

ERVIN "MAGIC" JOHNSON, AFROAMERICA NETWORK BLACK MAN OF YEAR 2005.

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It is easy to talk about Ervin "Magic" Johnson the basketball player. He has earned several firsts, reached the heights of stardom, and crowned all his achievement by a shrine in the Basketball Hall of Fame on September 27, 2002.

Ervin "Magic" Johnson, was born in East Lansing, Michigan, on August 14, 1959. Wherever he played, from Lansing Everett High School until he retired from the Los Angeles Lakers, he won championships: at the high school, collegiate, professional and international levels. Following his All-America scholastic career, Johnson led Michigan State to the 1979 NCAA championship in a classic battle against Indiana State's Larry Bird, a rivalry that would continue throughout the 1980s with the Los Angeles Lakers and Boston Celtics.



In 1979, Johnson was the first overall pick in NBA draft. He became an immediate sensation and superstar, leading the Lakers to the 1980 NBA championship (the first of his five: 1980, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1988) over the Philadelphia 76ers. In the NBA Finals, the rookie played all five positions – scored 42 points – and was named the NBA Finals MVP, the first of three selections (1980, 1982, 1987). A 12-time NBA All-Star in his 13-year career and MVP of the 1990 and 1992 games, Johnson was also named NBA MVP three times, in 1987, 1989 and 1990. He was named to the NBA's First-Team nine times and the second team once. The all-time assist (10,141) and steals (1,724) leader in Laker

history, Johnson was the NBA's all-time leader in assists until Utah's John Stockton broke the record in 1995. Johnson won a gold medal with the original Dream Team at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

That is Magic Johnson the basketball player. Ervin Johnson, the businessman and philanthropist achieved equal fame and touched lives of millions, especially in the Black communities.

Ervin Magic Johnson has undertaken several other roles in the business, outside playing basketball. He was a broadcaster, for NBC Sports from 1992 to 1994, the Vice President of Los Angeles Lakers from 1994-95 to present and launched his own talk show, "Magic Hour". The talk show flopped, but Magic had a dignified exit.

Before the 1991-92 Basketball season Johnson stunned the world with the announcement that he had tested positive for the HIV virus and was retiring from the NBA. He made a triumphant appearance at the All-Star Game that season,



however, earning the game's MVP Award and leading the West to a 153-113 victory. He also began a campaign to promote AIDS awareness, an effort for which he received the league's J. Walter Kennedy Citizenship Award.

He focused on writing a book about safe sex, and running several businesses he had started as a player.

Profits from the book Johnson wrote with a team of ghostwriters were donated to the Magic Johnson Foundation for the prevention, education, research and care in the battle against AIDS.

What people like and admired in him is his affable personality and sense of responsibility. Struck with AIDS, he blamed only himself. Instead of being crushed, he showed sheer determination and eagerness to help others. This has certainly constituted a major factor in overcoming the dreaded disease and in the process has given hope to millions of Blacks around the World affected by the disease. His awareness campaign has dramatically impacted the way Black and minority communities in America view the disease and try to prevent it from the individual level.

Johnson's post-basketball business ventures include Magic Johnson Theatres, a nationwide chain of movie theaters whose complexes are primarily in urban locations. The chain is now a part of Loews Theatres, but is operated as a separate entity. More recently, his interests have expanded to include ownership of several Starbucks franchises, again primarily in urban locations. The choice of urban locations is to create jobs and opportunities for inner cities youth and people, the majority of whom are poor minorities.

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