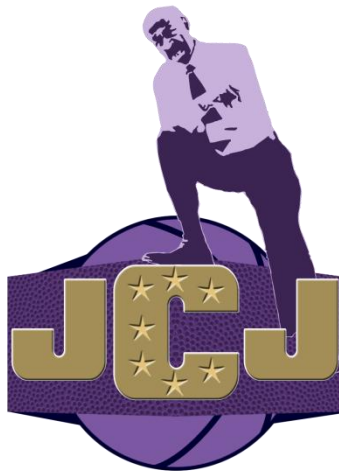


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, September 3, 2020

MEDIA CONTACT: Jae Henderson, [putitinwritingpr@gmail.com](mailto:putitinwritingpr@gmail.com) or 901.359.6629



## **STORY OF LEGENDARY LEMOYNE-OWEN COLLEGE COACH FEATURED AT THE BURBANK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

**(MEMPHIS, TN)** -- The spotlight is on Memphis sports once again as the independent film “1st Forgotten Champions: The Legacy of Jerry C. Johnson” by native son Morreco Coleman makes its debut in the Burbank International Film Festival September 10 – 13. The documentary chronicles the life and times of award-winning Coach Jerry C. Johnson, who served for 46 years as the head men’s basketball coach at LeMoyné-Owen College (LOC), the only HBCU located in Memphis. During his career, Coach Johnson led the Magicians to many victories but his most notable one was the 1975 NCAA Division III Championship. He became the first African American coach to do so and LOC the first HBCU. Coach Johnson, who is now 102, retired from coaching in 2005 and left a legacy that remains unmatched. The Burbank International Film Festival is virtual this year and the film will be broadcast Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> only. The community can help bring home the prize by purchasing tickets to view the documentary. To add to the excitement, the Jerry C. Johnson Foundation is purchasing tickets for the first 100 people to email them at [jcjfoundationmemphis@gmail.com](mailto:jcjfoundationmemphis@gmail.com). The email must contain the person’s legal name, email, and phone number. Only one request can be made per person.

The Burbank International Film festival began in 2009 in Burbank, California to highlight filmmakers who focus on social and environmental subjects. “1st Forgotten Champions: The Legacy of Jerry Johnson” is in the category of featured documentary and will be competing against six other films. “1st Forgotten Champions: The Legacy of Jerry Johnson” contains interviews with Coach Johnson, other legendary professional athletes and current and past University of Memphis head basketball coaches Anfernee “Penny” Hardaway, John Calipari, and Josh Pastner. Former Memphis Mayor Willie Herenton also shares his thoughts on Coach Johnson and his rigorous basketball program.

Morreco Coleman is a filmmaker, animator, and graphic artist who graduated from Memphis College of Art. He relocated to Los Angeles, CA in 2015 to further pursue his dream. This is Coleman’s second film festival feature. “Gansta Walking The Movie” competed in the 2015 Memphis International Film and Music Festival bringing light to the Memphis hip hop-rap and dance culture. He recently found out that “1st Forgotten Champions: The

Legacy of Jerry C. Johnson” was accepted into the Nashville Black International Film Festival being held September 30<sup>th</sup> – October 4<sup>th</sup>.

“This film is an important part of not only Memphis sports history but also African American history and winning the documentary division of the Burbank Film Festival would be a great way to pay homage to a great man who helped shape many boys in Memphis into awesome men. He taught them how to win on the basketball court and life,” said Coleman. “It was an honor and pleasure to tell Coach Johnson’s story, and I hope everyone will find it in their hearts to not only buy tickets but view it with family and friends who may not be familiar with Coach Johnson and LOC mens basketball team’s story of hard work and triumph,” said Coleman.

Former Jerry C. Johnson Foundation Chairman Jesse Chatman is excited about the possibilities this honor presents. “We’ve been working with Morreco to complete this film for a couple of years. Several of the interviews were shot during Coach Johnson’s 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration. The film has gradually progressed and the finished product can be seen during the Burbank International Film Festival. If Memphis and the students, staff and alumni of LeMoyné-Owen College get behind it, I know we can win. The Jerry C. Johnson Foundation is trying to do our part and we welcome the assistance of anyone else who wants to donate tickets to others,” said Chatman.

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/jcjfoundation1](https://www.facebook.com/jcjfoundation1). You can also visit the Burbank International Film Festival page directly, <https://burbankfilmfest.festivee.com/1st-forgotten-champions>.