

PRESS RELEASE

April 7, 2016

**ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR
THE WEST SIDE HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM
FOR WINNING THE 2015-2016 BOYS BASKETBALL GROUP 2 & NJSIAA
NORTH 2 GROUP 2 SECTIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**



The Essex County Freeholders honored the West Side High School Boys Basketball Team. (from left to right) Freeholders Leonard M. Luciano, Wayne L. Richardson, Patricia Sebold, and Rufus I. Johnson (rear center) presented the Board's Commendation to the team.
PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Newark, NJ) – During its Wednesday, April 6th meeting at the Hall of Records, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored the West Side High School Boys Basketball Team for winning the 2015-2016 Boys Basketball Group 2 and NJSIAA North 2 Group 2 Sectional Championships. The Commendation was sponsored and presented by Freeholders Rufus I. Johnson, Leonard M. Luciano and Wayne L. Richardson.

Freeholder Johnson began the ceremony with opening remarks. He stated, “Today is a very special day for me because, myself being a West Ward resident and being a West Ward resident for over 35 years, and for me to have played with some of the guys that came through West Side High School for many many years, like your Athletic Director Gary Taylor, the John Snows and the Jack Hills, and so many other great players that have come through the institution that you young men are now coming through. But, today is a special day, because there’s so many accomplishments this team has made, and it’s very remarkable.”

Freeholder Lunciano, cosponsor of the Commendation, shared remarks, as well, adding: “I just wanted to say that on behalf of myself, not just as a Freeholder, but as a public school teacher in Newark, you guys really make all of us proud.”



Essex County Freeholders join the West Side High School Boys Basketball Team in a team huddle. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

Freeholder Richardson, who also cosponsored the Commendation, added: “I just want to say congratulations. Commitment, dedication, and hard work is what it takes to get you to become a champion.”

In the State Tournament competition, the West Side High School Boys Basketball Team defeated Lyndhurst High School (92-27), Newark Tech High School (81-61), Hanover Park High School (89-75), Newark Central H.S. (69-49), and Ramsey High School (55-51), to win the school’s first NJSIAA North 2 Group 2 Sectional Championship on March 7, 2016.

The team also won the Super Essex Conference (SEC), Liberty Division Championship for the first time in school history. The basketball team finished its outstanding 2015-2016 season ranked as the 18th team in the State of New Jersey and the State’s #1 Group 2 team with a stellar overall record of 25-8.

The team was further recognized through honors bestowed upon individual players: Senior Isiah Reyes who was named to the MSG Varsity All-State 2nd Team, the *NJ.Com* Group 2 1st Team, the Sideline Chatter All-Essex County 1st Team, All-Newark 1ST Team and SEC Liberty Division 1st Team; Junior Quyan Williams-King was named to *NJ.Com* Group 2 2ND Team, the Sideline Chatter All Essex County 3rd Team, the All Newark 2nd Team and SEC Liberty Division 1st Team; Shaquan Barnes was named as the Essex County Athletic Directors Association’s “Karen Fucello Scholar Athlete”; and Head Coach Akbar Cook was named “Essex County Coach of the Year”.

The West Side High School Boys Basketball Team is comprised of the following members: **Seniors** Isiah Reyes, Dayvon Savage, Shaquan Barnes, Daviean Espinal, and Keon Thomas; **Juniors** Quyan Williams-King, Yasim Hooker, Javonne Jones, Justin Jones, and Alif Beyah; **Sophomores** Jaquil Wise, Shahadaquan McGee; and **Freshmen** James Bell.

The team was guided by Head Coach Akbar Cook and Assistant Coaches Craig Chillious, Marc Harris, Kirk Parsons, Darnay Dodson, Gary Raschid Taylor, and Deavon “Cheese” Marshall. The team also received administrative support from Superintendent Christopher Cerf, Principal Larry Ramkissoon and Athletic Director Gary Raschid Taylor.



Freeholder Wayne L. Richardson, Newark’s West Ward Councilman Joseph McCallum, Mr. A. Cook, Director of School Operation and Vice Principal of West Side High School (from left to right), join together as Athletic Director Gary R. Taylor shares remarks thanking the Board for its Commendation. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

Newark’s West Ward Councilman Joseph McCallum was also present at the ceremony. Councilman McCallum shared remarks congratulating the team, stating, “I’ve never been as proud of a group of young men, the administration, the coaches, you guys were great. You’ve represented Newark so well.” Athletic Director Gary R. Taylor also thanked the Board for recognizing the team for its win.

Principal Larry Ramkissoon thanked the Board for its Commendation, saying, “So, on behalf of the Roughrider family, and I represent the Roughrider family. I feel like a proud father. I’d like to thank the Board of Freeholders, our Councilman, and all the honored people that are here.”

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