

# **PRESS RELEASE**

April 6, 2017

## **ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS RUFUS I. JOHNSON AND LEONARD M. LUCIANO HONOR THE WEST SIDE HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM 2016-2017 NJSIAA GROUP 2 CHAMPIONS**



(Front row, from left to right) Assistant Coach Daevon Marshall, player Quayon Williams-King, player Kirk Parsons, player Javonne Jones, player Tyrese Henryel, Assistant coach Darnay Dodson, (second row, from left to right) Freeholder Leonard M. Luciano, player Quaion Taylor, Athletic Director Gary Taylor, Assistant Coach Kirk Parsons, Assistant Coach Craig Chillious Head Coach Akbar Cook, and Freeholder Rufus Johnson celebrate West Side High School's championship win during a special presentation at the Hall of Records in Newark.

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored the West Side High School Boys Basketball Team on Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Hall of Records for winning the 2016-2017 NJSIAA Group 2 Championship. The Board's commendation was sponsored and presented to the team by Freeholder At-Large Rufus I. Johnson of Newark and District 4 Freeholder Leonard M. Luciano of West Caldwell.

Freeholder Johnson presented the team with the Board's Commendation, recognizing their hard work and dedication for winning the Championship for two consecutive years. He expressed his appreciation to the team's coaches for their dedication to empowering the players to excel. He noted that the coaches have dedicated their time, effort, and energy to ensuring that the players are successful in basketball and in the future. Furthermore, Freeholder Johnson congratulated the players for their hard work this season.

Freeholder Leonard Luciano, a former Newark Public School Teacher congratulated the team for their successful season.

The Roughriders won the 2017 NJSIAA, Group 2 Boys Basketball Championship after defeating Parsippany (73-20), Fort Lee (71-43), Hackettstown (35-23), Hanover Park (63-37) and Newton (58-35). In addition to winning its second consecutive NJSIAA North 2, Group 2 Sectional Championship, the team also became the Super Essex Conference (SEC), American Division Co-Champions with a 10-2 Conference record.

The team finished its outstanding 2016-2017, season ranked as the 20th Team in the Tri-State area, as the 15th ranked team in the State of New Jersey, and the State's #1 Group 2 team with a stellar overall record of 25-7.

Several of the team's players were further recognized with additional honors. Senior Quayan Williams-King was named to the *NJ.Com* All Group 2 1st Team, the *Sideline Chatter* All-Essex County 1st Team, All-Newark 1st Team, SEC American Division 1st Team, and an All-New Jersey News12 Honorable Mention. Senior Quaison Taylor was named to *NJ.Com* Group 2 1st Team, the *Sideline Chatter* All Essex County 3rd Team, the All Newark 2nd Team, and SEC American Division 2nd Team. Senior Yasim Hooker was named to the *NJ.Com* All Group 2 2nd Team, the *Sideline Chatter* All-Essex 2nd Team, the All Newark 1st Team, the SEC American Division 1st team and was selected as the Essex County Athletic Directors Association's "Karen Fucello Scholar Athlete" from West Side High School. In addition, Head Coach Akbar H. Cook was chosen as the *News 12-2017* All New Jersey "Boys Basketball Coach of the Year".

The team is comprised of the following members: **Seniors** Quayan Williams-King, Yasim Hooker, Quaison Taylor, Justin Jones, Javonne Jones, Alif Beyah, and Tyrese Henryel; **Junior** Shahidaquan McGee; **Sophomores** James Bell, Ka'ronn Boundurant and Moussa Camara; and **Freshman** Kirk Parsons.

The Roughriders were led by Head Coach Akbar H. Cook and Assistant Coaches Craig Chillious, Marc Harris, Kirk Parsons, Darnay Dodson, Gary Raschid Taylor, and Daevon "Cheese" Marshall.

They also received administrative support from Superintendent Christopher Cerf, Principal Larry Ramkissoon, and Athletic Director Gary Raschid Taylor; Videographer Acrew Entertainment-Randy Morrison; and Team Chaplain Jermel Mayo.

Director of Athletics Gary R. Taylor thanked the Freeholders for recognizing the team for two consecutive years. As an alumnus of West Side High School, he shared that it is important to support the youth of West Side High School and impact the lives of the student body.

Vice Principal and Head Coach Akbar H. Cook thanked Freeholder Johnson and Freeholder Luciano for honoring the Boys Basketball Team for their championship win. He expressed that he is happy to share in the joy of the West Side Community in celebrating the team and looks forward to coming back next year to celebrate another championship win.

Seniors Quayan Williams-King and Tyrese Henryel thanked the team for coming together to win the championship. The players expressed that they were happy to share this accomplishment with their teammates that have become their brothers.

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