



KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR '65

In 1961, a very tall young man enrolled as a freshman in the Class of '65. He was already known for his talent on the basketball court and getting him was a coup for Power. His name was Ferdinand Lewis Alcindor, better known as Lew Alcindor, and later to be known as Kareem Abdul Jabbar. Already a local basketball legend, Alcindor was actively recruited by many of the local New York preparatory schools. He chose Power Memorial Academy, and his 6'-10" height gave Coach Jack Donohue no alternative but to place him on the varsity squad, a rarity for a freshman.

He spent the year honing his skills and building his coordination. As a sophomore averaging 19 points per game, Alcindor led his team to 27 straight victories en route to the 1963 New York City CHSAA championship. Power Memorial's unbeaten streak continued the following year, as Alcindor averaged 26 points per game and led Power to another CHSAA championship. As a senior he averaged 33 points per game, and although DeMatha HS of Hyattsville, Maryland, snapped Power's unbeaten streak of 71 games, they again won the New York City CHSAA championship by going undefeated the rest of the season.

As a college student, he was the heart and soul of the UCLA Bruins team. He began his professional career with the Milwaukee Bucks in 1969. He won his first NBA championship in 1971. In 1975 he was traded to the Los Angeles Lakers, where he won another five championships alongside Magic Johnson. Kareem has been the NBA's league MVP six times and a 19-time All-Star who has set NBA all-time records in nine categories. In 1995, he was inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and is the NBA's All-Time Leading Scorer with 38,387 points.

Since retiring as a player in 1989, Abdul-Jabbar has focused his energies on expansive, socially minded projects that encompass African American history, social and racial justice, foundation work, as well as numerous speaking engagements and appearances in a variety of media. Abdul-Jabbar is a *New York Times* best-selling author and has written seven books based on the contributions of African-Americans to American culture and history, including his upcoming children's book, *What Color Is My World: How African American Inventors Changed the Way We Live*. His documentary, *On the Shoulders of Giants - The Story of the Greatest Basketball Team You Never Heard Of*, was released in February of this year and is being shown in thousands of schools around the country.

Abdul-Jabbar is a strong advocate of higher education. In 2010, he founded the Skyhook Foundation, with a mission "to motivate today's youth to pursue higher education by using sports to celebrate social and racial justice." The foundation achieves this goal by developing, supporting, and promoting programs that focus on the life-affirming aspects of diversity. As the foundation continues to expand, plans are being developed to distribute inspirational films to schools across America and to provide free lectures and teaching kits to high schools and colleges located in economically disadvantaged areas.