

= Lusia Harris =

Lusia " Lucy " Harris @-@ Stewart ( born Lusia Harris ; February 10 , 1955 ) is a former American basketball player . Harris is considered to be one of the pioneers of women 's basketball . She played for Delta State University and won three consecutive Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women ( AIAW ) National Championships , the predecessors to the National Collegiate Athletic Association ( NCAA ) championships , from 1975 to 1977 . In international level , she represented the United States ' national team and won the silver medal in the 1976 Olympic Games , the first ever women 's basketball tournament in the Olympic Games . She played professional basketball with the Houston Angels of the Women 's Professional Basketball League ( WBL ) and was the first and only woman ever officially drafted by the National Basketball Association ( NBA ) , a men 's professional basketball league . For her achievements , Harris has been inducted to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and Women 's Basketball Hall of Fame .

= = Early life = =

Harris was born in Minter City , Mississippi to Ethel and Willie Harris , a vegetable farmer . She is the tenth of eleven children and the fourth of five daughters . All of her brothers and one of her older sisters , Janie , also played basketball . Harris and her siblings attended Amanda Elzy High School in Greenwood , Mississippi .

Harris played basketball under coach Conway Stewart in high school . She won the most valuable player award three consecutive years , served as team captain and made the state All @-@ Star team . She scored a school record 46 points in one game and led her school to the state tournament in Jackson , Mississippi .

After her high school graduation , she planned to attend Alcorn State University , which did not have a women 's basketball team . However , she was asked by Melvin Hemphill , the recruiter for coach Margaret Wade , who was restarting a collegiate women 's team , if she would attend Delta State University in Cleveland , Mississippi . This was before Title IX , so there were no sports scholarships for women . She attended school on a combination of academic scholarships and work study funds .

= = College career = =

In her first year in Delta State , Harris helped the Lady Statesmen to a 16 ? 2 record . However , they finished third in the regional tournament and failed to qualify to the national tournament . The following year , the Lady Statesmen qualified to the national tournament at Harrisonburg , Virginia . They went all the way to the final where they met the Mighty Macs of Immaculata University who had won the last three consecutive AIAW championships . In the final , Harris scored 32 points and recorded 16 rebounds to lead Delta State past Immaculata 90 ? 81 . The 1975 championship game was televised nationally ( albeit delayed ) . This is the first year that women 's basketball games were nationally televised by a major network . That season , Delta State went undefeated in with a 28 ? 0 record , the only undefeated college season that year ( men or women ) . Harris scored a total of 138 points and 63 rebounds in four games at the national tournament and was named as the tournament 's most valuable player .

In the 1975 ? 76 season , Delta State and Immaculata met again in the national tournament final . Harris again led Delta State with 30 points and 18 rebounds in a 69 ? 64 victory . That season , she led the nation in scoring with 1 @,@ 060 points and a 31 @.@ 2 points per game average , including a 58 @-@ point game against Tennessee Tech . In her senior season , Delta State played a game in the Madison Square Garden , in which Harris scored 47 points . This was one of the first women 's basketball game ever played there . Delta State then went to the national tournament final for the third year in a row . In the final , Harris scored 23 points and recorded 16 rebounds as Delta State defeated Louisiana State University 68 ? 55 for their third consecutive title .

Harris was named as the national tournament 's most valuable player and to the All @-@ American

first team during Delta State 's three winning seasons . Her college career record was 109 ? 6 , and included victories over later NCAA Division I powerhouses such as Immaculata University , University of Tennessee , Baylor University , University of Mississippi , Louisiana State University and Louisiana Tech University . Harris finished her college career with 2 @, @ 981 points and 1 @, @ 662 rebounds , averaging 25 @. @ 9 points and 14 @. @ 5 rebounds per game . She also graduated with fifteen of eighteen Delta State 's team , single game , and career records . In 1977 , she won the inaugural Honda Sports Award for basketball , as well as the Broderick Cup , an award for outstanding female athletes in college .

= = National team career = =

In 1975 , Harris was selected to represent the United States ' national team in the FIBA World Championship for Women in Colombia and the Pan American Games in Mexico City , Mexico . She teamed up with high school star Nancy Lieberman and fellow college stars Ann Meyers and Pat Head . In the FIBA World Championship , the United States compiled a 4 ? 3 record and finished in eighth place . In the Pan American Games , the United States team went unbeaten in seven games to win the gold medal , their first win since 1963 . They averaged 86 @. @ 7 points per game with an average winning margin of 34 @. @ 4 .

The following year , Harris was selected to represent the United States in the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal , Canada , the first ever women 's basketball tournament in the Olympic Games . She used the number seven on her Olympics jersey . She teamed up with most of her teammates in the 1975 Pan American Games , including Lieberman , Meyers and Head . In the opening game against Japan , Harris scored the first ever points in women 's Olympic basketball tournament . The United States team won three games and lost two games against Japan and the Soviet Union . The Soviet Union team went undefeated and won the gold medal , while the United States team won the silver medal . Harris played in all five games , averaging 15 @. @ 2 points and 7 @. @ 0 rebounds per game .

= = Professional career = =

In the seventh round of the 1977 NBA Draft , the New Orleans Jazz selected Harris with the 137th pick overall . She became the second woman ever drafted by an NBA team , after Denise Long , who was selected by the San Francisco Warriors in the 1969 Draft . However , the league voided the Warriors ' selection , thus Harris became the first and only woman ever officially drafted . Harris did not express an interest to play in the NBA and declined to try out for the Jazz . It was later revealed that she was pregnant at the time , which made her unable to attend the Jazz 's training camp . She was selected ahead of 33 other male players , including the Jazz 's eighth round selection , Dave Speicher from the University of Toledo .

Harris never played in the NBA or any other men 's basketball league but played professional basketball briefly in the 1979 ? 80 season with the Houston Angels of the Women 's Professional Basketball League ( WBL ) . She was initially picked as the number one free agent by the Angels in 1978 , the league 's inaugural season .

= = Personal life = =

Harris graduated from Delta State University with a bachelor 's degree in health , physical education and recreation in 1977 . After graduation , she worked for Delta State as an admissions counselor and assistant basketball coach . She earned a master 's degree in education from Delta State in 1984 . After leaving the assistant coaching post in Delta State , she served as the head coach at Texas Southern University in Houston for two years . She then returned to her native Mississippi where she worked as a high school teacher and coach at her alma mater Amanda Elzy High School in Greenwood , at the Greenville Public School District , and at Ruleville Central High School . Harris married George E. Stewart on February 4 , 1977 . They have four children , two sons and twin

daughters .

= = Legacy = =

For her achievements and contributions to the Delta State University , Harris was inducted to the Delta State 's Hall of Fame in 1983 . In 1992 , Harris and former player Nera White became the first two women ever inducted to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame . She also became the first African @-@ American woman inductee . In 1998 , Harris , along with her college coach , Margaret Wade , and her teammates in the national team , Nancy Lieberman , Ann Meyers and Pat Head , were named among the 26 inaugural inductees to the Women 's Basketball Hall of Fame . She has also been named to the International Women 's Sports Hall of Fame .