

## **Black Basketball: The McLendon Years at North Carolina College for Negroes, 1937-1952**

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This study seeks to provide a historical examination and analysis of the grassroots civil rights efforts of John B. McLendon Jr. and how he used basketball to push for integration of the gymnasium highlighting the social and political impact of black basketball in Durham, North Carolina. McLendon spent fifteen years as the head basketball coach at North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham. McLendon created the defensive and offensive techniques to modernize the game of basketball. In addition, it is the intent of this research is to illustrate how John B. McLendon used the game of basketball to confront racial barriers and integrate the basketball court. By 1954, the political and social climate in America was intense and the Supreme Court case *Brown v the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* declared that “separate but equal” was unconstitutional. Ten years prior to this landmark decision, McLendon orchestrated an integrated basketball game that was unknown to history until fifty-two years later in 1996. Known as the “Secret Game,” historian Scott Ellsworth conducted a creditable investigation to piece together missing pieces of history. Current sources on McLendon do not focus exclusively on McLendon’s tenure at NCC.