

Finals Flashbacks

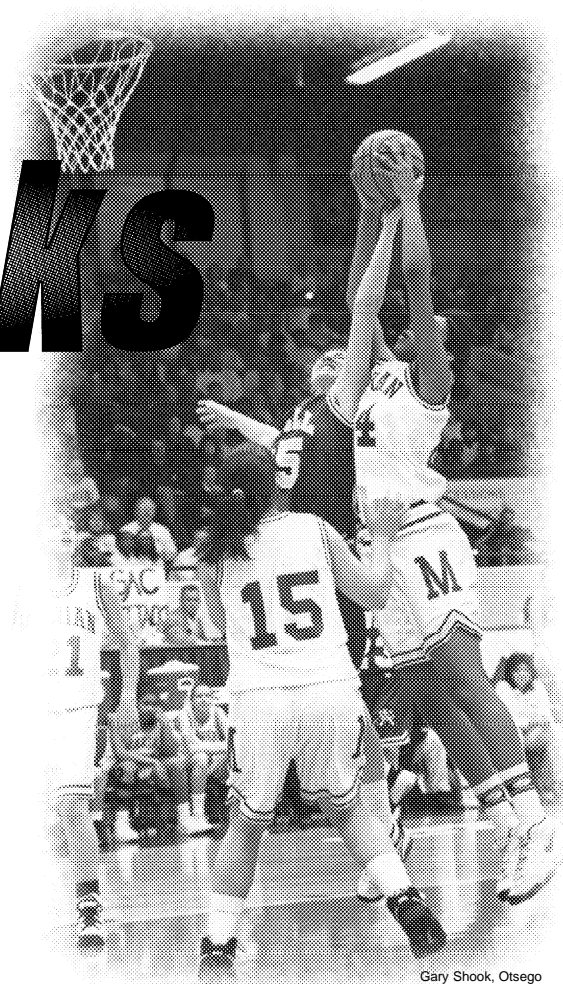
1996

Birmingham Marian picked up its third MHSAA **Class A** title with a 54-40 victory over Howell at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek. Champs in 1988 and 1992, the Mustangs defense forced 24 turnovers by Howell in the game, many coming on the full-court press. Junior Breean Walas racked up five steals, seven assists and 16 points to lead the winners. Teammate Nicole Anaejionu, a sophomore, added 12 points and 15 rebounds while holding the Highlander's Sylvia Blakeslee to 12 points. Blakeslee posted 28 markers for Howell in a 48-47 semifinal victory over Grand Rapids Christian. Jenny Esper chipped in with 11 for the Highlanders, who were previously unbeaten.

Dedicating their season to the memory of senior captain Liz Hallman, Flint Powers Catholic coaches and players donned "Mission Accomplished" t-shirts following a 60-53 win over Detroit Renaissance in **Class B**. Hallman died in her sleep that July due to a defective heart valve. Sophomore Aimee Pearson paced the Chargers with 24 points, while Brandy Pickens added 14, including a big three-point play with 23.2 remaining in the game to seal the victory. Shamira Thedford notched 24 for Renaissance, including a jumper from the lane to knot the score at 53 with 1:29 left in the contest.

Niki Blankenship scored 15 points on 6-of-10 shooting from the field as Frankenmuth dismantled Gwinn, 50-24, in the **Class C** contest. Christina Grossi hit three treys, finishing with 11 points. Gwinn, 22-5 on the year, was lead by Sonja Jacobson and Molly Van Damme, with six points apiece.

Trailing Ashley by five points with 11 seconds to play, Portland St. Patrick staged a miracle rally to force overtime, eventually defeating the Bears,



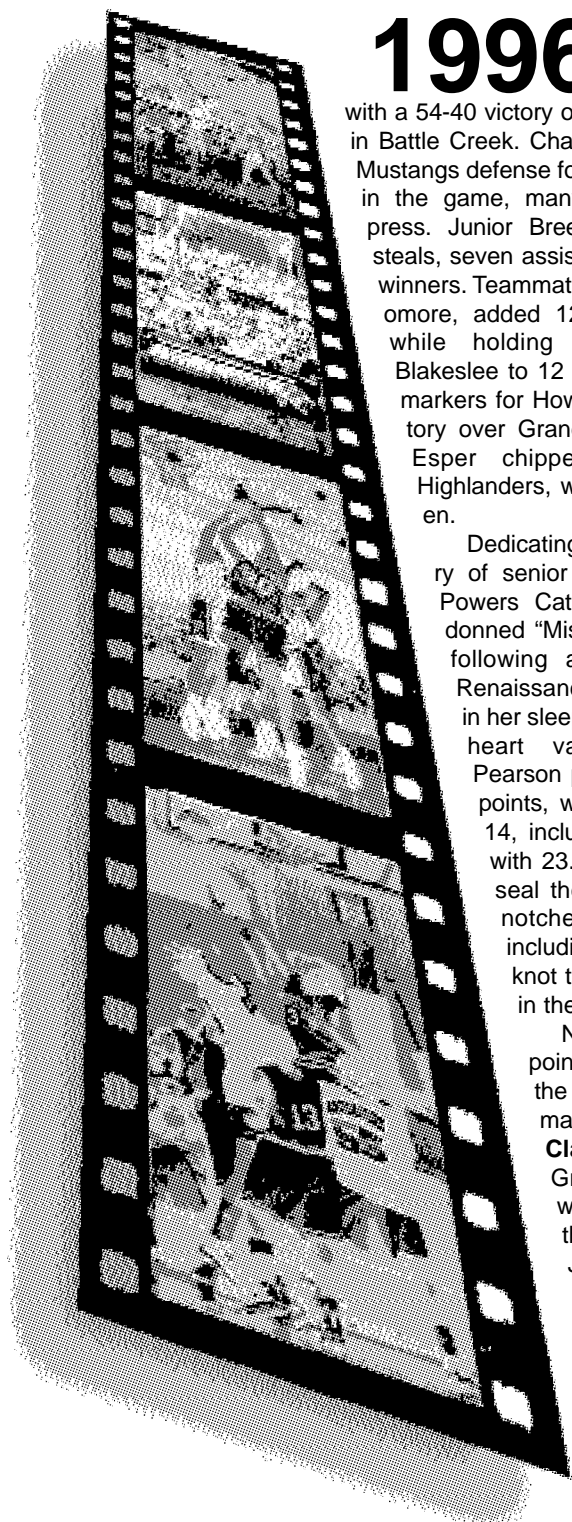
Gary Shook, Otsego

Birmingham Marian's Nicole Anaejionu goes above Howell's Carey Musko for a rebound in the 1996 Class A tilt, won by Marian, 54-40.

53-47, in a **Class D** thriller. It was the third consecutive MHSAA title for the Shamrocks and Coach Al Schrauben. Carissa Schneider began the improbable comeback with a three-pointer, cutting the Ashley lead to 43-41 with 9.6 seconds to play in regulation. After the Bears missed the front end of a one-and-one opportunity following a St. Pats foul, the Shamrocks called timeout to set up the final play. With 3.1 seconds remaining, Schneider's court-length inbounds pass deflected off the foot of an Ashley player and ended up in the hands of Janet Russman. The freshman's layup tied the score at 43 as time expired. Trisha Fedewa led the Shamrocks with 11 rebounds and 20 points, including 14 from the free throw line. Kristen Fabus tallied 13 points for Ashley and set an MHSAA championship record with nine steals.

1991

Farmington Hills Mercy fought to take away Detroit Martin Luther King's strong inside game in the first half of the **Class A** title matchup at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek. That left it up to five-foot Crusader guard Schwanna Prince to carry the load from the prime-



ter. Prince responded to the challenge, scoring all of her game-high 16 points in the first half as King jumped out to a 30-18 lead at the intermission. The Crusaders added a 9-1 run to open the third quarter, and ended the day with a 52-36 victory over the Marlins. Tiffany Mitchell finished with 13 points and nine rebounds for the victors. Laure DeMattia led Mercy with 14 points.

In **Class B** play, Flint Powers ended New Boston Huron's 23-game winning streak, 41-29. Lisa Negri and Sarah Willyerd paced the Chargers with 15 and 11 points, respectively. Janet Hughes scored 14 points for New Boston.

Sophomore Jessica Powers hit 5-of-11 from the field and went 8-for-8 from the free throw line as Burton Bendle defeated Williamston, 69-60, for the **Class C** title. Trailing 31-28 at the half, the Tigers turned to the press, and took the lead with just over three minutes to play in the third quarter. Melissa Monroe and Maria Logan each scored 16 for Williamston.

Runner-up in 1990, Fowler downed Central Michigan Athletic Conference rival Pottsville for the third time on the year, 45-28, in the **Class D** finale. Kara Hafner grabbed 11 rebounds and guard Kristin Nobach scored 17 points to lead the Eagles to the crown.

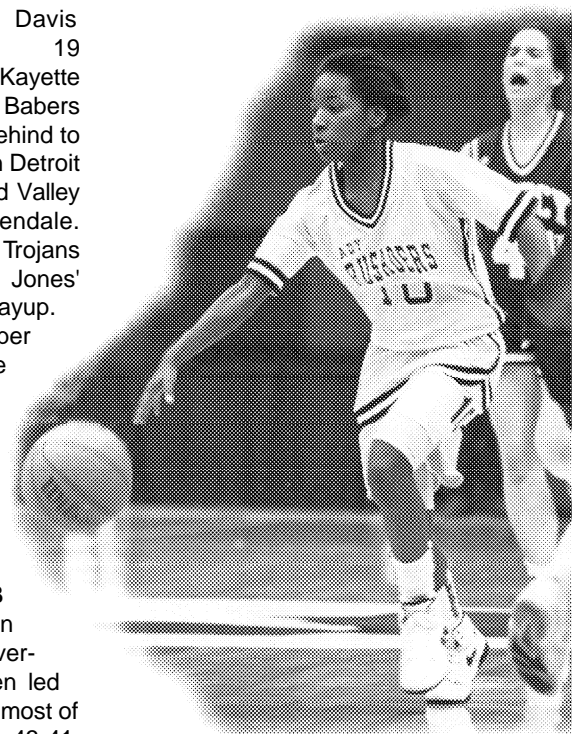
1986

Hattie Davis scored 19 points, Kayette

Jones dropped in 15, and Annette Babers added 14 as Saginaw came from behind to defeat defending **Class A** champion Detroit Martin Luther King, 58-52, at Grand Valley State College Fieldhouse in Allendale. Trailing 48-41 with 3:04 to play, the Trojans came back and tied the game on Jones' mid-court steal and uncontested layup.

The senior guard hit a 12-foot jumper with 13 seconds remaining to give Saginaw the lead. Following an intentional foul, Jones added a pair of free throws, then Davis hit a 25-footer with two seconds remaining to round out the scoring. Guard Denise Kirby led the Crusaders with 17 points.

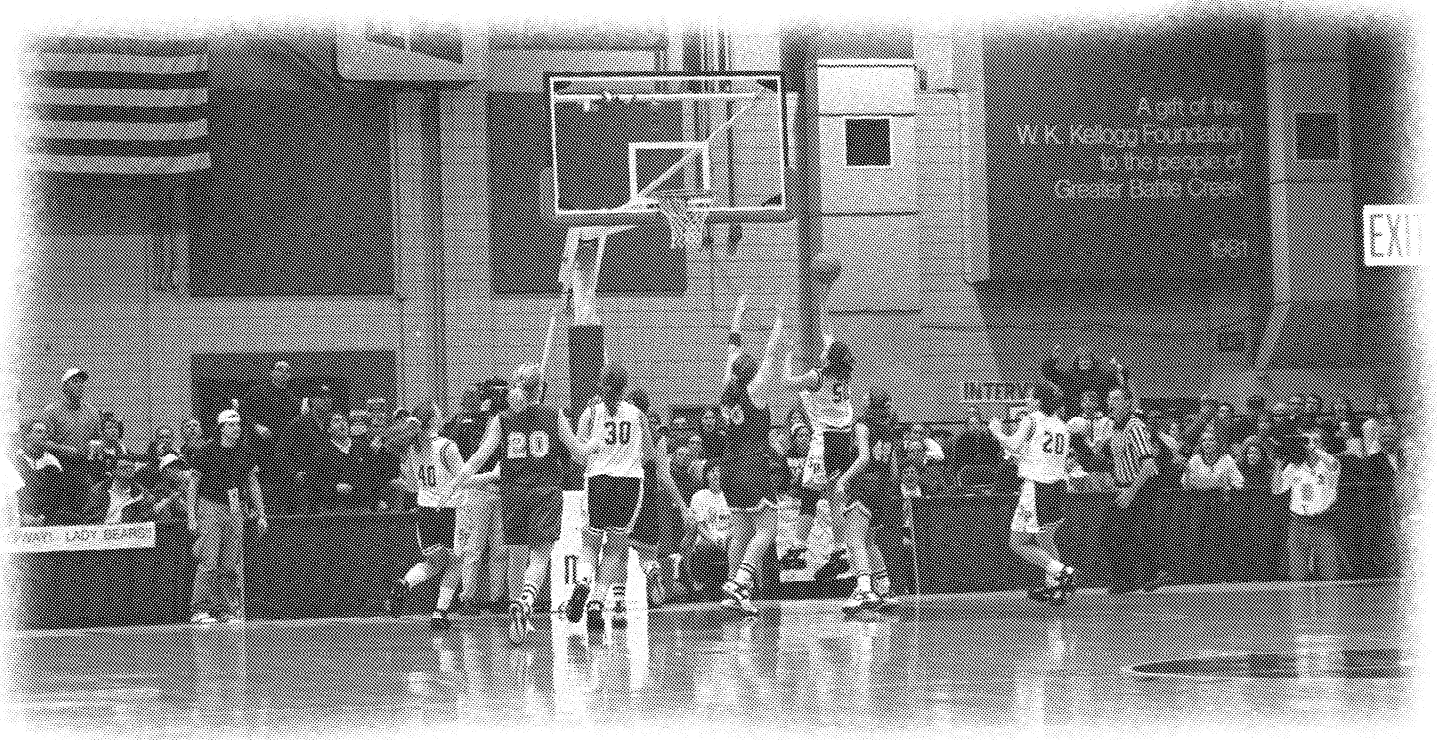
Runner-up in the 1985 **Class B** championship match, Dearborn Divine Child battled to a 50-45 overtime win over Okemos. Sue Nissen led the winners with 22 points. Leading most of the second half, Okemos fell behind, 43-41, on Andrea McAllister's breakaway with 1:33 left in the fourth quarter. Sophomore Amy Zack tied the game with a five-foot jumper, and the Chieftains had a chance to win with one second to play in regulation. After being fouled, Zack missed the front end of



Gary Shook, Otsego

Detroit Martin Luther King guard Schwana Prince drives to the hoop during the Crusaders' 52-36 Class A win over Farmington Hills Mercy in 1991.

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Freshman Janet Russman (50 in white) scores the game-tying bucket for Portland St. Patrick to force overtime in the 1996 Class D Final vs. Ashley. St. Pats defeated Ashley, 53-47, as Russman wound up with 14 points.



Gary Shook, Otsego

Peck players celebrate the 1986 Class D championship after downing Climax-Scotts, 72-58.

a one and one, and the game went into overtime.

Sophomore Carrie Isanhart scored 16 points, including a short jumper to pull Evert to within one point of Wyandotte Mt. Carmel, 42-41, late in the **Class C** Final. But in the final minute, the Lady Wildcats missed two chances for the lead, and were forced to foul. Carol Szczechowski (25 points) stepped to the line and nailed both free throws to put the Comets up, 44-41, with six seconds to play. Tammi Bruggema's basket at the buzzer wasn't enough, as Mt. Carmel ended the year with a 44-43 win and the championship.

The Peck Pirates capped a perfect season with a 72-58 victory over Climax-Scotts in **Class D**. Colleen Bradley paced the winners with 31, while Cherie Swarhout scored 34 points for the Climax-Scotts despite running into foul trouble.

1981

Flint Northern and Coach Dottie Kukulka

won their fourth consecutive **Class A** title with a 37-32 victory over Harper Woods Regina before a crowd of 2,111 at the University of Detroit's Calihan Hall. Laurie Spencer notched a game-high 16 points for Regina. Felicia Cooper, the only senior starter for the Vikings, led Northern with 10. Teammate Yvonne Thompson added six points and nine rebounds.

In **Class B**, Okemos posted a 64-52 win over Marshall in a thriller. The Redskins jumped out to an 18-9 lead in the first quarter, but Okemos battled back to within five,

30-25 by halftime. Sue Tucker scored 10 of her game-high 27 points in the third quarter as the Chieftans continued to chip away. Tied at 50 with 5:24 to play, Okemos grabbed the lead on Jill Cooley's putback following a rebound. The Chieftans proceeded to score the final nine points in the game en route to the title. Cooley came off the bench to score 13 points and grab a game-high 11 rebounds.

Vonnie Thompson tallied 17 points and Kelly Burns added 15 to lead Carrollton past Addison, 53-46, in **Class C**. Lorri Vettes led Addison with 19 points, while Sandy Parker finished with 17. It was the second crown in three years for the Cavs.

Leland grabbed its 55th consecutive victory under Coach Larry Glass, and its second consecutive **Class D** crown with a 50-33 win over Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard. Paula DeFord led Richard with 13 points, while Julie Polakowski's 21 points in the contest capped a stellar prep career at Leland. The senior ended the year with 812 points in 28 games, establishing a single-season scoring mark that still stands today. Currently, Polakowski's 2,109 career points in 97 games ranks 11th on the MHSAA all-time scoring list.

1976

The Redettes of Marquette became the

first and only UP school to win a **Class A** basketball title with a 68-41 win over Farmington Hills Our Lady of Mercy (See "Legends of the Game" article on page 6 of this program). It was the third consecutive Finals appearance by Mercy, which again came away short. The team would return to the Class A title game again in 1977, before emerging victorious.

Marine City jumped out to an early lead, then never looked back in a 52-38 win over Three Oaks River Valley in **Class B**. Mariners 6-2 center Doreen Grote led all scorers with 25 points. Deb Lundin paced River Valley with 15 points.

Teammates Janet Goschnski and Carol Valchine combined for 36 of Allen Park Cabrini's points in a 48-35 win over Mason County Central in **Class C**. The Monarchs led 22-19 at the half, then scored 12 unanswered points in the third quarter before senior guard Glenda Gruno hit a bucket for the Spartans with a minute to play in the period. Monarch center Goschnski ended the contest with 20 points, while Gruno led Scottville with 15 points.

Abby Currier scored 26 points and Becky Sessions added 22 as Lake City cruised past Perkins, 58-48, for the **Class D** title. Lynette Royer led Perkins with 23 points.

— Ron Pesch



Gary Shook, Otsego

Sarah Willyerd scored 11 points in Flint Powers Catholic's 1991 Class B win over New Boston Huron.