

## H. Stanley Hardin

A winner.

No, other word describes Stan Hardin better. He brought that winning attitude with him wherever his ball bounced. Stanley Hardin grew up in a basketball atmosphere .....a "gym rat" is a better term. His father Harry K. Hardin was a great high school player, college player and coach himself. Just look in the KHSAA state tournament stats and you will see his name in the box scores when he played for Tolu in 1930 and 1931. He made the All-tournament team both years and was name the recipient of the Sportsmanship Award in 1930. Stanley's dad also coached at Fairdale High School and took his 1942 and 1950 teams to the Sweet Sixteen. Yes, right there under his dad's feet was Stanley, the gym rat.

Stanley Hardin wanted to graduate from Fairdale but was sent to Southern High School while the new Fairdale was being built. The little man, he was only 5-7, was and outstanding player and after high school his itinerary would make even the mappers at AAA tired and worn out. Stan served the the armed forces, and his name can be found on college transcripts from the north to the south, from the east to the west. Through all his travels he never, ever lost his enthusiasm or his sight on becomeing a teacher and a coach. When his journey ended, with diploma in hand Stan came back to Kentucky. Wherever you venture throughout basketball country you will find someone that met him They would always leave with a smile on their face and a funny story in their hearts.

Stanley Hardin never met a stranger, never made an enemy in the 50 years that I have known him, as a small child, and adolescent, his assistant coach for 13 years, and most of all, my friend for life.

Thirty-three years after Stanley's dad took a Fairdale team to the Sweet Sixteen the laughable coach took Fairdale to Rupp Arena .....he had lived one of his dreams. This feat was accomplished in just his fifth year as the Bulldogs mentor. Even more amazing is the fact that when he arrived at Fairdale from Fern Creek (76-90) the Dogs had won only five games the previous three years, in the always tough Sixth Region.

"Hardee", as we sometimes called him, continued to spread his humor and basketball knowledge throughout the nation as he worked basketball camps across the USA. He was such a hard worker, had great leadership skills and was respected by so many that you would usually find him being "the man in charge". Such was the case with the nationally know B/C All-star Camp. An invitation only camp for high school players that now has a list of over two hundred NBA player that once met face to face with "Stan the man". I will guarantee you that to this day ever prepster that passed through that camp or any other basketball event remembers us upbeat personality. The list would go on-and-on of the places and people where he left a memory in someones heart.

Finally, Stan reached his ultimate dream as a coach in the Bluegrass state, when his

1990 and 1991 teams won back-to-back State Championships. He becomes one of only four coaches to accomplish that feat since 1920. He is the only coach to win state titles in both Freedom Hall and Rupp Arena. Like his dad you will find his name / teams listed numerous times in the state tournament record book.

Stanley has coached numerous basketball events .....to many to mention, but that list does include the Kentucky All-Stars, and several Derby Classics.

At Fairdale his record was 247-138. He was brought in just to try and get the Bulldogs to the regional tournament .....the community got more than they ask for: three trips to the Sweet Sixteen and two State Championship banners to hang in the gym which is named after his father.

If H. Stanley Hardin had never won a game in his life he would deserve to be in the Hall of Fame. His name is etched in the hearts of everyone that came in contact with him. As a coach he spent his hard earned money, opened the doors of his house, loaned his car to those in need, and opened his heart to everyone.

Stan Hardin gave the greatest gift of all. He gave *himself*.

*Clayton N. Gonder*, Head Coach Fairdale High School

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