



There are currently seven banners hanging in the rafters of the Quicken Loans Arena which are used to commemorate former players and team personnel. To an outsider, that number may appear to be high for a team that has only been to the finals once and never even won a game once getting to the championship series.

I disagree and believe that the Cleveland Cavaliers have a rich history and there are men who played a great part in shaping it.

It would be a shame for athletes like Mark Price, Larry Nance or Austin Carr to not be honored by the team in that manner.

One name that I feel does not belong in the rafters is Nate Thurmond. His career achievements are undeniable.

Thurmond was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1985 as a result of his great career achievements.

He is the first player in NBA history to record a quadruple-double.

Thurmond was a career 15 PPG and 15 RPG player.

Additionally, he is a 7 time All-Star, 2 time All-Defensive First Team member, 3 time Defensive Second-Team member, All-Rookie First Team and a member of the NBA's 50

th

Anniversary All-Time Team.

Despite these great accomplishments, he was a member of the Cleveland Cavaliers in the tail-end of his career.

In his 114 games with Cleveland, he averaged just under 5 PPG.

Allow me to make an analogy: How many Cavaliers fans would be on board with retiring Shaquille O'Neal's number? His career is among one of the best of all time, but that doesn't change the fact that he was a year away from being retired and burnt out in the stretch-run with Cleveland.

I find it questionable that Lenny Wilkens is not somehow honored by the Cleveland Cavaliers. According to Joe Tait, Wilkens was the first "legitimate star" player to ever wear the Cavaliers wine and gold.

In his two seasons as a player with the Cavaliers, Wilkens averaged 18.46 PPG, 7.71 APG and 4.18 RPG.

These are fantastic numbers for a player in his mid-thirties and in the tail-end of his career.

Lenny Wilkens had a very established career as a player and coach (sometimes simultaneously). He averaged 16.5 PPG, 6.7 APG and 4.7 RPG in his playing career. Wilkens is a 9 time All-Star, All-Star game MVP and a member of the NBA 50th

Anniversary All-Time Team.

As a player, Wilkens was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1989.

On top of his career accolades, he was still a very effective player when he was a member of the Cavaliers.

The achievements do not end as a player for Wilkens. In 1994, he was received Coach of the Year honors. Additionally, Lenny Wilkens was voted as one of the Top 10 Coaches in NBA History in 1997.

Lenny Wilkens spent seven years of his career as the head coach of the Cavaliers and those are fondly remembered as some of the most successful years for the franchise.

One can talk about different numbers and achievements, but the most impressive thing Wilkens did as a coach was take over the 5-17 Seattle Supersonics and turn them into a championship team within two seasons.

The Cleveland Cavaliers and Lenny Wilkens relationship lasted for a total of nine years. As a player, he helped the team win games and provided a strong, veteran presence.

As a coach, he took the team to some great heights and helped develop the young talent and turn them into a championship contender.

Wilkens did more for the franchise than other people whose numbers are immortalized in the rafters of the Quicken Loans Arena.

In addition to the positive impact that he had on the Cavaliers organization as a player and a coach, I find it a shame that his number is not retired by any team because of the relocation of the Seattle Supersonics to Oklahoma City.

It is unfortunate when man whose career as a player and a coach is as decorated as Lenny Wilkens' is not immortalized by having his number retired by a single franchise.

Considering the questionable decision by the Cavaliers to retire Nate Thurmond's number for his career achievements, it seems reasonable to give Lenny Wilkens that same honor for his career milestones and his contributions to the team as a player and coach.

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