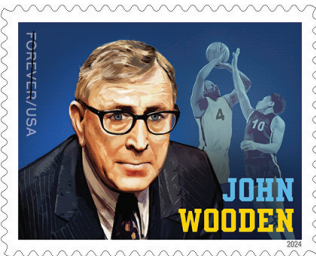


John Wooden Stamp Tipped Off February 24

by John F. Dunn



In a ceremony in the Pauley Pavilion on the University of California, Los Angeles, Campus, the United States Postal Service honored the legendary John Wooden with a commemorative postage stamp. As he died in 2010, one wonders what took the Postal People so long to honor him with this commemorative stamp.

The stamp features a portrait of

Wooden. In the “UCLA blue” background, a player defends a shot. The numbers on the two players’ jerseys, 4 and 10, evoke the Bruins’ four perfect seasons and the 10 national championships during Wooden’s tenure.

The John Wooden stamp will be issued as a Forever stamp in panes of 20, with 18 million scheduled for production. Antonio Alcalá, an art director for USPS, designed the stamp using original artwork by Alexis Franklin.

As the USPS background information was brief, I turned to Wikipedia for this presentation:

John Robert Wooden (October 14, 1910-June 4, 2010) was an American basketball coach and player. Nicknamed the “Wizard of Westwood”, he won ten National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) national championships in a 12-year period as head coach for the UCLA Bruins, including a record seven in a row. No other team has won more than four in a row in Division I college men’s or women’s basketball.

Within this period, his teams won an NCAA men’s basketball record 88 consecutive games. Wooden won the prestigious Henry Iba Award as national coach of the year a record seven times and won the Associated Press award five times.

As a 5-foot-10-inch guard with the Purdue Boilermakers, Wooden was the first college basketball player to be named an All-American three times, and the 1932 Purdue team on which he played as a senior was retroactively recognized as the pre-NCAA tournament national champion by the Helms Athletic Foundation and the Premo-Porretta Power Poll. [This was before the NCAA held the tournaments that have made “March Madness” a month-long national event. JFD.]

He played professionally in the National Basketball League (NBL). Wooden was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame as a player (1960) and as a coach (1973), the first person ever enshrined in both categories.

One of the most revered coaches in the history of sports, Wooden was beloved by his former players, among them Lew Alcindor (later Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) and Bill Walton. Wooden was renowned for his short, simple inspirational messages to his players (including his “Pyramid of Success”) many of which were directed at how to be a success in life as well as in basketball.

Wooden’s 29-year coaching career and overwhelming critical acclaim for his leadership have created a legacy not only in sports but also extending to business, personal success, and organizational leadership.