COACHES

Alcorn demotes Whitney to academic advisor

ketball coach Davey Whitney was demot- him. ed to academic advisor.

was 398-199. He was 450-265 in 25 Thompson, who played for Whitney. praise Whitney's coaching. years overall that included five seasons at "Firsthand knowledge tells me he's one of Texas Southern and five years at the high the better coaches in the nation. In view school level.

NCAA tournament berths, two appearances in National Invitational Tourna- to go out in a more tactful manner. The ment berths from 1973-77. He was the with his status. He should have been Southwestern Athletic Conference coach given a grand exit." of the year eight times.

each season from 1973-80 and had 12, ing their disapproval of Whitney's demo-20-victory seasons overall. ASU was tion. unbeaten in the 1979 regular season and is the only historically black school to tion," said Texas Southern coach Bob win an NCAA tournament game. They have three tournament victories to their

However, Alcorn fell on hard times more games each of the last three seasons got to come. But it and dropped 80 of their last 114 games. "The institution has not been successful", Was unexpected. said Alcorn president Dr. Walter Washington. "We've had a decline and we need This is the most disto get back into the winning column. It was a hard decision. It was a decision any administrator has to make. It had nothing to do with our feelings toward Coach Whitney. But we have to get back into the winning column."

Whitney's contract will continue until June 30. He will retain his current salary as academic advisor.

Whitney, 59, said his demotion came as a complete surprise.

"In this business, if you don't win, it's got to come. But it was unexpected," he said. "This is the most disappointing thing in my career."

Whitney's demotion came on April 14, two days after the start of the signing period. He was summoned to Washington's home and informed of the move. Football coach and athletic director Theo Danzy was relieved of his duties as athletic director at the same time.

Washington released a statement to the press at approximately 10 p.m. CDT that day. Most team members learned of Whitney's demotion from television reports and newspaper stories. Many of them were confused by it all.

"I'm puzzled by it really," freshmanforward Rossie Kearson told The Clarion-Ledger / Jackson Daily News. "The candidate to succeed Whitney, later timing was all off. I think this was the worst time to do it. It kind of puts a damper on recruiting. There could have been some players who wanted to come in and they won't when they find out he

Whitney's demotion has been met with shock and disappointment by Alcorn pi State in the first round of the NIT and missing layups during a shoot around.

"The likelihood of finding a better should have been given the opportunity Games. way he was dismissed was not in keeping

Alcorn alumni have been circulating The Braves won 20 or more games a petition to present to Washington stat-

"I think it was an unfortunate situa-

"In this business, if in recent years. The Braves lost 20 or you don't win, it's appointing thing in my career."

> -- Davey Whitney

Moreland.

AND THE RESIDENCE AND THE REAL PROPERTY AND THE PARTY AND

"We're moving closer and closer to being like everyone else. In our programs and programs like ours, once a program gets down it takes about three years to get it back again. That's because of the limitations we have in terms of money to spend on recruiting. You might get one or two good players a year. By the time you get enough, two or three years have passed. They had some good kids this past year. But they didn't have enough to be the impact team they had been. They signed some good kids. They could be up

The Braves will have 10 returnees next season, including four starters. Whitney had signed 6-10 center Clarence Hain from St. Louis and 6-2 guard Steve Jennings from Eastern Utah Junior College. Assistant coach Lonnie Walker, a leading signed Levi Wyatt a 6-5 all-state forward from Vicksburg, Miss.

light in 1979. Led by forward Larry ers didn't go out after curfew when the the issue at all. After I pursue some Smith, now with the Golden State War- Braves were in Kansas City for the NAIA options, I'll decide what's best for Dave riors, the Braves were unbeaten during tournament. the regular season. They upset Mississip-

played Indiana or even terms before losing by five points.

Following the Indiana loss, Hoosiers' In 20 seasons at Alcorn, Whitney coach than him is remote", said Gil coach Bobby Knight made it a point to

Whitney went on to coach in the 1985 U.S. Olympic Festival and was a of the fact that he put Alcorn, SWAC and member of the 1984 Olympic selection Whitney coached the Braves to four Mississippi basketball on the map, he committee and the '86 World University

Throughout his career, Whitney was future. known as a tough disciplinarian. There

His teams were noted for their rebounding, pressing defenses and capacity for never giving up.

"I want to be remembered as a professional," said Whitney. "I wasn't one to gloat in victory or cry in defeat. I believed that what I was doing was right regardless of anyone else's opinion."

Whitney said he'll take his time before making a decision about his

"Whatever capacity I'm in, I'll do it

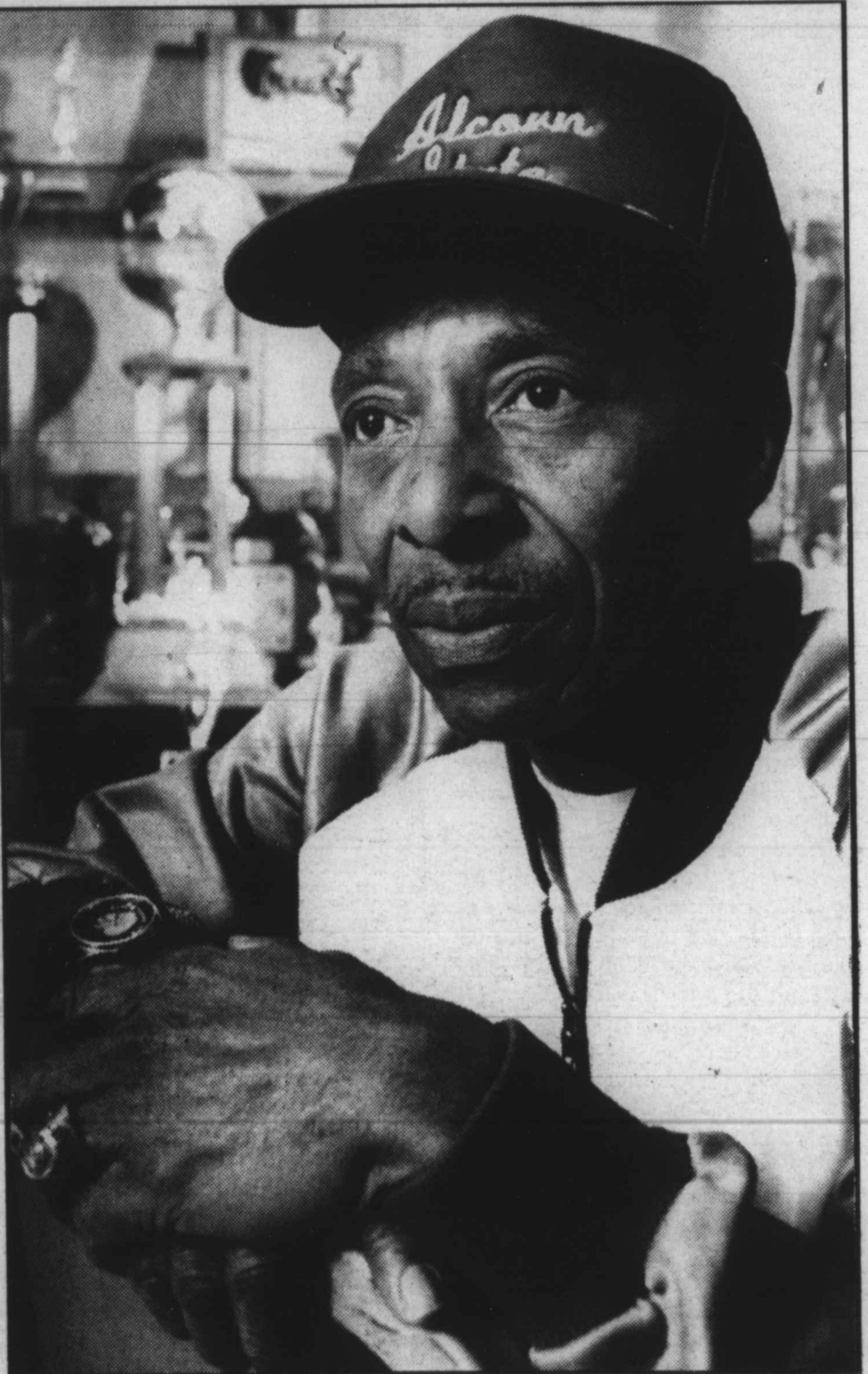


Photo by J.D. Schwalm

are stories of how he had his wife sleep in professionally and do a heckuva job," he Alcorn burst into the national spot- the hotel hallways to make sure that play- said. "I'm not tired of coaching. That's not

Once, he had recruits do pushups for

-Roscoe Nance

ALUMNI

Dakley makes a difference in the 'Big Apple'



Photo by The Magnificent Eye

As a pro, Oakley doesn't concentrate on scoring like he did at Virginia Union. Nevertheless, he's a valuable commodity for the Knicks because of his defense and rebounding. When it comes to carving out space for himself in the paint, "Oaks" has few peers.

power forward Charles Oakley to the New the playoffs. But with the Knicks, Oakley's York Knicks last summer, the move drew mixed emotions around the league.

Michael Jordan, the infamous "Air" personality, wasn't pleased with the trade Detroits, Clevelands, and LAs. and said so publically. Evidently, the Bulls' Cartwright in the deal for Oakley.

Nearly a year after that swap, it's clear the year at 38-44. that the Knicks really got the best of the points a game this season (Oakley averaged the turnaround in the "Big Apple." 12.9 ppg). But more importantly, he averdid for the year.

like the best thing that could've happened to reason why we've done what we have this (Charles) Barkley, and Buck (Williams), the former Virginia Union star.

In three NBA seasons, Oakley has been consistently ranked among the cir- muscle for the Knicks inside the paint. cuit's best rebounders (career average of Because he takes a lot of the rebounding the tough defense. But still, points never 11.6 a game). He has the reputation of load off of Patrick Ewing's shoulders, teams hurt any team's cause either. OK, so you expected." being an enforcer. Oakley's work on the can't totally concentrate on Ewing. This have Karl "Mailman" Malone, Barkley and

When the Chicago Bulls shipped burly boards made the Bulls more of a threat in allows Ewing the freedom to do more presence has helped a young, developing team, become a rising star that's on the brink of mounting a serious challenge to the

This season, the Knicks have turned management felt that Oakley's hard hat their fortunes in a positive direction. Going productive low-post scorer to help take the fifth best record in the NBA (52-30). Only steals after he's forced an errant entry pass. heat off of Jordan. So they got Bill Detroit, Cleveland, the Lakers and Phoenix fared better. Last season, New York ended

Oakley's play as the silent, but effecdeal. Cartwright scored a little over 12 tive contributor, has been a major part of

"He's a guy that we needed," said aged roughly half the rebounds that Oakley Knicks coach Rick Pitino. "His value to us doesn't show up in the stats. For us, he's the league's tough guys. "Hey, when you play In retrospect, going to Gotham looks missing link on this team and he's a major against people like (Kevin) McHale,

"Oaks" pounds the boards and provides work hard."

offensively and be even more of a force as a shot blocker because Oakley will get his hands on the missed shot.

In addition, he's the lead man and key roadblock in the Knicks' vaunted full court pressure defense. At 6-9, "Oaks" often swarms over opponents when they prepare style in the paint wasn't what they needed. into the playoffs, they finished tied for third to inbounds the basketball. The pressure he Instead, Chicago's braintrust wanted a more in the Eastern Conference and owned the creates often enables his teammates to get Inside the paint is no place for the

meek to inherit the hardwood. The good teams have their guys who can push, shove, nudge, and budge for position down low, and Oakley is one of the game's top practitioners at that craft.

Oakley shrugs his shoulders when asked about being perceived as one of the you have to put your body on them and

So sure, Oakley rebounds and plays

McHale, all who are power types who get their 20 plus points nightly.

"Oaks" isn't exactly a deadbeat in terms of offense. It's more a matter of what his role is and how his skills best benefit the Knicks. This season, he scored 12.9 points and pulled down 10.5 rebounds per game.

"I'm just called on to do different things," Oakley said. "My job is to play a role on this team. Malone, McHale and Barkley are players whose job it is to score for their teams. I don't concentrate on scoring 20 points. I'll get 10 to 15 a game, but I'll also get you 20 rebounds."

Actually, Oakley doesn't have to score 19 points a game for the Knicks to be successful. With Mark Jackson, Ewing, Gerald Wilkins and Johnny Newman around, Oakley's offensive output just makes them a more balanced team.

"I'll get my 10 or 15 points. But I've had to sacrifice my game to do what this team needs. I dedicate myself to getting rebounds and doing the dirty work around the boards -- the little things."

Some observers believed that Oakley's departure from Chicago was induced by problems between he and Bulls coach Doug Collins. Speculation even had it that some observers believed Oakley could become a disruptive force on the team, so they shipped him out before that could possibly

Was scene in Chicago a case of bad blood between player and coach?

"That's what they (the media) kept saying," Oakley pointed out. "I never knew about anything like that when I was in Chicago. In New York, I'm playing like I always have. We're winning and there aren't any problems."

In some circles, those supposedly in the know questioned whether or not Oakley could make the transition from a slow paced team like Chicago to a more upbeat squad like the Knicks. The Bulls rarely pushed the ball up the floor as a regular part of their offense. And they seldom employed a lot of trapping presses. The difference in playing styles between the two teams is as stark as the difference between the music of Beethoven and the sounds of Run DMC.

"I don't think his being traded had so much to do with him not getting along with Doug Collins," Pitino added. "It was really more of a matter of Chicago's philosophy. They walk the ball up the floor and depend more on one man than we do.

"In New York, we distribute the ball more. Charles understands what we need from him. People told us that he wouldn't be good in our press. They kept telling us that he wouldn't be able to run the floor on our break. But we've found that he's excellent in our press and on our break. He's done so much better than anybody thought. Actually, he's done better than we ever

-Craig T. Greenlee

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