

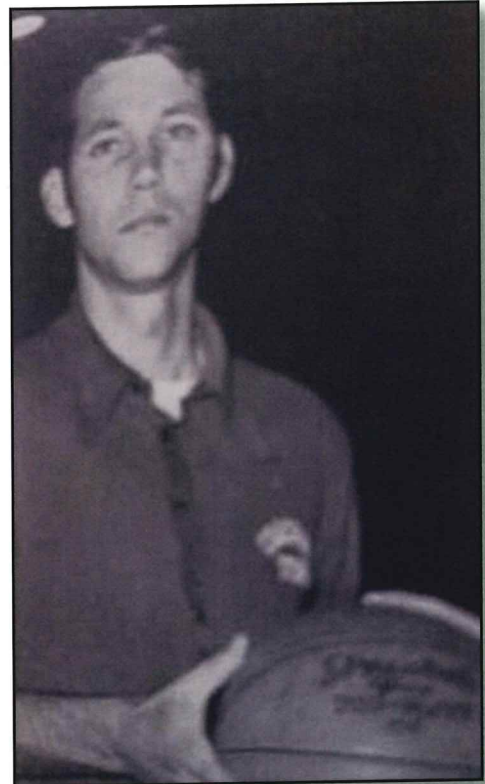
LARRY BANKS

LARRY BANKS WAS BORN OCTOBER 17, 1945. HE GREW UP IN OAKMAN AND WAS A 1964 GRADUATE

of Oakman High School. From there he attended Walker College and the University of Alabama, receiving his degree in January of 1969, the same year that he began his teaching and coaching career with the Walker County School system at T.S. Boyd in Dora.

Following a brief stopover at Parrish High School, Larry made his way to Curry High School as an assistant football and basketball coach under the tutelage of James Hubbert and Ralph Pinion, respectively. Larry remained at Curry for three years, coaching the basketball B-team where the highlight of his stay was defeating the Walker Vikings.

It was then that an opening occurred at Oakman High School, and Larry was granted the opportunity to go home and join head football coach Ray Tidwell as an assistant and to be the head basketball coach. Although Larry put all his energy into helping OHS win as many football games as possible, his real passion was on the hardwood. Using that passion, he was able to take a handful of seniors and a few underclassmen and turn them into winners, notching 20 wins that first season and 20 plus wins in the two that followed.



Oakman became a recognized powerhouse during Larry's three-year stint. They took on all corners. In his inaugural season, with eight varsity players and five B-team players to round out the roster, Larry led the wildcats to the area finals where they fell by one point to eventual state champion Kennedy High. Each of the following years ended in similar fashion, with OHS losing to Holy Family by two points in the area finals in year two and then by one point in year three. Holy Family went on to win the state title both years.

Though they couldn't quite get over the hump to win a state championship, the Wildcats captured the Wal-Win conference title twice during Larry's tenure at Oakman, with Larry being honored as Wal-Win coach of the year along the way. With a break or two, Oakman would likely have won a state championship under Coach Banks, but his legacy was firmly established for generations to come as the Wildcats won 69 games against only 12 losses in those three glorious seasons.

In pursuit of career change amid the pressures associated with coaching high school basketball, Larry moved on from Oakman to Redmill Jr. High School where he was named the principal and basketball coach. It was there that he completed his coaching career, directing the Wildcats on the hardwood for one final season before turning his full attention to his administrative duties.

Recognizing Larry's skill as an administrator, he was asked by the superintendent to move to Cordova High School as the new principal. He remained at that post for three years, helping to revitalize the school and steer the Blue Devils in a new direction.

Larry's final stop in the Walker County School system was as its leader. Larry was elected superintendent by a wide margin, and having fulfilled his duties to the students, teachers, administrators and citizens of Walker County. He chose to retire in 1998. From classroom teacher to coach to superintendent, Larry proudly proclaims that those three years at Oakman High School were by far the most satisfying of his long career.

Post retirement, Larry and his wife, Betty, have lived a quite life in their hometown of Oakman.