

*W. Milward Dedman, Jr.*  
Mercer County Judge Executive  
134 South Main Street  
Harrodsburg, KY 40330

OCT 31 2012

October 15, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for James Richard "Dickie" Parsons to become a recipient of the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame. Dickie is a man I have known and admired for many years.

He was a true high school star athlete during his years at Harlan High School. A standout in four sports, he garnered All-State and All-Conference honors. I have enclosed documentation of his exceptional athleticism in the attached application. Dickie was also an outstanding student athlete, graduating third in his senior class. He accomplished something few Kentucky high school athletes obtain but most only dream of - he played both basketball and baseball at the University of Kentucky.

His contributions to high school athletics did not end with his high school career. He went on to impact high school athletics as a coach at Glasgow and Boyle County. Most recently, he volunteered as head basketball coach at Mercer County Middle School in order to coach his grandson in boys' basketball and then his granddaughter in girls' basketball. He then joined the Mercer County High School coaching staff as assistant coach.

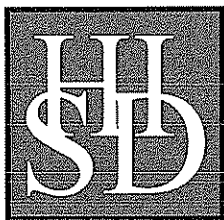
Dickie Parsons was not only a star athlete, but he is an example of integrity and leadership which he has shown in a lifetime of contributions to athletics.

Finally, I know you will select the most deserving candidates to be honored by this award. I ask that you give the utmost consideration to Dickie Parsons. I cannot think of a more deserving person to join the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,



W. Milward Dedman, Jr.  
Mercer County Judge Executive



**HARLAN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

TEL. (606) 573-8700  
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October 29, 2012

420 E. CENTRAL STREET  
HARLAN, KY 40831

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to recommend James Richard "Dickie" Parsons for the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame. Mr. Parsons was an outstanding high school athlete at Harlan High School where he participated in four sports and earned All-Conference and All-State recognition before graduating in 1957. His achievements as a student-athlete have been recognized by Harlan High School where his picture is still displayed in the school's trophy case and a banner in his honor hangs from the gym rafters. From a school that produced All-American and Olympic Champion Wallace "Wah Wah" Jones and Kentucky's Mr. Basketball Charles Thomas, "Dickie" is remembered as one of Harlan High School's most outstanding athletes.

As local lore has it, Harlan High School coaching legend Joe Gilley contacted University of Kentucky Coach Adolph Rupp about "Dickie" but was told Parsons was too small. Unwilling to take "no" for an answer, Gilley convinced Rupp to watch "Dickie" play after which he immediately offered a scholarship to "Little Man" Parsons, the shortest player to ever take the floor for the legendary Rupp. Mr. Parsons went on to the University of Kentucky to become the captain of the basketball and baseball teams in 1961 and an All-American in baseball that same year. Parsons later served as an assistant basketball coach at UK where he helped lead the team to a national championship in 1978.

Harlan High School is honored to call Mr. Parsons one of its most recognized alumni and to have him represent our school and community with great integrity and leadership. On behalf of the school and our district, I highly recommend Mr. Parsons for membership in the Hall of Fame. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

David R. Johnson  
Superintendent

*"Partners For Success"*

**EQUAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT INSTITUTION**

# Dickie Parsons Awarded Scholarship From U. K.

## Star Harlan High Athlete Excelled In Basketball, Baseball And Football

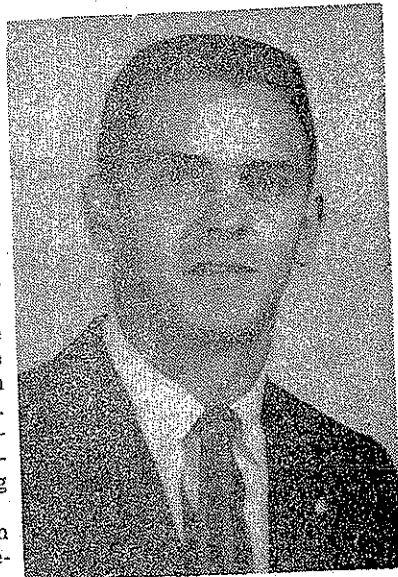
Dickie Parsons, Harlan High School athlete, has received a scholarship from the University of Kentucky effective September 1957, it was announced today.

The grant-in-aid for basketball and baseball was received from Leo M. Chamberlin, vice president and chairman of the committee on scholarships. The award consists of expenses such as allowed by the Southeastern Conference.

Notification of the award was sent to the commissioner of the Southeastern conference and the athletic director of each of the 11 other member schools, Chamberlin said.

Parsons, an A student, will be graduated in May. During his high school career he has excelled in basketball, baseball and football. At the University he plans to participate in both basketball and baseball and will enter the coaching profession following graduation.

The star athlete has lettered in the three major sports since becoming a member of the Green Dragon team in 1955. During the past basketball season he holds an average of 22.9 points per game in 22 contests. He was named to the all-CVC team Saturday by the coaches of the conference.



**FUTURE WILDCAT — Dickie  
Parsons, Dragon star**

# Harlan pays tribute to Parsons, Francis

By JEFF DRUMMOND  
Sports Editor

In keeping with its tradition of honoring former Green Dragon standouts, Harlan High School paid tribute to Dick Parsons and George Francis prior to its game Friday against Cumberland.

Green and white banners were unfurled from the ceiling before a packed gymnasium as Francis and Parsons joined the previous group of honorees, including E.R. "Doc" Gray, Joe Gilly, Wallace "Wah Wah" Jones and Ernest Trosper.

Parsons, a three-sport star from 1955-57, attended the ceremony and also received a framed kelly green jersey featuring his No. 17 from Harlan Principal David Johnson.

"I'm proud of the fact that I would be recognized this way,"

said Parsons, who later went on to star for the University of Kentucky basketball and baseball teams. "It's a real special honor."

Parsons said that watching the Dragons' game against the Redskins brought back a bundle of memories.

"I always cherished being a Green Dragon," he said. "There's been so many great athletes who have passed through this place that I'm just pleased to be part of that tradition. The tradition and pride of Harlan basketball has changed very little since I was here."

After graduating from Harlan, Parsons found continued success as a Kentucky Wildcat. He served as a captain in both sports as a senior, and earned All-America status in baseball.

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## Tribute

Continued from Page 6

Parsons later joined the UK basketball coaching staff as an assistant under Adolph Rupp and Joe B. Hall, and piloted the baseball Wildcats from 1970-72.

"Sports have been good to me," said Parsons, who currently lives in Lexington. "I've had an awfully good career from Harlan all the way down to UK."

Francis served as a coach from 1965-70 and from 1976-78. The Knott County native led the Dragons to regional titles in 1967 and 1969, and the runner-up trophy in 1968.

Following his tenure as a coach, Francis served as a principal and superintendent in the Harlan Independent Schools. His life came to tragic end after a

The program also included a special basketball recognizing the 2,000-point, 700-rebound plateau recently eclipsed by senior guard Casey Lester.

Lester is the third Harlan player to collect over 2,000 points in the 90s. Charles Thomas and Michael Jones also surpassed the mark, having joined a group which includes Wallace Jones and Jeff Miller.

## UK SPORTS INFORMATION

July 2, 1969

Dickie Parsons, one of the "most honored" athletes in University of Kentucky sports history, has been named coach of the Wildcat baseball team.

Athletic Director Harry C. Lancaster, who coached the former Wildcat All-America baseball player, said Parsons' appointment is effective immediately.

Parsons, captain of both the 1960-61 Wildcat basketball and 1961 baseball teams, succeeds Joe (Abe) Shannon, who recently accepted a golfing post with Mississippi State University.

Lancaster said that in addition to baseball coaching duties, Parsons will be available to assist Coach Adolph Rupp's basketball program.

Parsons filled various part-time roles with the basketball team last season, assisting at times with the freshman team, scouting and recruiting as he spent the school term completing his master's degree.

A native of Harlan County, Parsons hit .400 in regular season and .435 in Southeastern Conference play during his senior year (1961). His production included six doubles, a home run and 15 runs batted in. He committed only six errors as a shortstop that season.

His name was added to the Wildcat baseball record book for most at bats (116), most hits (40), most runs (35), most doubles (8) and most assists (79).

He was the second Wildcat named baseball All-America. Dom Fucci achieved the honor in 1949.

On the academic scene, Parsons also earned many honors, including "Outstanding Student of the College of Education" and the 1959-60 and 1960-61 Chandler Trophy given annually to the Wildcat basketball player chosen by a secret committee as best exemplifying the qualities of leadership, scholarship, character and ability. He was also a member of Omicron Delta Kappa honorary.

After graduation, Parsons was basketball and assistant football coach two years at Glasgow High School.

He coached baseball and basketball from 1963-68 at Boyle County High School, where his baseball teams compiled a 65-19 record.

He was married in 1961 to the former Miss Celia Lee Cawood of Harlan. They have two children, Roy Edward, 6, and Kathryn Renee, 3.

# Wildcats Of The Past

## Dick Parsons (1959-61)

The smallest player (at 5'9") ever to play at Kentucky until Randy Embry came along, grew up to be the Wildcat's chief assistant coach.

Dick Parson came to Kentucky from a small coal mining community—Yancey, in Harlan County. He graduated third in the class, scholastically, from Harlan High School, the same school that produced "Wah Wah" Jones. He recounts to Russell Rice in "Big Blue Machine":

"Our little gym looked more like a barn than anything else. It had a lot of cracks, no heat, although at one time there was a potbellied stove, and it was so cold in winter that we played in sweat shirts.

"We would play before school, at noon, and after school, then we'd go home and eat and come back at night. There were some naked lights, so we'd just take two wires and cross them and play until about 9 or 9:30. That's a lot of basketball, but I felt like that was where I learned some of the fundamentals and style of play that helped me a great deal later on. Our grade school team played on dirt courts along the creeks and up and down the Cumberland River.

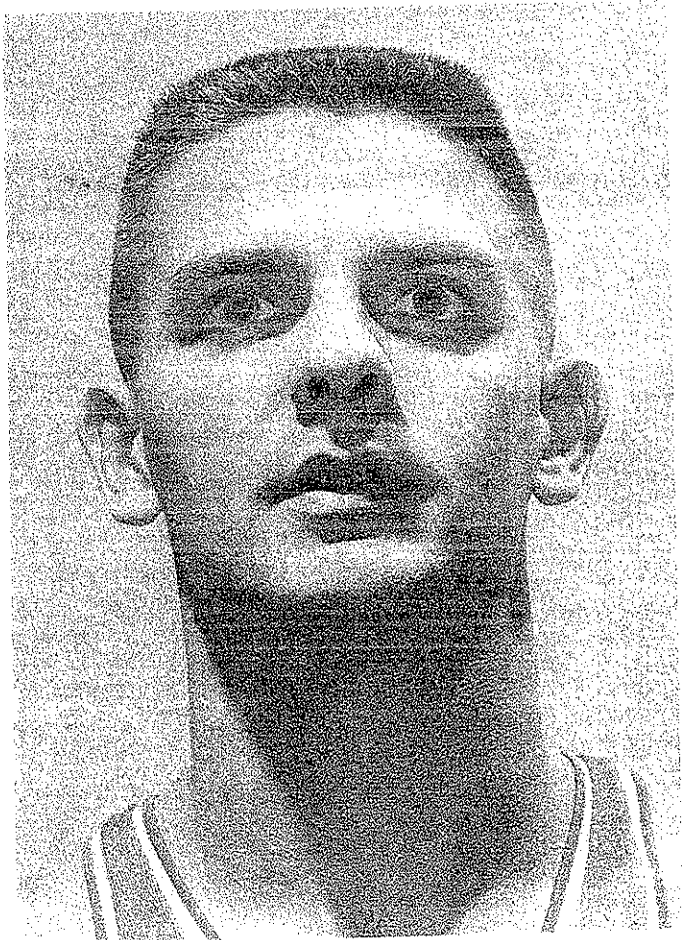
"In my senior year at Harlan High I was not recruited by many schools. I had decided to maybe go out of state, but Rupp and Lancaster sent someone down to see me play in a tournament game, and Rupp came in to visit me and Bobby Slusher of Lone Jack. We both eventually signed at UK. I guess if I had known how tough it would be for a small fellow to play at UK, I never would have attended. At the time I was thinking if I couldn't make it there, I could go elsewhere. And when Coach Rupp kept calling me "Bobby" thinking I was Bobby Watson, I knew I had it made."

As a freshman, Parsons was a regular starter on a Kitten team which featured Billy Ray Lickert, Bobby Slusher, Carroll Burchett, Ned Jennings and Howard Dardeen. At the beginning of the 1958-59 season the UK Fact Book says of Parsons:

"He was a regular starter at guard with Harry Lancaster's impressive yearling squad last season but few of the "guessers" tend to give him much of a chance to beat our bigger men for a varsity starting berth."

At the beginning of Dick's senior year ('60-'61) the Fact Book had changed it's tune considerably:

"Dick (Little Man) Parsons is a diminutive playmaker equally dangerous in every phase of the cage game . . . He can dash in for a quick crip or hit with deadly accuracy on a two-handed push from far out . . . He is a quick-thinking competitor who makes up in hustle and determination what he lacks in size.



"Parsons, who is not prone to getting hurt takes a terrific physical beating in most games."

Dick was one of the most honored athletes in UK history. He holds the distinction of captaining two varsity sports at UK—basketball and baseball.

He was a two-time (1960, '61) recipient of the coveted A. B. Chandler award, given annually for the player best exemplifying the qualities of leadership, scholarship, character and ability. Only four other Wildcats have twice been so honored since the award was originated in 1951.

Holding more Wildcat baseball records than any other player, he was an All-Conference shortstop in 1959 and 1961, All-NCAA District 1960, 61, and All-American '61. He hit .400 his senior year.

Dick was treasurer of the K Club, a member of Omicron Delta Kappa (national men's leadership society) and in his junior year was named "Outstanding Student of the College of Education."

After graduation, he was an assistant football coach at Glasgow High School for two years and baseball and basketball coach at Boyle County High from 1963 to 1968.

Parsons returned to the University in 1969 as head baseball coach and is presently in his fifth year as Joe Hall's top assistant coach.

He will receive mail addressed to:

Coach Dick Parsons  
Basketball Office  
Memorial Coliseum  
University of Kentucky  
Lexington, Ky. 40506

