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## The late Ray Crowe selected for National High School Hall of Fame

### Legend becomes first Indiana high school basketball coach inducted into National HOF

Ray Crowe, the legendary boys basketball coach who guided Crispus Attucks High School to four state finals appearances in the 1950s, will be inducted posthumously into the National High School Hall of Fame this summer.

Crowe, the first Indiana high school basketball coach to be inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame, is part of the 2022 Hall of Fame class which also includes Notah Begay, the late Walter Payton, Sanya Richards-Ross, and Thurman Thomas.

The Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place on July 1 in San Antonio, TX as a highlight of the annual Summer Meeting of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

[Read yesterday's announcement from the NFHS](#)

Crowe, who passed away in 2003 at the age of 88, took over the reins of the Crispus Attucks boys basketball team in 1951 installing an up-tempo, aggressive style of play and established what would become one of the greatest eras of Indiana high school basketball.

He taught his Attucks teams to play with discipline and sportsmanship; players were not allowed to trash-talk or complain to game officials while facing blatant racism and discrimination from opposing teams, fans and game officials.

After reaching the IHSAA Boys Basketball State Finals in 1951, his first year as coach, he guided Crispus Attucks to three consecutive state championship games in Indiana's famed single class basketball tournament. In 1955, Crowe became the first African-American coach and Attucks became the first African-American school in the country to win an open state title. He then coached the Hoosier State's first-ever undefeated state champion in 1956 (31-0) and state runner-up in 1957. The "Flying Tigers" went 61-1 during their two championship seasons.

During his seven seasons (1950-57), Crowe coached the Tigers to a 179-20 record (.899) including a state record 45-game winning streak. Remarkably, all this success came despite playing all their games on the road or at a neutral site because they did not have a suitable school gymnasium to host games.

Crowe was known as coach, mentor, father figure, teacher and guardian to his players and other members of the Indianapolis African-American community.



He coached several players that went on to great careers including the legendary Oscar Robertson (the Big O and 1983 National High School Hall of Fame inductee), Hallie Bryant and Willie Gardner, both of Harlem Globetrotters fame, Willie Merriweather, Albert Maxey, Ed Searcy, Bill Brown, Bob Jewell, and Bailey “Flap” Robertson.

Following his final game as coach in 1957, he became the Crispus Attucks High School athletic director for 11 years during which he helped lay the groundwork for a modern gymnasium. Its playing floor is now named Ray Crowe Court and he holds a prominent place in the Crispus Attucks Museum which sits adjacent to the school gym.

Beginning in 1967, he was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives (1967-75) and ultimately became the Chairman of the House Education Committee. In 1976, he became director of the Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation. He also served on the Indianapolis City-County Council from 1983-1987.

Inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 1968, Crowe was also cast in the movie, *Hoosiers*. He didn't have a speaking role but played the part of the South Bend Central coach in the state championship game and could be seen consoling his players during the post-game scenes.

In 1991, Crowe was named a *Sagamore of the Wabash* by Indiana Governor Evan Bayh. The award is the highest honor an Indiana governor can bestow and is a personal tribute to someone who has rendered a distinguished service to the State or to the Governor.

A residence hall at the University of Indianapolis was re-named in 2012 for Crowe and his brother - Ray & George Crowe Hall where they both graduated when it was known as Indiana Central College.

Ray Crowe Elementary School in Whiteland, IN, was dedicated in July 2021 near the family farm he grew up on in Johnson County just south of Indianapolis. He graduated from Whiteland High School in 1934 where he was a two-sport star lettering in basketball and baseball.

**“The games won, the championships, those things are for the moment and then they are sweet memories. The enduring satisfaction has been watching young men turn their basketball experiences into successful lives away from the court. I don't know what higher honor a coach could ever ask for.” ~ Ray Crowe**



This iconic Indiana high school basketball photo shows Crispus Attucks head coach Ray Crowe (holding ball) with his 1955 starters (l to r) Oscar Robertson, Shedrick Mitchell, Willie Merriweather, William Hampton, and Bill Scott (Photo courtesy Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame).

The 2022 Hall of Fame Class was chosen after a two-level selection process involving a screening committee composed of active high school state association administrators, coaches and officials, and a final selection committee composed of coaches, former athletes, state association officials, media representatives and educational leaders. Nominations were made through NFHS member associations.

Crowe becomes the 18th individual from the state of Indiana to be inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame. Others that have been inducted from Indiana and year of induction include:

**Athletes (9)**

Damon Bailey (2019)  
Larry Bird (1995)  
Terry Dischinger (1995)  
Maicel (Malone) Green (2020)  
Rick Mount (1986)  
LaTaunya Pollard (2005)  
Oscar Robertson (1983)  
Robert "Fuzzy" Vandivier (1986)  
John Wooden (1991)

**Coaches (6)**

John Campbell (1989)  
**Ray Crowe (2022)**  
Dick Dullaghan (2009)  
Chuck Koeppen (2013)  
Ken Schreiber (1999)  
Steve Shondell (2017)

**Administrator (1)**

Robert Gardner (2019)

**Official (1)**

Robert Marcinek (1996)

**Other (1)**

Dave Krider (1997)



Coach Ray Crowe is hoisted onto the shoulders of his players after the 1955 state championship game (photo courtesy of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame).



**“Crowe literally changed the face of basketball in Indiana and lifted the spirits of an entire race.”**

*Columbus Republic journalist Harry McCrawley after Crowe died in 2003*

**“I know if we came along now things would be different. There would be money, fame, scholarships and the opportunity to play in the NBA but we were given something much better. Mr. Crowe. He became our coach, our mentor and a father. He made us believe in ourselves and together we changed the game of basketball.”**

*Former Crispus Attucks player Bill Hampton*

**“Call that decade of the 1950s Hoosier basketball’s Era of Oscar (Robertson). The schoolboy sport that was Indiana’s trademark was great before and great after, but never, ever greater than in that Attucks-dominated decade.”**

*Bloomington Herald-Times Hall of Fame sportswriter Bob Hammel*



***About the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. (IHSAA)***

*The IHSAA is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization that is self-supporting without the use of tax monies. Since its founding in 1903, the Association’s mission has been to provide wholesome, educational athletics for the secondary schools of Indiana. Its 407-member high schools - public, institutional, parochial, and private – pay no annual membership fee or incur entry fees to play in the Association’s tournaments. A state tournament series is conducted annually in 22 sports, 10 for girls, 10 for boys and two co-ed (unified flag football and unified track and field). A 19-person board of directors, elected by member school principals, governs the organization.*