

**THE CATSPAW
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This issue of "The Catspaw" will continue a series of brief descriptions of teams that have been inducted into the Rector High School Sports Hall of Fame (RHSSHOF). The order in which they are presented will be the order in which they were selected and inducted. The third team that was selected and inducted was the 1959 Rector High School (RHS) basketball team which was inducted in 2011.

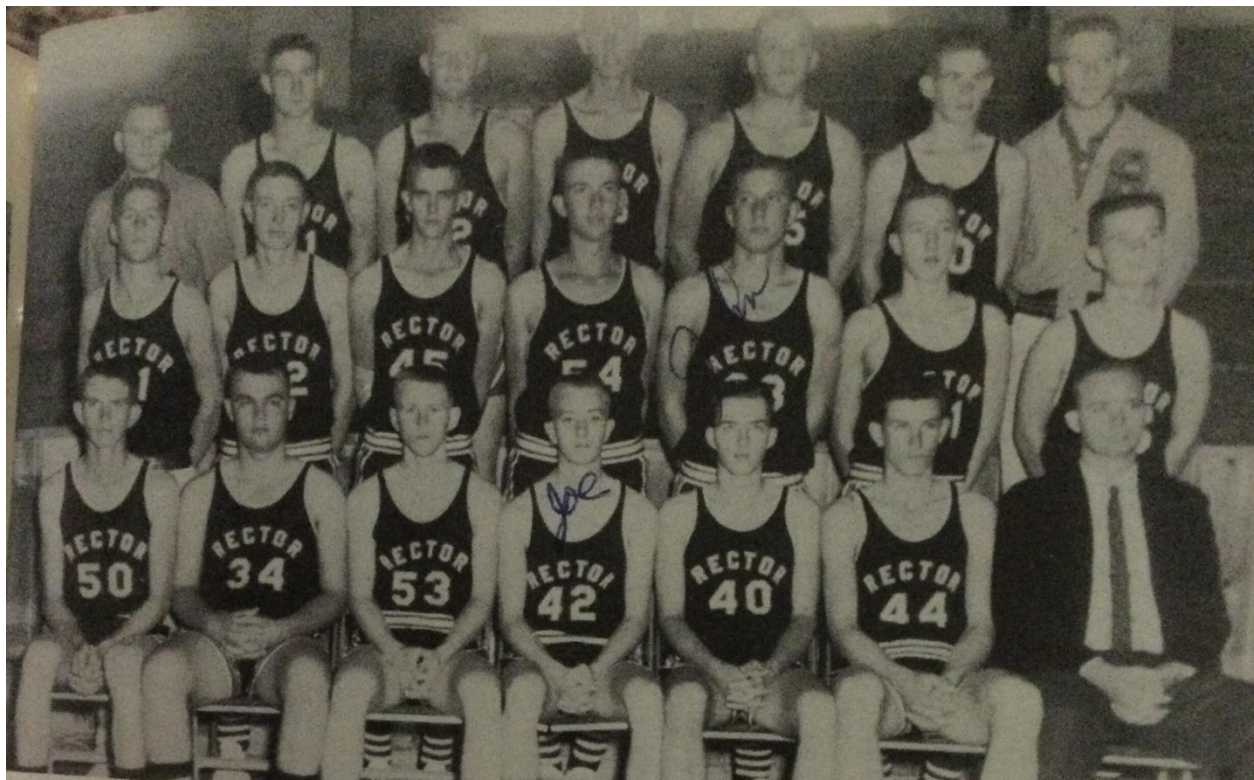
CLOSE, BUT THE WIN WAS NOT TO BE!

The 1958-59 Rector Blackcats are remembered as one of the most successful basketball teams in Arkansas. The team came within LESS THAN A SECOND of claiming the Class A state tournament title.

Among those still living, debate continues surrounding the team's state championship contest with Ouachita, even more than 60 years after the game was played. With time all but gone in overtime, Rector trailed 56-55. After securing an offensive rebound, Jim McKeel quickly went back up and seemingly won the game as time expired. One official declared Rector the winner. Unfortunately, the other official on the floor conferred with the timekeeper and overturned the decision on the floor several minutes after play had stopped.

Known as "The Cardiac Cats," Rector went through the district and state tournaments in a series of highly-contested, close games. Five of the squad's last six tournament games were decided by three points or less. Rector topped Manila in the district semifinals, 51-50; fell to Harrisburg, 58-56 in sudden death overtime in the district finals; routed DeQueen, 51-38 in the first round of the state toumey; topped Whitehall 64-63, in the quarterfinals and bested Hoxie 56-53 in the state semifinals. Rector finished the season 20-13 overall, with a rough start slowing the squad. "Against good competition, we lost seven of our first 10 games, but improved tremendously," coach Jess Bucy recalled of his squad. "In my opinion, this team came closer to reaching its potential than any team that I coached."

[Picture of team is below.]



1st row: Danny Kitchen, Jimmy McKeel, Owen Moseley, Joe Pruett, George Bearden, Lavaughn Robertson, Coach Jess Bucy

2nd row: Delbert Herrell, Edward Gardner, Ralph McDonald, Danny Mulhullen, John Taylor, Butch Bradsher, Charles Long

3rd row: Tom Johnson, Mgr., Lynn Phillips, Jerry Hubble, Gene Girtman, Elton Matheney, Phil Pruett, Lindell Pratt, Mgr.