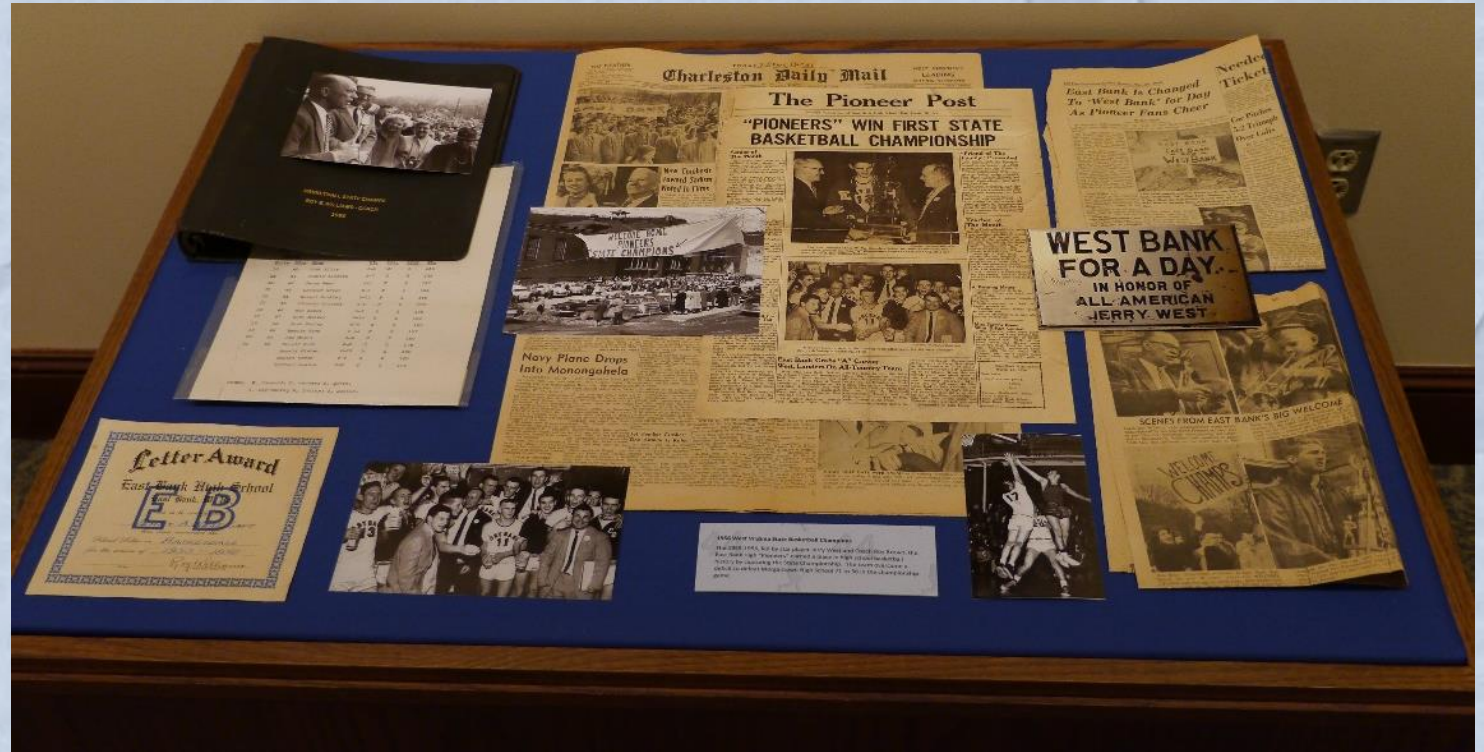
Senior Senate

Jerry West was an active student at East Bank High School. In this image, he is pictured with other members of the Senior Senate, a student government group, ca. 1956.



1956 West Virginia State Basketball Champions

In 1955-1956, led by star player Jerry West and Coach Roy Brown, the East Bank High "Pioneers" earned a place in high school basketball history by capturing the State Championship. The team overcame a deficit to defeat Morgantown High School 71 to 56 in the championship game.





East Bank High School Pioneers Basketball Team, 1956



**East Bank High School Pioneers Basketball Team Reunion,
ca. 1980s**

Record Breaker

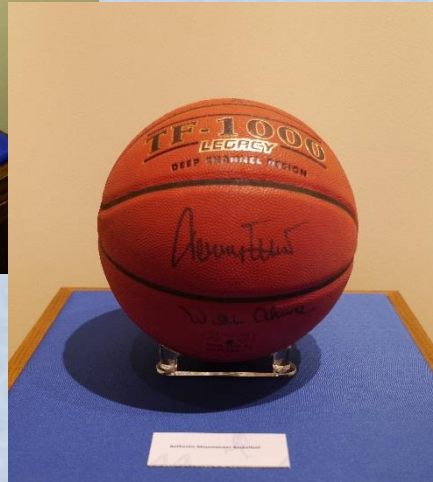
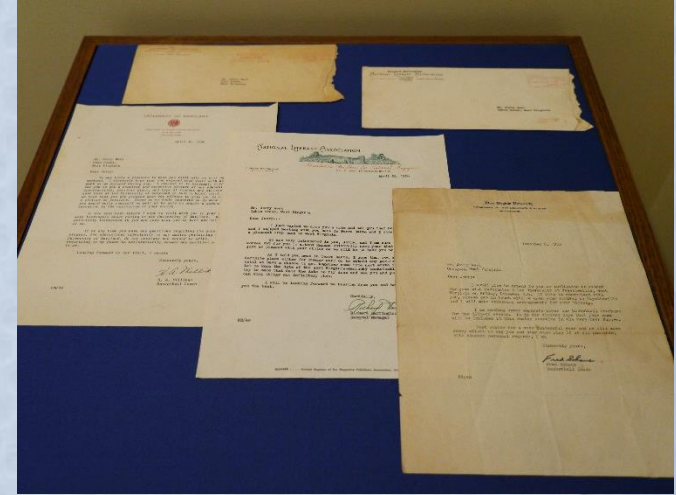
Jerry West (No. 12) set a new state record with this very shot – 860 points in a single season! He would go on to top the 900 point mark before the season's end (1956). Also pictured on the court here is Bob Green (No. 20) of East Bank and Bob Short (No. 24) of Mullens. West was East Bank's small starting forward. He was named All-State from 1953–1956, then All-American in 1956 during which he was named West Virginia Player of the Year.



Welcome to WVU



As a result of his impressive high school career, some sixty colleges across the nation vied to recruit Jerry West, including perennial powerhouses like Kansas and Maryland (see letters at right). A West Virginian at heart, West was a Mountaineer fan as a school boy and his decision to attend West Virginia University was in fact fulfillment of a dream.



In May 1956, Mountaineer Coach Fred Schaus wrote to Jerry West welcoming him to the Mountaineers saying, "I am confident you will never regret your decision at any time during your four years here in Morgantown." Truer words were never spoken. Jerry West's bond with WVU and Mountaineers everywhere remains strong to this day.

One of Ann's Boys

In the early 1950s a small, unassuming house on Beechurst Avenue, next to the WVU Fieldhouse (Stansbury Hall), became a second home to many on the WVU basketball team. The home belonged to a local pharmacist, Ann Dinardi, and her sister Erlinda. The first female graduate of the WVU School of Pharmacy, Ann was part owner of Moore and Patriot Pharmacy in downtown Morgantown. Erlinda worked as a sales clerk at Chico's Ice Cream parlor just up the street on Beechurst.

The sisters' lives changed forever when they received a call from WVU Athletic Director, Red Brown, seeking lodging for one of his star basketball players, "Hot" Rod Hundley. Hundley had left WVU, hoping to join the NBA, but had had a change of heart and returned to Morgantown. Because of his late enrollment, there wasn't a place for Hundley in the dorms. When the Dinardi's agreed to take Hundley in, a tradition was born that would establish the little house on Beechurst as a home away from home for many of WVU's basketball players.

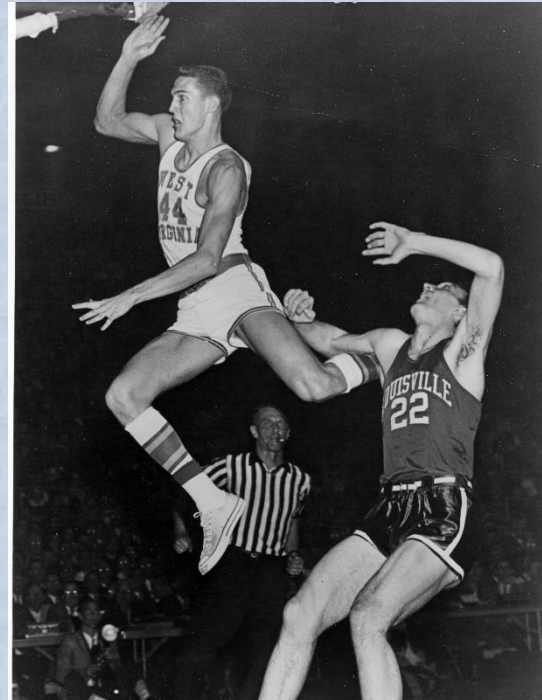
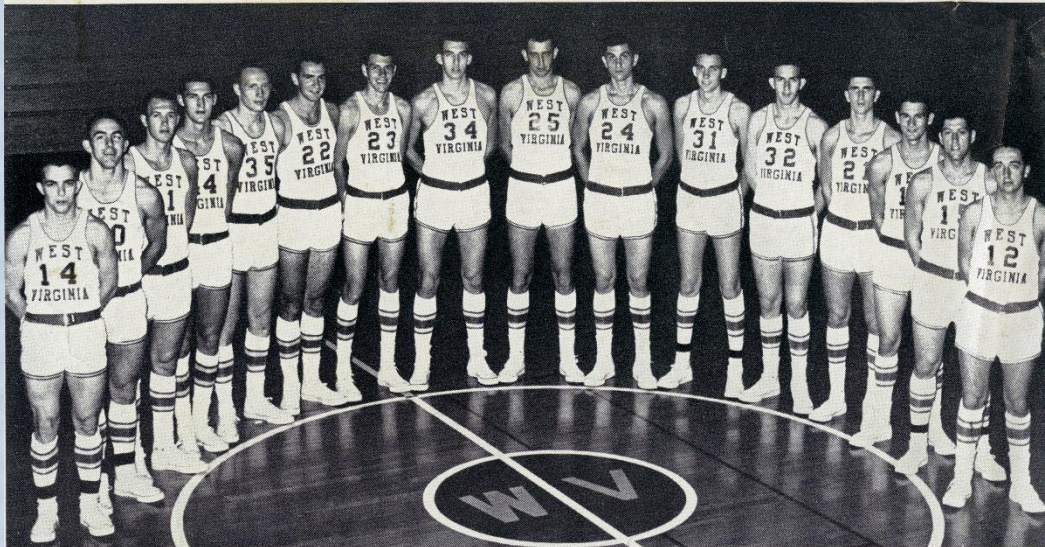


In the summer of 1956, WVU's newest recruit, Jerry West, moved into this little house. The nurturing environment proved to be a godsend to a shy young man who faced a difficult transition from his rural roots to a major university. Though he would go on to become one of the NBA's greatest players, he would never forget the love, encouragement and support he received from Dinardi's.

While Erlinda died in 1980, Ann continued to live on Beechurst for another half century. "Ann's Boys" would continue to visit her there whenever they were back in Morgantown. In 1996, they gathered at Lakeview Resort for Ann's surprise 90th birthday party. The former players all wore t-shirts with Ann's likeness in her honor. Ann was also on hand in 2000 when part of Beechurst Avenue was renamed "Jerry West Boulevard." Ann passed away in 2003 at the age of 97 but will be eternally remembered as the "Mother of WVU Basketball."

1959 NCAA National Championship

In 1959, the Mountaineers came one point away from winning the NCAA Men's Division I Basketball National Championship. WVU defeated powerhouse Louisville in the Final Four to advance to the Championship Game in which they bowed to California. Despite the loss, WVU's Jerry West was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.



Mid-Air in the 1959 NCAA Tournament

Jerry West flies past Louisville's John Turner during the 1959 NCAA Semi-Finals.



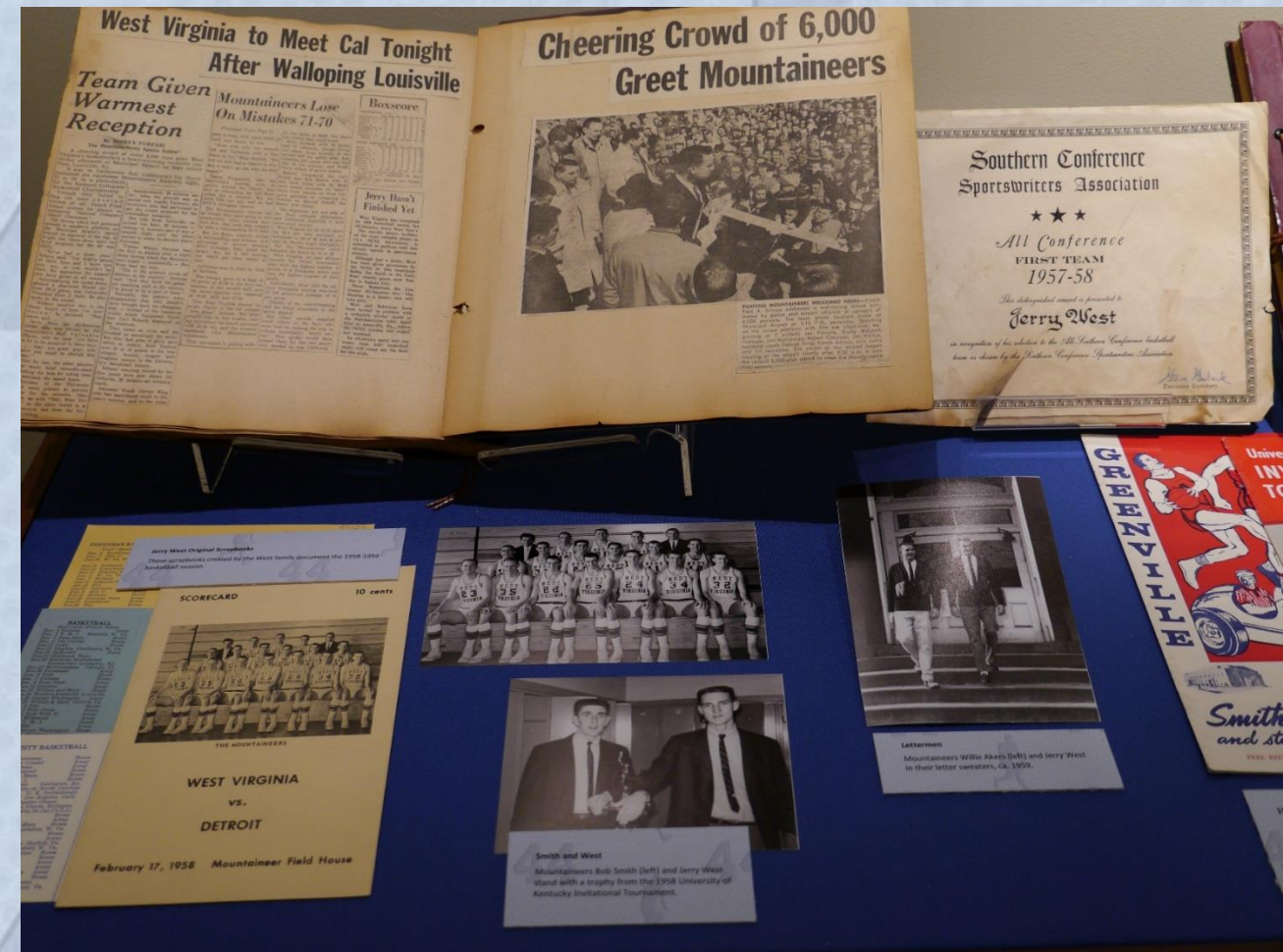
Mountaineers Bob Smith (left) and Jerry West stand with a 1959 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball tournament trophy.

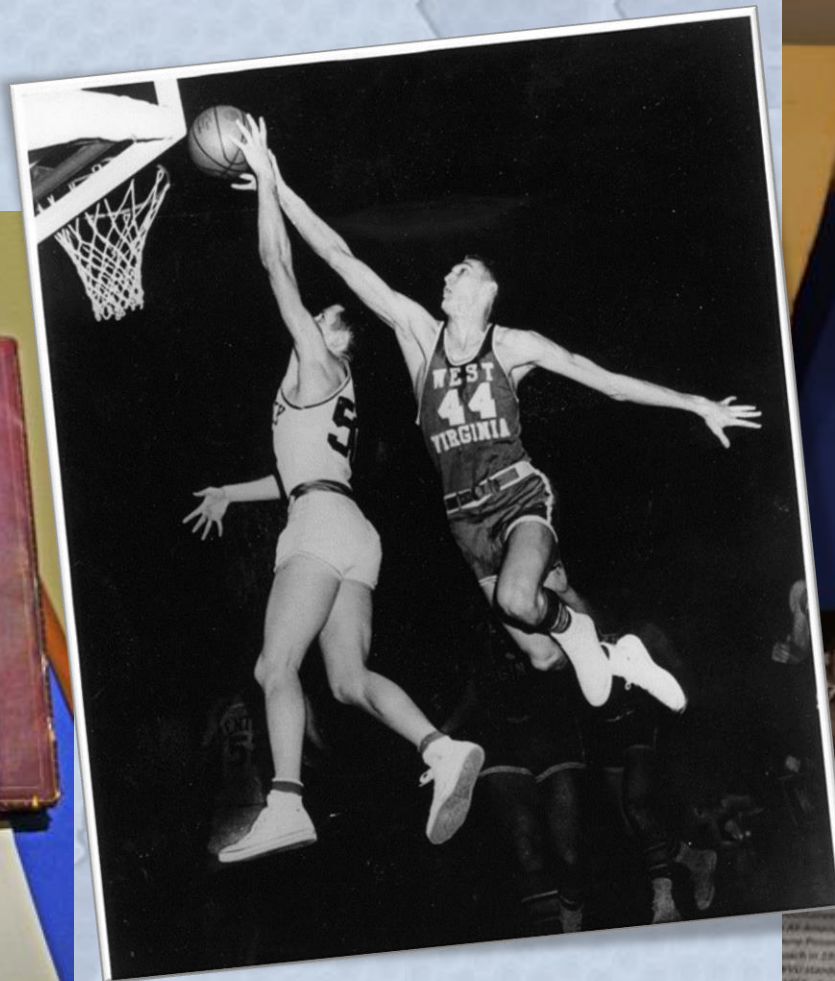
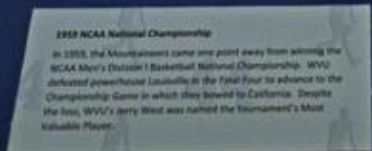
College Years

The West family scrapbooks below and at left contain clippings from Jerry's college basketball seasons.



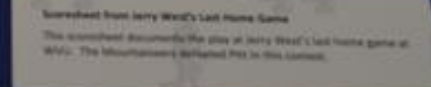
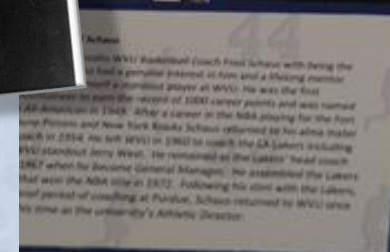
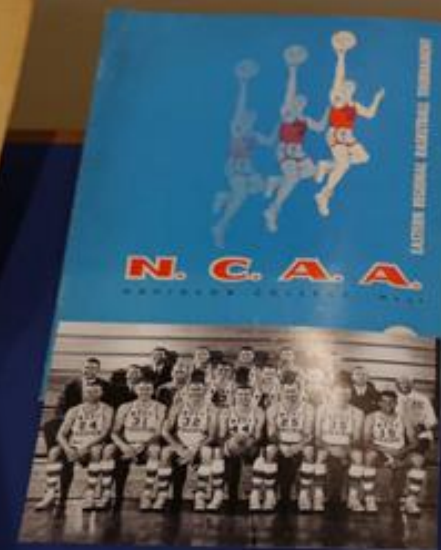
Lettermen - Mountaineers Willie Akers (left) and Jerry West in their letter sweaters, ca. 1959.





Jerry West Foils a Lay-Up


West blocks a layup by the University of Kentucky's Adrian Smith in 1957. WVU handed Kentucky one of just five home losses in 15 years in this game. Rivals in this game, West and Smith would become teammates three years later on the 1960 United States Olympic team.



The WVU Field House (Stansbury Hall)

The WVU Field House was the home to WVU basketball until the opening of the Coliseum in 1970. This is the floor on which Jerry West played. Now known as Stansbury Hall, the building currently houses a fitness center, the ROTC program, and WVU's Department of Philosophy.



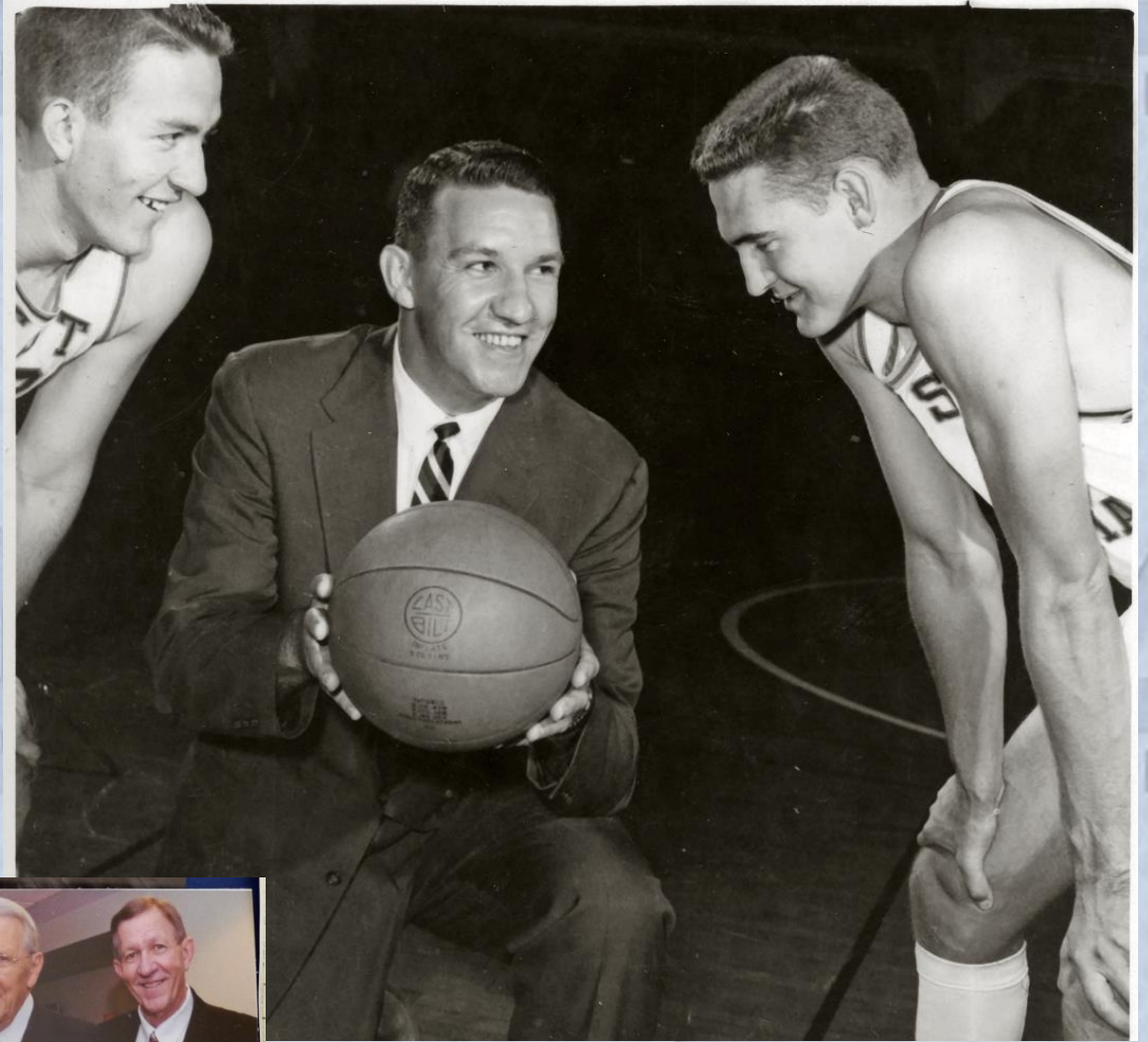


Highlights from the 1958-1959 Mountaineer Basketball Season

Video available on YouTube:
<https://youtu.be/k1TdptecUnk>

Coach Fred Schaus

Jerry West credits WVU Basketball Coach Fred Schaus with being the first coach who had a genuine interest in him and a lifelong mentor. Schaus was himself a standout player at WVU. He was the first Mountaineer to earn the record of 1000 career points and was named an All-American in 1949. After a career in the NBA playing for the Fort Wayne Pistons and New York Knicks, Schaus returned to his alma mater to coach in 1954. He left WVU in 1960 to coach the LA Lakers including his WVU standout Jerry West. He remained as the Lakers' head coach until 1967 when he became General Manager. He assembled the Lakers team that won the NBA title in 1972. Following his stint with the Lakers, and a brief period of coaching at Purdue, Schaus returned to WVU once again, this time as the university's Athletic Director.





A Pretty Jump Shot - Jerry West taking a shot during a match up between WVU and Tennessee, ca. 1960.



Nine Times

Jerry West broke his nose nine times throughout his basketball playing career, but he rarely missed a game. Here he is guarded by his Olympic team co-captain Oscar Robertson

Scoresheet from Jerry West's Last Home Game

This scoresheet documents the
play at Jerry West's last home
game at WVU.

The Mountaineers defeated
Pitt in this contest.

West Virginia

VS

43RD. CASSATIVE

HOME COURT WIN.

Pitt.

2/10/60

at Morgantown

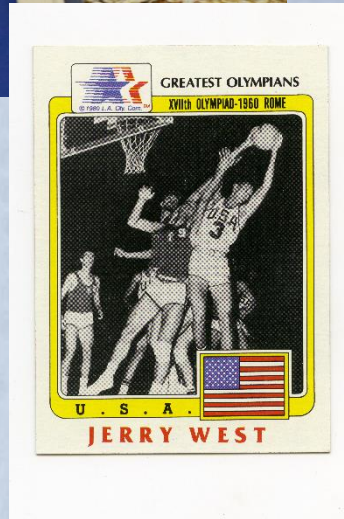
Last Home game
for WEST, AKERS,
WARREN + GOODE.

FOULS	NAME	POINTS	WVA - RIT	WVA - PITT	WVA - ATT	
①	1 WEST	27			65-55	89-75
②	111 AKERS	2	2-0	31-27	66-55	
③	111 WARREN	12	4-0	33-28	66-57	
④	111 PETRONE	13	4-1	33-29	68-57	
⑤	111 RICHE	2	6-1	35-29	68-57	
⑥	111 GOODE	10	7-1	35-31	68-59	
⑦	1 POSCH	6	7-3	37-31	70-59	
⑧	POPOVICH	6	7-4	39-31	70-59	
⑨	111 MILLER	10	7-5	41-31	72-59	
⑩	111 WARD	11	9-5	41-33	72-59	
⑪	25 SERDICH	2	10-5	41-35	74-59	
⑫	FOULS BOOE	11	10-7	41-37	74-61	
⑬	1- VIGNIO	11	12-7	41-39	74-63	
⑭	111 MILLS	FOULED OUT	14-9	41-40	76-63	
⑮	111 FRIDLEY	8	16-9	41-42	76-63	
⑯	111 FALENSKI	12	16-10	42-42	78-65	
⑰	111 MAURO	13	16-11	42-44	79-65	
⑱	111 SANKEY	13	18-11	42-44	79-66	
⑲	11 SMITH	2	20-11	44-44	79-66	
⑳	1 STINEHART	2	20-13	46-44	79-67	
㉑	1 DITKA	4	21-13	48-44	79-67	
㉒	KELLER	6	21-15	48-44	81-67	
㉓	1 MASER	6	21-17	49-44	81-67	
㉔	19 foul	15	21-19	50-44	81-68	
㉕			21-21	50-45	83-68	
㉖			21-23	50-46	83-69	
㉗			21-25	52-46	83-70	
㉘			21-27	55-46	85-70	
㉙			21-29	57-46	85-70	
㉚			21-31	57-47	85-70	
㉛			21-33	59-47	85-70	
㉜			21-35	59-49	85-70	
㉝			21-37	60-49	85-70	
㉞			21-39	61-49	85-70	
㉟			21-41	62-49	85-70	
㊱			21-43	62-49	85-70	
㊲			21-45	62-49	85-70	
㊳			21-47	62-49	85-70	
㊴			21-49	62-49	85-70	
㊵			21-51	62-49	85-70	
㊶			21-53	62-49	85-70	
㊷			21-55	62-49	85-70	
㊸			21-57	62-49	85-70	
㊹			21-59	62-49	85-70	
㊺			22-01	62-49	85-70	
㊻			22-03	62-49	85-70	
㊼			22-05	62-49	85-70	
㊽			22-07	62-49	85-70	
㊾			22-09	62-49	85-70	
㊿			22-11	62-49	85-70	
1			22-13	62-49	85-70	
2			22-15	62-49	85-70	
3			22-17	62-49	85-70	
4			22-19	62-49	85-70	
5			22-21	62-49	85-70	
6			22-23	62-49	85-70	
7			22-25	62-49	85-70	
8			22-27	62-49	85-70	
9			22-29	62-49	85-70	
10			22-31	62-49	85-70	
11			22-33	62-49	85-70	
12			22-35	62-49	85-70	
13			22-37	62-49	85-70	
14			22-39	62-49	85-70	
15			22-41	62-49	85-70	
16			22-43	62-49	85-70	
17			22-45	62-49	85-70	
18			22-47	62-49	85-70	
19			22-49	62-49	85-70	
20			22-51	62-49	85-70	
21			22-53	62-49	85-70	
22			22-55	62-49	85-70	
23			22-57	62-49	85-70	
24			22-59	62-49	85-70	
25			23-01	62-49	85-70	
26			23-03	62-49	85-70	
27			23-05	62-49	85-70	
28			23-07	62-49	85-70	
29			23-09	62-49	85-70	
30			23-11	62-49	85-70	
31			23-13	62-49	85-70	
32			23-15	62-49	85-70	
33			23-17	62-49	85-70	
34			23-19	62-49	85-70	
35			23-21	62-49	85-70	
36			23-23	62-49	85-70	
37			23-25	62-49	85-70	
38			23-27	62-49	85-70	
39			23-29	62-49	85-70	
40			23-31	62-49	85-70	
41			23-33	62-49	85-70	
42			23-35	62-49	85-70	
43			23-37	62-49	85-70	
44			23-39	62-49	85-70	
45			23-41	62-49	85-70	
46			23-43	62-49	85-70	
47			23-45	62-49	85-70	
48			23-47	62-49	85-70	
49			23-49	62-49	85-70	
50			23-51	62-49	85-70	
51			23-53	62-49	85-70	
52			23-55	62-49	85-70	
53			23-57	62-49	85-70	
54			23-59	62-49	85-70	
55			24-01	62-49	85-70	
56			24-03	62-49	85-70	
57			24-05	62-49	85-70	
58			24-07	62-49	85-70	
59			24-09	62-49	85-70	
60			24-11	62-49	85-70	
61			24-13	62-49	85-70	
62			24-15	62-49	85-70	
63			24-17	62-49	85-70	
64			24-19	62-49	85-70	
65			24-21	62-49	85-70	
66			24-23	62-49	85-70	
67			24-25	62-49	85-70	
68			24-27	62-49	85-70	
69			24-29	62-49	85-70	
70			24-31	62-49	85-70	
71			24-33	62-49	85-70	
72			24-35	62-49	85-70	
73			24-37	62-49	85-70	
74			24-39	62-49	85-70	
75			24-41	62-49	85-70	
76			24-43	62-49	85-70	
77			24-45	62-49	85-70	
78			24-47	62-49	85-70	
79			24-49	62-49	85-70	
80			24-51	62-49	85-70	
81			24-53	62-49	85-70	
82			24-55	62-49	85-70	
83			24-57	62-49	85-70	
84			24-59	62-49	85-70	
85			25-01	62-49	85-70	
86			25-03	62-49	85-70	
87			25-05	62-49	85-70	
88			25-07	62-49	85-70	
89			25-09	62-49	85-70	
90			25-11	62-49	85-70	
91			25-13	62-49	85-70	
92			25-15	62-49	85-70	
93			25-17	62-49	85-70	
94			25-19	62-49	85-70	
95			25-21	62-49	85-70	
96			25-23	62-49	85-70	
97			25-25	62-49	85-70	
98			25-27	62-49	85-70	
99			25-29	62-49	85-70	
100			25-31	62-49	85-70	

Last home game for Jerry West
A modest, talented, and everything
else that goes to make up a
Gentleman. Good Luck for
a great future.
J. J. Small

1960 United States Men's Olympic Basketball Team

The 1960 US Men's Olympic Basketball team is considered to be the best amateur basketball team of all time and is one of only a handful of teams to be included in the Naismith Hall of Fame as a unit. Coached by California Golden Bears coach Pete Newell, the team went 8-0 to bring home the Gold Medal. The team was comprised of Jay Arnette, Walt Bellamy, Bob Boozer, Terry Dischinger, Burdette Haldorson, Darral Imhoff, Allen Kelley, Lester Lane, Jerry Lucas, Oscar Roberston, Adrian Smith, and Jerry West.



Olympic Co-Captains - Jerry West and Oscar Roberston served as co-captains of the US Men's Olympic basketball team in Rome.



Winning the Olympic Gold

Prior to the commencement of the Olympic Games, Jerry West penned this postcard to his high school coach, Roy Williams, to let him know about his adventure so far. The Olympic win was a thrilling and defining moment for West.



*To continue the
story of Jerry West,
please see Gallery 2
Slideshow*