

Meadowlark Lemon

April 2015 Calendar

A newsreel of the Harlem Globetrotters captured Meadowlark Lemon's heart when he was 11 years old, giving him a dream to play for the team. Though he had no money for a basketball, he was determined. His first hoop was made out of a coat hanger and an onion sack nailed to a tree in Wilmington, North Carolina. His ball was a milk can. It was a humble beginning for a legendary career that would change the face of basketball forever.

"Many kids grow up being told they're never going to be anything. If they hear those words enough, they start believing them. Sports can help them pick themselves up and take them in the right direction, changing them forever," said Lemon. He adds that he was changed by basketball, knowing early on that bringing joy to people would be his lifelong mission.

Lemon became an ordained minister in 1986, and in 1989 he founded Camp Meadowlark. In 1994 he and his wife, Dr. Cynthia Lemon, founded Meadowlark Lemon Ministries. Reaching thousands of children through camps across the country, Lemon helps kids learn athletic skills along with stressing the importance of education, health and character. Lemon said, "It's important for kids to see the hard work that it takes to be really good at something. They get to see that it takes commitment to develop talent; and when kids work hard at something, they're too exhausted to get into trouble



it's good for them and their communities." In over 16,000 career games with the Globetrotters, Lemon knew he was making a difference by helping families have fun. "We were changing the way people thought about the game of basketball – bringing joy to people and making them smile when sometimes there wasn't much to smile about. And I know that's what I'm doing when I share encouraging stories from my time with the team," said the Basketball Hall of Famer.

"I set out to be the best basketball player I could be. I wanted to leave the game better than I found it," said Lemon. "That remains my mission today: Be the best mentor I can be and leave communities I reach better than I found them."