

Thales Alford McReynolds

Thales Alford McReynolds was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on June 8, 1943, and graduated from Parker High School in 1961. Although he had never played organized basketball before college, McReynolds' dedication, determination, and natural talent quickly transformed him into one of the most remarkable scorers in Miles College basketball history.

McReynolds attended Miles College from 1961 to 1966 and played guard for the Golden Bears from 1961 through 1965. After developing his skills under coaches Oscar Catlin and Arthur Wilkins, he emerged as a first-string player and became a dominant force on the court. During the 1964–65 season, McReynolds was recognized as the nation's leading small-college scorer, averaging an extraordinary 39 points per game and earning the nickname "Big Gun." He scored a career-high 54 points against Mississippi Industrial College and helped lead a Miles College team that ranked third nationally while averaging 101.6 points per game.

McReynolds' exceptional performance earned him selection by the Baltimore Bullets of the NBA in the 11th round of the 1965 draft. He played professionally from September 1965 through January 1966 before returning to Miles College to complete his degree. In 1966, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics.

Following college, McReynolds served honorably in the United States Army during the Vietnam War and continued to play basketball while in military service. After his discharge in 1968, he became a mathematics teacher in Alabama and later began a distinguished career as a cartographer with the United States Department of Defense in St. Louis, Missouri.

McReynolds continued to participate in basketball, softball, and tennis throughout his life. He passed away on June 30, 1988, at the age of 45, leaving behind his wife, Shirley Smedley McReynolds, their two children, Dana and Merus, and a lasting legacy of determination, athletic excellence, and service.

Thales McReynolds' journey—from a young man who had never played organized basketball to a nationally recognized collegiate scoring leader and NBA draft selection—stands as a remarkable testament to perseverance and talent. His accomplishments remain an enduring part of the proud history of Miles College athletics.