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Hot Ticket

02.25.2011 | Campus and Community, Culture and Society The greatest basketball player of all time has, ironically, produced a documentary on "the greatest basketball team you never heard of."

The legendary Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who scored more points than any other NBA player in history, is coming to Dayton March 14-15 to talk hoops, filmmaking and life as part of the University of Dayton's Diversity Lecture Series.

He also plans on attending part of the inaugural First Four of the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the University of Dayton Arena.

In an "Inside the Actors Studio" format, Marsha Bonhart, anchor for WDTN-TV, will converse with Abdul-Jabbar on the Schuster Center stage at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 14. Abdul-Jabbar, who's turned to filmmaking and writing books that popularize the contributions of African-Americans to American culture and history, also will take questions from the audience. His appearance is presented by the University of Dayton and Victoria Theatre Association. Tickets for the general public are \$15 and \$20. Call Ticket Center Stage at 937-228-3630.

The Ohio premiere of Abdul-Jabbar's documentary, *On the Shoulders of Giants: The Story of the Greatest Basketball Team You Never Heard Of*, will precede his talk at 4 p.m. at the Victoria Theatre, 138 N. Main St. The documentary chronicles the Harlem Rens, an all-black New York team that became the first basketball world champions in 1939. Abdul-Jabbar called the Rens "precursors to those brave men and women, who, 20 years later, would found the civil rights movement." Tickets for the general public are \$5. Students with a valid college or high school identification card may attend the movie for free.

The 7-foot-2 Hall of Fame center, famous for his indefensible skyhook, dominated the NBA for 20 years. He not only captured the NBA's MVP six times, was a 19-time All-Star and set the NBA all-time records in nine categories -- but he also remains the NBA's all-time leading scorer, with 38,387 points, a record that may never be broken.

Basketball has not totally defined his life. A lifelong passion for history led to six best-selling books on various historical subjects. His knowledge and love of jazz birthed an audio book (based on one of his *New York Times* best-sellers, *On the Shoulders of Giants*) and the recent documentary that features numerous celebrities, from Samuel L. Jackson and Billy Crystal to Quincy Jones and Maya Angelou. Beyond that, Abdul-Jabbar offers his time to philanthropic causes, especially ones that promote the fight against cancer. In November 2009, he went public with a diagnosis of chronic myelogenous leukemia and today is in complete remission.

Longtime Dayton Flyer fans remember one image from Abdul-Jabbar's career well. In 1967, Flyer Dan Obravac won the opening tip over Abdul-Jabbar, then known as Lew Alcindor, in the national title game of the NCAA tournament in Louisville. UCLA won 79-64 over Don Donoher's squad. On Oct. 4, 1974, Abdul-Jabbar and Bill Walton drew a sell-out UD Arena crowd in a Milwaukee Bucks' 103-96 exhibition win over the Portland Trail Blazers. Both celebrated centers are coming to the University of Dayton in March. Walton will give a motivational talk at the University's annual R.I.S.E. Forum, the world's largest student investment forum, on March 31.

The University of Dayton's Diversity Lecture Series is part of a larger strategic plan to increase inclusion and diversity on campus and prepare students, faculty, staff and the Dayton community for success in a global society. Past speakers have included Andrew Young, Coretta Scott King, Spike Lee, Kirk Franklin, Elie Wiesel, Reza Aslan, Clarence Page, Nikki Giovanni, Soledad O'Brien, Azar Nafisi, Roland Martin and Johnnetta B. Cole.

The University's commitment to diversity is founded in its Catholic heritage of social justice and the Marianist tradition of equality and being inclusive of people from all segments of society.

The Diversity Lecture Series is co-sponsored by the offices of the president and provost, with the generous support of such community partners as The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ); United Way of the Greater Dayton Area; YWCA Dayton; Victoria Theatre Association; Markey's Rental and Staging; Ross Buick-GMC-Hummer; RTA; NewPage; University of Dayton's Media Production Group; Dayton Daily News; WDTN-TV; WDAO-1210 AM; and 92.1 WROU.

For more information, contact Teri Rizvi at 937-229-3255 or rizvi@udayton.edu.