

Marques Haynes

A unique talent for basketball took him from small-town American to the world. He's a true Globetrotter

Chapter 1 – 1:00

Introduction

Announcer: Marques Haynes played basketball for more than 50 years, weathering bumpy roads, drafty buses and not-so-subtle racism. He logged 12,000 games and entertained millions in 106 countries with his trick shots and masterful dribbling. Marques was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame, representing all of the great black players of his era—like Goose Tatum and Meadowlark Lemon, who played for touring teams before minorities were allowed in the NBA. Marques' talent got its start in Sand Springs, Oklahoma in a three-bedroom house with a mother who preached education first and then basketball. The wallpaper of that three-bedroom house consisted of the *Tulsa World* and the *Tulsa Tribune*. Marques Haynes became known as the world's greatest dribbler. He tells his story in this oral history presentation made possible by the generosity of foundations that believe in preserving Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time on VoiceofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 – 8:25

From the Beginning

John Erling: My name is John Erling and today's date is December 8, 2011. Marques would you please state your full name please?

Marques Haynes: Marques Oriole Haynes.

JE: Where did your middle name come from?

MH: I don't know. I haven't found that out.

JE: Your date of birth?

MH: March 10, 1926.

JE: So that makes your present age?

MH: Young. (Laughter) What's the matter? (Laughter)

JE: (Laughter) Well, that is young. Compared to Otis Clark, you are young. Where are we recording this interview?

MH: Plano, Texas where I live.

JE: Where were you born?

MH: I was born in Sand Springs, Oklahoma in what they called a shotgun house. It had three rooms in it, a front room, a bedroom and a kitchen. That was it.

JE: Did you have electricity or plumbing?

MH: Nothing but kerosene lamps that used oil.

JE: Did you grow up in that house?

MH: That's the house I was born in and grew up in.

JE: What as your grandfather's name?

MH: His name was the same as my dad's, Emanuel Haynes.

JE: Did you know him?

MH: No, I didn't know my grandfather.

JE: What was your mother's name?

MH: Her name was Hattie. She was from Mississippi originally. She and her family lived in Mississippi and they were run out of there. Her dad owned a cotton gin and he was doing such big business that the whites ran him out. Then they came up to Coweta, Oklahoma.

JE: What was your mother like?

MH: She was a great, great person and a well-liked person. Of course, naturally I loved her, but throughout the community people looked up to her.

JE: Did she encourage you in basketball and sports?

MH: She encouraged me to learn my lessons. She always told me, "When you go to school, you learn as much as you possibly can." I had two brothers and a sister and they all played basketball. I got it from my sister. My mom told me I could play basketball as long as I wanted to, but that they could take the ball away from me, but not my education. Nobody can take that.

JE: That was some great advice that you carried with you. We'll talk about your college work in a bit. So your father was also named Emanuel Haynes, where was he from?

MH: He was from Bastrop County, Texas.

JE: What did he do for a living?

MH: While he was there in Sand Springs he worked for the railroad called Sand Springs Railway that went from Sand Springs to Tulsa and back. Once he left home, he ended up back in his home state of Texas.

JE: How old were you when he left home?

MH: No more than three or four years old.

JE: So did you ever connect with him later on?

MH: Later on, I did connect with him after I started playing basketball. We played basketball in Austin, Texas, which isn't too far from where his home was.

JE: Did he come to a game?

MH: Yes, he did. I recognized him as soon as he walked in.

JE: Even though you had not seen him for a long time?

MH: I hadn't seen him since I was three or four years old.

JE: How old were you when you saw him at your game?

MH: I was 16 by the time I met him.

JE: Did you maintain a relationship with him?

MH: Yes, from that point on.

JE: Tell us about your family.

MH: I had two brothers and one sister. Wendell is my oldest brother, then my sister Cecil and then my brother Joe. I was the youngest.

JE: Let's talk about this house that you grew up in. Here you have four children and your mother and you grew up in this house with one bedroom?

MH: It had one bedroom, but we slept in all three rooms in what you would call pallets. You put blankets and sheets down on the floor and that's where you slept.

JE: There was no electricity or plumbing?

MH: There was a person across the alley from us that had a hydrant. We bought water from them. We paid them so much a month for buckets or cups of water.

JE: How did you insulate the house?

MH: We used boxes leftover from the box factory called Sand Spring Box Company, which was right across the street from us. They made corrugated cardboard boxes. We used them to tack up on the inside of the house.

JE: What did you put on the walls to decorate it?

MH: We had the *Tulsa World* and the *Tulsa Tribune* during those years. There were also a couple of black newspapers, *The Oklahoma Eagle* in Tulsa and the *Black Dispatch* in Oklahoma City.

JE: What did your mother do for a living?

MH: She was a domestic worker. She took in clothes to wash. She would wash and iron them for 10 cents a shirt, which is very cheap compared to today's prices. She would do that for people who lived across the tracks from us. The blacks in Sand Springs lived on the south side of the tracks and the whites lived on the north. She charged 10 cents per garment and 5 cents for a handkerchief.

Joan Haynes: I wanted to interject here—his mother was very industrious. She was really a pioneer to this whole women's movement toward entrepreneurship.

- JE:** Let me just say that we are talking to Joan, who is Marques' wife. Joan when did the two of you get married?
- JH:** We've been married 37 years. I met him in Oklahoma City. We got married in 1974 or 1975 in Las Vegas.
- JE:** How did you meet?
- JH:** I was a professional model at the time and he had a successful Italian knit-house. Marques was written up in *Forbes* magazine and numerous high-end magazines and newspapers about his successful knit-house.
- JE:** What is a knit-house?
- JH:** Well, you know high-end knitwear in women's clothes, like St. John and Valentino.
- JE:** That was a business of his?
- JH:** Yes, that was a business of his, so he really was a pioneer in that area also. He was very successful in that. He was giving this great big fashion show. My agency, which was Wilhelmina Modeling Agency at the time, sent me up to go and try out for the show. Well, I got rejected because Marques said, "Don't hire her." (Laughter) Later on, I found out that when they asked him why he didn't hire me he said, "I don't date my employees and I do intend to date her." So that's how we got together.
- JE:** (Laughter) You were pretty sure of yourself there pal! That's a great story. So Joan will be interjecting throughout the interview. We were talking about Marques' mother. She was such a hard worker. Joan, I think you were saying that she was a forerunner for women. Tell us about that.
- JH:** When I listen to the stories that have been told by Marques' family, the parallels between what she did and what's going on now are just amazing. Women now are working at home. They've come out of corporate America and they are at home. She worked at home. Her advertising was mouth-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth is a very good form of advertising today. She worked with other women in the community to spread the word about what she was doing. She had more than enough work. Like Marques said, on the other side of the community, she was utilized all of the time, so she did very, very well. In fact, she had to turn down work.
- MH:** My sister was a seamstress. She made women's clothing and she also papered houses.
- JE:** Did they give you a job or tell you that you had to go out and earn some money?
- MH:** I cut grass with Uncle Jack uptown in the white neighborhood. I worked for him for 25 cents a day. We didn't have the electric mowers in those years—we just had the ones that you pushed.
- JE:** So you were bringing money into the house too?
- MH:** A little bit. I sold newspapers too. I sold the *Tulsa World* and the *Tulsa Tribune*. Then there were a couple of black publications that I sold.

Chapter 3 – 2:32**Introduction to Basketball**

John Erling: Where was your house located in Sand Springs?

Marques Haynes: They had three streets for blacks in Sand Springs. They had the south section right across the street from the box factory. Then there was Oak Street, Pecan Street and Elm Street. Actually there were four areas all together. Elm Street was just a short street, but we lived on the south section there just north of the highway. The highway came right through that part of town.

JE: Was that road renamed?

MH: That particular road was not renamed, but they did change the name of a road to the Marques Haynes Highway. It's a road near the Tulsa County line.

JE: You never thought that would happen living back then did you?

MH: No, I thought they were joking when they told me that, but that's what they wanted to do.

JE: (Laughter) Let's talk about your sister. Was she the one that was more dominant and interested in basketball?

MH: My sister was a star player on the girls' basketball team in high school. I was just a kid then, I was only three or four years old.

JE: What was her name?

MH: Her name was Cecil. When she went to practice, she had to take me with her, because nobody would have been there to take care of me, being the youngest in the family. She would take me with her and put me over to the side and put chairs around me so while she was practicing with the other girls a ball wouldn't come over and hit me. Many times she gave me a ball. When I became interested in basketball it was through her.

JE: Who taught you how to shoot? Did she teach you that?

MH: I shot like her.

JE: Like she did?

MH: Yes, I bounced the ball the way like they would bounce it, and I would shoot like I saw them try and shoot. Before I knew it, as I grew older, I was shooting the same types of shots that she shot.

JE: Who taught you how to dribble?

MH: My oldest brother Wendell. He was a great dribbler in my opinion. My youngest brother Joe, who was older than me, taught me passing. He was a great passer and guard defensively.

JE: So you were being coached at what age?

MH: I was about four or five years old.

JE: They must have seen something special in you back then too?

MH: At that age I don't think they did. He just threw me a ball and told me to mark him and I did a pretty good job of marking him.

Chapter 4 – 5:21

High School Basketball

John Erling: You lived in Sand Springs. Did you ever go into downtown Tulsa to the Greenwood District where the blacks lived?

Marques Haynes: Yes. They had a trolley car in Sand Springs. We called it a streetcar. It went from Sand Springs to Tulsa. We didn't go to the local movies in Sand Springs, you know, because of segregation. The streetcar took us to the black neighborhood in Tulsa in and around Greenwood and then it would turn around and go back to Sand Springs. The Dreamland Theater was right across the street from one of the streetcar stops in Tulsa. We would get off and all we had to do was walk across the street to the movie house.

JE: Was that the only place blacks could go to the movies?

MH: Yes, in those years. They had the Dreamland Theater and the Rex Theater, but the Dreamland was the main one. Rex Theater came a little bit later. The Dreamland was the only one that the blacks went to.

JE: Where did you go to school in Sand Springs?

MH: We just had that one school called Booker T. Washington, named after a great black educator. I went there from kindergarten all the way through high school.

JE: When you were in high school, did you think that you wanted to be a basketball player?

MH: One day I was reading the *Pittsburgh Courier*, which was a black newspaper, and I saw where a fellow by the name of Pop Gates was being paid \$250 to play basketball. I couldn't imagine that someone was being paid to play basketball. That's when I started concentrating a heck of a lot more on basketball.

JE: In high school did you try out and play for the varsity team as a freshman?

MH: No, I was a mascot, or what you call a student manager now. I would watch the guys in high school play, but I had to do all of the cleaning up work before the game and after the game. I took care of the gym with another fellow named Roland Smith who I went to high school with. He and I were the two mascots and we got the chance to travel with the team. We got to go to Oklahoma City.

JE: Probably your first trips out of the Sand Springs area were because of basketball?

MH: Yes.

JE: Were you a member of the team for your sophomore year?

MH: The team was going to the National Negro High School Basketball Tournament, which was being held in Tuskegee, Alabama. I was the 9th man, and the 9thth man didn't get a chance to make trips outside of the state. One of the players got sick and couldn't go. They stopped by my house that morning at 5am to ask me if I could go. I told them "yes" and my mom got me ready and I went down to Tuskegee with them. We ended up winning the National Negro High School Basketball Tournament.

JE: So you were asked at the last minute to play...did you play much in that tournament?

MH: Yes. I played an awful lot. I ended up making second-team All-American.

JE: They were glad that guy got sick then, eh?

MH: They might have been! Let me tell you whom I met at that time. I got the chance to meet Dr. George Washington Carver Jr. That's where his laboratory was. I met Eleanor Roosevelt and (inaudible) Cookman. Those three people I got a chance to meet on that trip.

JE: Why was Eleanor Roosevelt there?

MH: Well, now that I didn't ask her—but I got a chance to meet her. I assume they were there visiting with Dr. George Washington Carver Jr., because this friend of mine from Tulsa, who was a friend of my brother's, was taking me to Dr. Carver's laboratory to show it to me and to meet him. We were on our way and on the sidewalk Dr. Carver and these two ladies were on that same sidewalk. He stopped and recognized this fellow by the name of Fred Kennedy. We stopped and talked to him, and Dr. Carver introduced these two ladies to us.

JE: That's great. You're team defeated these twins from Oklahoma, who were they?

MH: The Cudjoe twins, there was almost a whole family of them. Lawrence and Lance were the twins but then they had two older brothers. The Cudjoe twins had beaten us twice in Oklahoma before we got to Tuskegee, once in Seminole, and once in Sand Springs. Now we were both in this tournament in Tuskegee. Now, for the first time, and I think the only time, we had two teams from the same state in the finals. We beat them in the finals at Tuskegee.

JE: The names of players that were on that team like Orlandis Low and Milton "Big Eyes" Davidson?

MH: That's right.

JE: There was Andrew Wilks and Long John Smith?

MH: That's right. You did some good researching! (Laughter)

JE: You won a state title with that team and you were named as Second Team Scholastic All-American? So it wasn't just that you could play basketball, you were also a good student.

MH: Yes, I was a good student.

Chapter 5 – 2:43
Langston University

John Erling: You went to Langston University?

Marques Haynes: That's right,

JE: There's a story about \$25.

MH: Our church gave a \$25 scholarship to the student member of the church that had the best grades. I couldn't help but win, because I was the only one from my church that was graduating that year. (Laughter) So I got the \$25 scholarship. I went up to get it and they told me they would send the \$25 to the school of my choice. Langston was the school of my choice. So I got to Langston and I went to get my \$25. They told me to sign a piece of paper and I signed it. I went to put my hand out for the \$25 and they said, "No, that's for your tuition." (Laughter) I thought—what am I going to do now? I remembered one thing, my oldest brother who went to Langston used to work on the yard for a fellow named Uncle Bill. So I went to Uncle Bill and asked him if he needed another worker. He heard my name and realized he had hired my brother and he told me to come on. He asked me, "What can you do?" I said, "I can cut grass." He said, "Can you fix a lawn mower?" I said, "I can take them apart and put them back together." He said, "Well, your brother couldn't do that." I said, "He probably did a lot of things I couldn't do." He said, "Let me see you do that." I took that sucker apart and put it back together so quick. He told me I was hired even before I finished it.

JE: (Laughter)

MH: I worked there for a short period of time and then another thing came up at an elementary school next to the campus of Langston University. They needed somebody to clean that school up. It was janitorial work and Uncle Bill asked me if I wanted that job and I said, "Yes, let me have that." Then later, I became the janitor for the college basketball team. That's what I wanted, the gym. I would practice, but after practice I used to clean up.

JE: What did you do with that money you earned?

MH: I used it to pay my tuition. My two brothers went to Langston but my sister didn't go. She got married and she had her own business as a seamstress. She made women's clothing and she even made her son's clothing. She was a great seamstress. She would get these dress patterns and lay them out on the floor and cut it out and before you knew it she had a dress or whatever it was made.

JE: Did you play as a freshman on the Langston University basketball team?

MH: I went out for the team and I was on the team, but I wasn't a starter until the second or third game. Then from that point on I was a starting guard.

Chapter 6 – 4:38**Jackie Robinson**

John Erling: One time you were playing for Langston and you were in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Marques Haynes: Yes, we were at Southern University, just outside of Baton Rouge.

JE: You dribbled out the clock to make fun of Southern University—why did you do that?

MH: No, no. I didn't do that to make fun of Southern University. What happened was Jackie Robinson was a friend of a fellow from Austin, Texas who had a team playing there. Jackie was visiting them, but Jackie was at the same time on his way to training camp in Cuba. That's where I met Jackie. While I was talking with Jackie, the Southern University team was playing Jackie's friend's team that was from Austin.

JE: Sam Houston College?

MH: Yes! That's right. Oh, they were putting on a show against Jackie's friend's team. The crowd was just going wild with every little bit that they did. Jackie and I just stood there and we were watching that. I thought that was terrible that the coach allowed that to happen. Jackie was getting ready to go. I said, "No Jackie, you've got to wait for a while. You can't go right now." He said, "I've got to go to train. I'm going all the way to Cuba, man." I said, "You've got to stay because if you hear about what's going to happen in this next game...we are going to be playing Southern and you are going to wish you had stayed here."

JE: We should point out here for listeners that Southern University ran up the score on Sam Houston College.

MH: Yes. The crowd was just going wild. I felt sorry that this was happening because Jackie was seeing his friend's team having a show put on them—and that's exactly what it was. They were just showing off. They were way ahead of them. So I convinced him to stay and watch. I told him, "Jackie, this is something that you have got to see. This is going to be for you because we are going to play Southern in the championship game." So we played Southern and near the end of the game I went into this dribbling routine. The referee was trying to stop me and I asked him if he would get out of the way. Then all at once there was a big, loud uproar. I wondered what the heck was going on. One of my teammates said the coach was behind me. I figured he was going to disapprove of what I was doing—but I thought he would maybe do it from the sideline. Then all at once the referee wasn't saying anything—by then he was enjoying it. I looked up and Zip, my coach, was directly behind me out on the court trying to stop me. You know how men used to wear cleats on their heels or on the toes of their shoes?

JE: Yes.

MH: I knew Zip had those cleats on. So I thought I am going to take care of this. So I went into a real fast dribble and all at once I stopped and he tried to stop too and Zip went right on by me. (Laughter) The crowd was going wild and they were throwing these little airplane paper deals down on the floor. I went on and made the basket and went straight to the dressing room. Zip was right behind me. He slammed the door and said, “Haynes...you’ll never play another game at Langston University.” I looked him straight in the eye and I said, “Zip, this is the last game of the season and I’m a senior.” (Laughter) He said, “Oh hell.” (Laughter) He walked out.

JE: He had seen you do that dribbling in practice hadn’t he?

MH: No, Zip didn’t know I could do that. We did it in practice, but we did it when he was out of the gym. The assistant coach Powell knew we could do it, but he didn’t care. Zip didn’t allow anything that was fancy. No behind-the-back passes, no bouncing the ball between your legs. He did not like showmanship. He was strictly a “no showmanship” type of coach. The only time we did anything like that was when we knew he was out of the gym. The gym had two doors. Sometimes he would leave and go over to the administration building for a while. We would put somebody at each door to watch and see when he was coming back. We would get out there and do all kinds of fancy dribbling and passing and having fun. Then they would signal us that he was coming back and so we would stop it.

JE: Let me ask you again about Jackie Robinson, did you know him before that game that day?

MH: No, I didn’t. I met him the day of that game.

JE: For listeners, he was the first black major league baseball player. He broke the color line in baseball with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. But he was a nice person and you liked him?

MH: Oh yes. Jackie was a great person. He was the type of guy that never met an enemy. He was a friendly person.

Chapter 7 – 3:49

Marques – Globetrotters

John Erling: When you played for Langston, the team had 112 wins, 3 losses, 2 conference titles and included a 59-game winning streak.

Marques Haynes: Yes.

JE: What schools did you play?

MH: We played schools in our conference. Bishop College out of Texas, Wiley, Xavier out of New Orleans, Texas College and Southern University.

JE: One time Langston was invited to play an exhibition game against the Harlem Globetrotters?

MH: Well, what happened was the team that they were going to play in Oklahoma City cancelled out on them. They got a hold of our coach, Zip Gayles and asked if our team would substitute and play against them because the other team wasn't going to make it. Zip said, "Yeah, we'll play against you." So we got into OKC at the old auditorium. We warmed up before the ball game and all of the coaches and the captains would meet at center court. Their coach told our coach, "We'll beat you when we play you but we won't make you look too bad." Zip told us, "Hell, make us look bad?" "He said to us, you guys shoot your best shots—you guys know what to do." We thought, okay let's get it on. We got it on and what happened at the end of it, we were the only college team to ever beat them. Langston University beat them by four points.

JE: And you scored 26 points.

MH: Oh, you've got all that info down eh?

JE: I do! Were the Globetrotters doing all of their clowning around in that game where you played them?

MH: No. They were for real. They were playing straight up.

JE: So you weren't doing your dribbling act during that game?

MH: Oh no, no. They wanted me to travel with them after that. I said, "No, man, my mom would kill me if I left school now. I'm graduating in May." They asked if they could hear from me and I said, "Well, what do you mean?" They said they would like to keep in contact with me and bring me up to Chicago to join them.

JE: You came to the attention of Abe Saperstein who was the owner of the Globetrotters. Was he at that game?

MH: No, he wasn't, but his traveling secretary, his front man was, a fellow by the name of Winfield Welch.

JE: That's when Abe heard about you and wanted you to join the Globetrotters?

MH: Actually, they had a team called the Kansas City Stars. That's the team I started out with. I played briefly with them. It was like a farm team for the Globetrotters.

JE: Did you do your dribbling act then?

MH: Yes, I did my dribbling act and shooting act and all of it.

JE: How much did you earn?

MH: I think I made \$250 a month.

JE: Then you signed on with the Globetrotters in 1947 I believe?

MH: Yes. The Hawaiian team was supposed to play the Globetrotters in Oakland, California. The Kansas City Stars were playing in the same deal. The Stars were supposed to play the first game and then the Globetrotters were going to play the second game. I was on the Stars at that time. The Hawaiian team was supposed to play the Globetrotters in the main event. Somehow, they were beating the Globetrotters. Winfield Welch asked me,

“Do you want to play against the team from Hawaii?” I said, “Sure.” So I went on and got dressed and I took one of the Globetrotters places. As soon as I got in the game I started firing away. I looked up and we were 10 points ahead of them. (Laughter) That’s when I joined the Globetrotters.

Chapter 8 – 2:54

George Mikan

John Erling: The National Basketball Association was not very popular at that time was it?

Marques Haynes: It wasn’t very popular at all. They ought to thank the Globetrotters forever because the Globetrotters kept them going. That’s a real fact.

JE: The Globetrotters brought attention to the basketball games when they played the NBA.

MH: That’s right. When they played on the card with them—when they had two games, a double header.

JE: So people came out really to see the Globetrotters?

MH: That’s a fact. The Globetrotters would play the first ball game and after that they would play the NBA game, but people started walking out, so they changed the schedule around so that the NBA teams played the first game and the Globetrotters played the second game.

JE: You started for the team when you beat George Mikan and the Minneapolis Lakers in 1948?

MH: That’s right.

JE: It was in the Chicago Stadium.

MH: I broke my back that night.

JE: Really? Tell us about that.

MH: George Mikan and I went up for a rebound. We both caught the ball at the same time. He snatched the ball and my hand slipped off of it and I fell on my back and broke it. They tried to take me out of the game but I told them I didn’t want to sit on the bench and get cold. So I stayed in the ball game and finished the game.

JE: Wow.

MH: I couldn’t sleep that night. The next day I went to the hospital. They examined me and they knew that I had fractured a lumbar vertebra.

JE: Was that the end of the season?

MH: That was the end of the season for me. They put a cast on me (motioning) from here to

here. After a couple of months they put a shorter cast on me. After that, I just wore a regular brace, but it did stop me from playing.

JE: How long were you out?

MH: I was out until the next season.

JE: But you won the ballgame 61-59?

MH: Yes, we won the ballgame with a last-second shot by Ermer Robinson. That was the first time we played them.

JE: You played them again in 1949 and you beat them 49-45 in front of 21,000 fans.

MH: Yes. That's when I did my dribbling.

JE: That had to be embarrassing for the Minneapolis Lakers. George Mikan was known as one of the first 7 footers. Did you remember a man by the name of Bob Kurland?

MH: Yes, Bob used to play for the Phillips 66 Oilers.

JE: Right.

MH: Yes, I know Bob.

JE: He was also about 7 feet tall.

MH: At least.

JE: These two guys, Bob Kurland and George Mikan were the two first big-tall seven footers so to speak. I have interviewed Bob Kurland and he doesn't really think he's seven feet tall, but they promoted him that way.

MH: Well, he looks like he's seven feet tall anyway, (chuckle) if you stand up beside him.

JE: Did you ever play against him?

MH: No, I didn't play against Bob, but I did play against Mikan.

JE: Okay, but you might have been around him before.

MH: Bob Kurland?

JE: Yes.

MH: Sure, he was a big Phillips 66 player.

JE: But they never played the Harlem Globetrotters?

MH: No.

JE: What kind of a guy was George Mikan?

MH: George was a nice fellow. He wasn't what you would call a talkative fellow but he was just a real nice guy—very nice.

Chapter 9 – 4:40**Money**

John Erling: There was a player for the Globetrotters that was pretty special and his name was Goose Tatum.

Marques Haynes: Goose Tatum, that's right. There will never be another one like him. He also played baseball briefly with the Kansas City Monarchs and for another team called the Zulus and they wore grass skirts. (Chuckles) I think that team was out of New Orleans.

JE: Then there came a point where you left the Globetrotters.

MH: Yes, in 1953.

JE: Why was that?

MH: That was what you call a player against owner argument so to speak.

JE: Like a contract dispute?

MH: Yes. Saberstein always figured that you had to take whatever it was that he gave. He had sent my contract out to me in Oklahoma and asked for me to send it back—something he had not done before. I looked at it and to me it seemed like the same contract as before. I thought, I've got to do some negotiating here. So he called me and asked me why I hadn't sent the contract back. I said, "You'll get it." He sent his brother down to get me to send this contract in. I told him he could not have it and that I would take it with me when I returned. So I went back, this was in the Chicago area, I went to his office and we sat down and we started talking about this contract. I said, "Let me tell you something, we have got to do something in the area of negotiating. The first contract I signed, I didn't know any better. We have got to negotiate on this." He had made two movies on that first contract and he was planning a third movie, but he didn't pay anybody what they felt that they should have gotten. He had made the *Harlem Globetrotter Story* and *Go Man Go* and he was getting ready to make another one. He hadn't told us about the third one, but I found out from one of the guys that worked in the office, named Jackson. He was one of the first Globetrotters back in the 1920s. I wanted to negotiate.

JE: What kind of money was he offering you?

MH: \$2,500 a month.

JE: What did you want to make?

MH: During those years I felt I should have been in the market of about \$5,000 or \$10,000 a month.

JE: But he was not really respectful of you was he?

MH: He and I got along well up until this point. I always told him that I felt that he was his own

worst enemy. He wanted to know why. I said, "You aren't square with the guys. You don't tell them the truth. You tell them one thing and it's something else."

JE: Was he famous for the quote, "Negroes don't need as much money as white men do?" Did he say that?

MH: Well, yes, he actually said that. I told him that I pay as much for a bottle of milk for my daughter as it does for yours. I told him that I did not know what he was talking about.

JE: So, you quit, you didn't want to play for him?

MH: He didn't want to negotiate on the contract.

JE: Then whom did you play for?

MH: I played for the Magicians. I started my own team.

JE: All right, but you turned down a \$35,000 offer to play for the Philadelphia Warriors in 1953.

MH: Goose Tatum had left the Globetrotters and had joined my team, the Magicians. Now, if I had joined the Warriors...you see Saberstein thought that Goose would come back. I had bookers and I had people in all parts of the country that got games for me. This is how he was thinking.

JE: But you did turn down that \$35,000. You would have been the highest paid player in the NBA.

MH: At the time, that's right.

JE: Why did you turn it down?

MH: Mainly because if I would have taken that, Goose would have had no alternative but to go back and play for the Globetrotters.

JE: And he was making more money with you?

MH: Yes, he was making more money with me. If I had not turned it down, Goose would have been out there by himself. He wouldn't have known what to do. He didn't have the bookers or anything else.

JE: \$35,000 was a lot of money then, were you making a lot of money with the Harlem Magicians yourself?

MH: Oh yeah.

JE: You did everything for that team. You were the manager and the scheduler and the booker?

MH: I did all of it. In traveling about with the Globetrotters, I met a lot of people who became acquaintances. I met bookers and later I was able to arrange games with them. Once I got Goose Tatum, it was no problem. Everybody, including Madison Square Garden, Boston Garden—I had the whole thing that Saberstein had. He was still pushing, but he didn't stop me. He tried to stop me two or three times.

JE: He filed a lawsuit against you.

MH: He filed two or three lawsuits against me and tried to get me to stop playing.

Chapter 10 — 2:44**Boxer & Jesse Owens**

John Erling: The boxing legend Sugar Ray Robinson even played on your team didn't he?

Marques Haynes: Oh yeah. He played in the Garden with me and one or two other places on the East Coast.

JE: Was he any good?

MH: No.

JE: (Laughter)

MH: He was an attraction. They were paying to see the Globetrotters because he was an attraction.

JE: Right. What kind of a guy was Sugar Ray Robinson?

MH: He was one of the nicest guys that you would ever want to meet. He was very friendly and he had lots of personality.

JE: Tell us about the day in 1951 in Berlin with Jesse Owens, the great track star who was your traveling secretary for the Harlem Globetrotters.

MH: He and I roomed together.

JE: Let me just say here that Jesse was a track and field athlete. He specialized in sprints and the long jump. He participated in the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin and he won four gold medals. This was at a time in 1936 where the victory was important because Adolph Hitler had intended for the 1936 games to showcase his Aryan white supremacist ideals.

MH: Yes.

JE: So here comes Jesse Owens. What kind of a guy was Jesse?.

MH: He was one of the nicest persons that you would ever want to meet. He was a friend to everybody. He was a great speaker and a top dresser. He was personality plus.

JE: So here he comes to Berlin in 1951?

MH: Yes and people loved him. We played in the Berlin Stadium. We went there on a chartered bus, but Jesse wasn't on the bus with us. A helicopter brought him in. When he got out of that helicopter and it was announced that Jesse Owens just arrived, boy, that stadium went wild. You had to put some cotton in your ears for earplugs. They just went wild when he got out and they gave him applause. He took all of his outer clothing off and he had his jog togs on. They invited him over to the Chancellor's box to greet him. He said to Jesse that in 1936 he had literally refused to give Jesse his hand, but he said, "Today Mr. Owens I give you both of my hands." Boy, that crowd went wild.

JE: There were 75,000 people there in the stands. They must have given him a standing ovation for a long, long time.

MH: Yes. Jesse took a light jog around the field. At the end of it, what really set it off was he took this long jump and it got even louder. The people just loved him over there.

JE: And you were there because the Harlem Globetrotters were playing in the Berlin Stadium.

MH: That's right.

Chapter 11 – 2:31

Goose Tatum

John Erling: Let's talk about some of the names of The Globetrotters. We've already talked about Goose Tatum. Was he the best or the greatest?

Marques Haynes: There's no doubt about it. There will never be another one like him.

JE: Was he funny off the court joking around in the locker-room too?

MH: Goose liked to go for a walks early every morning. Sometimes we would get up early and once he went out the door we would all go to the window of the hotel, because this guy was funny just watching him walk. (Laughter) But he was one of the nicest guys in the world. If we would pass a guy on the street and he has a can to beg for money. Maybe he's blind or maybe he's not blind, but Goose would always give him some money. He would say, "C'mon and follow me and I will get you something to eat." He was a good guy.

JE: How did he get the name Goose?

MH: He was a great baseball player. He was a first baseman. He did a lot of ball handling during the seventh inning stretch with another guy. His claim to fame when he played baseball was that no one could get by on him. Goose could stretch so far and keep his foot on the base that nobody could get by on him.

JE: What about Sweetwater Clifton?

MH: I think Sweetwater was the first black to go into the NBA.

JE: Oh!

MH: The NY Knicks signed him. Then I think Chuck Cooper was the next and he went with the Boston Celtics.

JE: What about other players for the Harlem Globetrotters, Sam "Boom-boom" Wheeler?

MH: Yes, he was out of St. Louis. He was a good ball player.

JE: Bernie Price?

MH: Yes, Babe Presley, Duke Cumberland...

JE: Ducky Moore?

MH: Yes, he was out of Cleveland, Ohio. Of course, Babe Presley was out of Cleveland also.

JE: Josh Grider?

MH: Yes, he was from Tennessee State.

JE: Ted Strong?

MH: Ted Strong was a great baseball player. He used to play for the Kansas City Monarchs.

JE: Was the game of basketball different then than it is today? Was it more skillful back then than it is today?

MH: No, it's as skillful, but not when it came to showmanship stuff.

JE: Right.

MH: As far as being good, yes. You had guys like Goose Tatum. He was the greatest there ever was. You've got guys now playing that part that Goose played, but they're not anywhere close to his ability.

Chapter 12 – 3:12

Tatum Mystery

John Erling: Goose Tatum is buried here in Texas isn't he?

Marques Haynes: Yes. D2668 I think in El Paso.

JE: At Fort Bliss?

MH: Yes, that's right.

JE: Did you just give the number of burial plot?

MH: Yes. D2668 I think. That was a terrible thing.

JE: There was no funeral service for him was there?

MH: No. In fact, the girl that was his wife had only been his wife a short time. She gave the funeral home people orders not to let anyone come view the body. See, Goose and I were supposed to meet here in Texas for a ball game at Southern Methodist University. We had just talked about it the day before. I went to El Paso to the Ramada Inn and I asked the man at the front desk where the black funeral homes were. The man named a couple of them. He said he knew it would be one of the two. He knew what I was going to ask before I asked it. He told me that Goose Tatum was at this certain funeral home. I called the funeral home and asked them how long they stayed open. The man told me they were open around the clock. I asked, "Do you have Goose Tatum's body?" He said, "Yes, we do." I said, "I am going to come down and view the body." He said, "You are Mr. Haynes aren't you?" I said, "Yes, how did you know?" He said, "I heard that you probably would be coming. I have orders from his wife that no one is to visit the body."

JE: Orders? Why?

MH: Why? (Pause) I won't go into that, but I think that she was afraid that some things might get out that she was trying to stop. But nobody could view the body. I had talked to Goose just the day before and we were going to meet up at the college here in Dallas for a game and then this happens—so something happened. The people that lived across the street from where Goose lived said that the night before he died there was a lot of commotion going on in that house.

JE: How old was he when he died?

MH: He was in his late 40s I believe.

JE: Late 40s? Wow!

MH: Yes, I would say he was 45 or 46 years old when he died.

JE: So nobody knew how he died?

MH: Well, his son lived in Albuquerque and I had suggested to his son that he ought to get his body exhumed and try to find out what caused his death.

JE: Didn't the police or the coroner file a report as to the cause of death?

MH: I don't know. I told his son when I met him earlier this year that he should look into it and find out what caused his father's death.

JE: Wow.

MH: The lady who lived across the street from where they lived said there was a big commotion the night before he died. He had been in the hospital, but he had checked himself out and left the hospital on his own.

JE: So he had been in the hospital for something?

MH: Yes, he had been in the hospital.

JE: So he could have died from whatever that was?

MH: No, he didn't die from whatever that was because he checked himself out of the hospital and he was going to meet me in Dallas, Texas, so something happened there.

Chapter 13 – 5:33

Travel & Prejudice

John Erling: Back in the old days when you traveled for the Kansas City Stars you traveled in an Army carryall with a barrel-covered roof and no insulation? There was no heating system?

Marques Haynes: In the front there was a little heat. But there were 6 of us traveling in that little carryall. You had to take a kerosene lamp with a wick and put it between your legs

with a blanket over it to keep the heat. That was the only way we could keep warm. We traveled up into the Dakotas—the really cold country and Nebraska and then out to the East Coast. It was terrible. There was a shotgun rider in the front and he had to stay awake to knock the icicles off.

JE: Then you traveled in an old school bus, but it wasn't heated?

MH: Yes, that's when the fight for the Globetrotters.

JE: It wasn't much better was it?

MH: No, it wasn't. We still got cold.

JE: So here we saw you putting on those great shows and you are traveling around these old school buses. So life wasn't so great. What about motels that you might have slept in?

MH: Some of them were good and others it depended on what part of the country you were in. We stayed in a lot of family homes where two of us would stay in one house and three of us would stay in another.

JE: Sometimes he stayed in motels with several of you in one room?

MH: Yes, that was in areas where we could get into hotels or motels. Back during those years, blacks just couldn't stay in the motels or hotels.

JE: Didn't every city have a black motel, which was kind of good?

MH: Not every city did, some cities did though, like Atlanta, Nashville and Memphis, but otherwise we stayed in private homes.

JE: At some of these black hotels, didn't some black entertainers also stay there and you would meet some famous people that way?

MH: Yes. That's where I first met Nat Cole.

JE: What about Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and Peg Leg Bates?

MH: Yes, I met them. Peg Leg fell in briefly with the Globetrotters years ago. The Globetrotters would sometimes have 2 or 3 teams going at the same time, rather than a main unit.

JE: Another person that I think you met in one of those black hotels was Joe Lewis?

MH: Yes, I met him at a hotel in Chicago, but we also saw Joe out in Las Vegas at Caesars Palace.

JE: That's when he worked for Caesars Palace as a greeter?

MH: Yes.

JE: What kind of guy was Joe Lewis?

MH: He was just a soft-spoken, easy-going guy. He was very friendly.

JE: Did you meet him when he was the heavyweight champion of the world?

MH: No, not then. It was after I met Joe.

JE: You had to travel hundreds of miles sometimes to use the restroom?

MH: Yes, a lot of places you couldn't use the restroom, depending on what part of the country you're in.

JE: What about drinking fountains?

MH: At the auditorium in Atlanta where we were playing, we had this one fellow that was traveling with us by the name of Stan Bergstein. He traveled with us as a scorer and announcer. I was upfront in the area where people were coming into the auditorium. They had these two drinking fountains there, one for blacks and one for whites. Stan went over to get some water fountain and a guy asked him what was wrong with him. He said, "What do you mean what's wrong?" He said, "You're not supposed to drink out of that." He said, "Hell, I'm trying to find out if there's a difference in the taste of the water." The guy was really starting to begin to get rough with Stan. It just so happened that the guy who was the promoter of the games and who was a big guy in Atlanta came up and said, "What's wrong here?" The guy tried to tell him that Stan was over there drinking out of the wrong fountain. The man said, "So what? Look I'm promoting this game and if you come up and try to interfere with this gentleman again I'm going to call the Chief (of Police) on you."

JE: Was he trying to drink out of the fountain for whites just to see if there was a different taste?

MH: Yeah. That's what he told the guy.

JE: (Laughter) In Atlanta, did you play for a mixed audience?

MH: No, you played two games in Atlanta and Memphis, Tennessee—you played one game for the blacks and one for the whites.

JE: Sometimes blacks would come into a side entrance and they had to sit upstairs?

MH: That's right.

JE: Then you traveled to all of these different countries and you didn't meet that kind of prejudice did you?

MH: (Laughter) No, not at all.

JE: None?

MH: Nothing. In every country that we would go in, we met nothing in that direction. They would greet us.

JE: Right. (Pause) Didn't it bother you that your own country treated you like that?

MH: That's the way it was back then during those years.

JE: All of these other countries would come out and welcome you with open arms and you would stay in nice hotels?

MH: Yes and travel on charter buses. One year, the first year in Europe we took our own bus, the Harlem globetrotter bus. That wasn't because we had to, because the next time we went over we had charter buses.

JE: You must have played in about 100 different countries. Was there any one country outside of the United States that embraced you more than anybody else?

MH: No, because this was something so different, we would turn away crowds at all of them

the first two or three years that we went over. The same thing applied to South America and Australia.

JE: You played for the Harlem Wizards?

MH: Yes, I played for the Harlem Wizards, the Harlem Magicians and the Harlem Globetrotters.

Chapter 14 – 5:19

Names You Know

John Erling: You played professionally more than 50 years?

Marques Haynes: Yes. I started in 1946 and I quit in 1998.

JE: Were you in your 60s or 70s when you quit?

MH: Well, I was born in 1926. (Laughter)

JE: What about some famous names like Wilt Chamberlain played for the Harlem Globetrotters?

MH: Yes, briefly on special tours.

JE: Did you play with him?

MH: Yes, just one time overseas.

JE: Magic Johnson played when you played?

MH: I never played with him, but I know Magic very well though.

JE: What about Geese Ausbie?

MH: Geese was a great guy. He was a great comedian and a great the basketball player too.

JE: You never saw yourself as a comedian did you?

MH: No.

JE: You let them do the clowning? You of course had your dribbling act, as Bill Russell called you “the greatest dribbler in the world.” So they did their fun and you wowed the crowd with your dribbling?

MH: Yes, that was a whole different part of it.

JE: You where a good shooter too?

MH: Yes, I knew how to shoot.

JE: You played in more than 12,000 games. You traveled more than 4,000,000 miles and entertained fans and 97 countries around the world?

MH: Yes.

JE: You were the greatest ambassador for the United States.

MH: Our team was good. There were so many teams and people that I had not seen before

until we started traveling overseas. France is an example. They started trying to play basketball. They made their own uniforms. They were terrible-looking uniforms, (chuckle) but at least they put forth the effort.

JE: You played for large crowds and small ones. Sometimes the gyms where you played weren't great?

MH: A whole bunch of them weren't great, not until we started playing in the really big arenas.

JE: The lighting in some of them wasn't very good?

MH: Well, once you got a feel of your distances from the basket, the length of the floor and the width of the floor...you could size all of that up when you get out there on that floor.

JE: But some of them had dim lighting?

MH: Yes, some of them had dim lighting—mostly in the smaller gyms. The big gyms were well-lit.

JE: Yes. Did you meet any Presidents?

MH: Yes, I met George Bush years ago. I met the young Bush's dad. I didn't meet him.

JE: You met George H. W. Bush?

MH: Yes.

JE: You played for a Pope?

MH: Yes, I played for Pope Pius XII. Usually when we want to meet people like that, we would put this ball handling deal on and take a ball with us. This was back in 1950 or 1951, when we first started traveling to a lot of these places. There would be at least 7 of us and we would put this ball handling deal on with Sweet Georgia Brown playing for two and a half to three minutes maybe. We noticed that the Pope was over there tapping his foot keeping beat with the music.

JE: ...to Sweet Georgia Brown?

MH: Yes. We did the act for him at least three times.

JE: That's funny.

MH: We got to take our picture with him.

JE: You met Hollywood stars along the way like Rita Hayworth?

MH: Yes.

JE: Do you remember any others?

MH: I met a lot of them. I got to meet Redd Foxx. (Laughter)

JE: (Laughter) You influenced a lot of people with your dribbling, people like Bob Cousy of the Boston Celtics. Did you meet him and talk to him?

MH: Yes, Bob and I are good friends. He lives right outside of Springfield, Massachusetts and he comes to the Hall of Fame ceremony every year.

JE: What kind of a guy is he?

MH: Very nice.

JE: Pete Maravich was also influenced by you?

- MH:** Yes. Pete and I would put on a ball-handling deal at Hutchison Country Club.
- JE:** You were such a great dribbler. Did anybody else come along and learn from you and do the same act that you did?
- MH:** Up until the time I joined the Globetrotters, they had nothing like it. But they've got a lot of them now that try to imitate what I did.
- JE:** Curly Neal?
- MH:** Curly is a friend of mine. Leon Hill out of Chicago did pretty well. Each year they got a bunch of them, just like the Goose Tatum act. You know Goose brought a lot of things to the group. I brought them a lot of things as well, especially in the dribbling area.
- JE:** One other thing, you talked about movies you made, but there was also the *Harlem Globetrotters Popcorn Machine*? It was a TV show on the weekends where you guys would put on a show singing and dancing and performing and doing comedy sketches. That was broadcast on CBS in 1974 with Nate Brown and Geese Ausbie?
- MH:** Yes. Curly Neal was on it too.
- JE:** I watched a little bit of it before I came here. Tex Harrison was the spokesman of the broadcast?
- MH:** Yes.
- JE:** You guys had fun putting that on I bet. It was a 25- minute program. So you made some money from that then from CBS?
- MH:** (Laughter) They paid Saberstein and he paid us.
- JE:** Or maybe he *didn't* pay you?
- MH:** Yes.
- JE:** Anyway, I wanted to mention that because you were on a regular TV program.
- MH:** Did you see the movie *Go Man Go*?
- JE:** I did not.
- MH:** The other movie was called *The Harlem Globetrotters Story*.
- JE:** I saw that.

Chapter 15 – 4:24

Advice to Players

John Erling: What was the last game you played?

Marques Haynes: It was in Chetopa, Kansas in 1998. It's not too far from Miami, Oklahoma.

JE: Did you know it was going to be your last game and that you were retiring after that night?

MH: Yes, I knew it.

JE: Was there anything memorable about that game?

MH: Yes, we got rear-ended.

JE: Oh, you had a wreck?

MH: Yes, we were in an automobile accident before the game. We were leaving out of Dallas to drive all the way up there.

JE: Was that sad to play your last game and know that that was it?

MH: No, I wasn't sad. I just wanted the memories. We had to call ahead that night and let them know we were running a little bit late. We needed them to have someone at the arena to help open our trunk for us because the trunk of the car was smashed in and we couldn't get our gear out of it without help.

JE: You probably played more professional than anyone else. Do you ever think about that?

MH: Back during that time probably so.

JE: You retired in 1998 and you were inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 1998.

MH: I was the only person that did not have to wait five years to get inducted.

JE: You retired in 1998 and they inducted you in 1998. That's pretty amazing. You've been inducted into several Hall of Fames. I was there that night about a month ago when you were inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. That had to have a special meaning for you.

MH: It did, but there's another hall of fame, the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame.

JE: To see you up on stage accepting that honor and to think your roots started there in Sand Springs, Oklahoma in a shotgun house—what a marvelous story that is. How many children did you have?

MH: I have two daughters.

JE: Were they interested in basketball at all?

MH: No, they couldn't care less. (Chuckle)

JE: All right, do you have any advice for athletes or basketball players today?

MH: It all depends on how far they want to go. If they want to get good at it they have to practice. That's the best advice I can give them is practice, practice, practice. Anything that you feel is your weak point, work hard on it and get somebody that can help you with improving your weakness.

JE: They think they are all going to go to either the NFL or the NBA, but very few do. I suppose you would preach education to them because you got your degree at Langston. What was your degree in?

MH: Industrial Arts—Industrial Education with a minor in agriculture.

JE: You could easily have left Langston to begin playing professional basketball, but you stayed and you finished and you got your degree.

MH: They wanted me to join the team that night that we beat them.

JE: Right, and you stayed to get your degree.

MH: I didn't want to get killed—my mama would kill me. (Laughter) She would have found me somewhere.

JE: (Laughter) You were also a businessman as we talked about earlier. It wasn't just basketball that you were good at. You had a mind for business because you ran that Italian knit-house. Were there any other businesses that you were involved in?

MH: I had a real estate company in Oklahoma.

JE: Didn't you acquire a fair amount of land as well in the Sand Springs area?

MH: I have some there now.

JE: You have land there now to this day?

MH: Yes, that's right.

JE: So then, how would you like to be remembered?

MH: As a ball player out there on that ball court that you could tell knew what he was doing.

JE: As a person, how would you like to be remembered?

MH: I would like to be remembered as a very nice person, with a decent side and as someone easy to get along with. (Chuckle) Check him out and depending on what you find out, you know, shoot your best shot.

JE: Laughter.

MH: That's a fact.

JE: I have just gotten to know you here. You've been a delight to talk to and easy to laugh with. This has been a truly enjoyable experience.

MH: You know what you just said about me? You are going to laugh at me when you leave...

JE: (Chuckle) No, we're not, and if we smile it will be because you made us happy.

MH: What's the song, "If you're smiling keep on smiling, the whole world smiles with you." Yes, keep on smiling. You'll make it.

JE: Thank you pal.

MH: Good enough. Thank you.

JE: I enjoyed it. You played in my hometown of Grand Forks, North Dakota back in the 1950s and so forth and I watched you play then.

MH: Grand Forks, North Dakota, always very cold!

JE: Thank you Marques. Thank you Joan for making this happen.

Joan Haynes: You are more than welcome.

MH: My pleasure.

Chapter 16 – 0:29**Conclusion**

Announcer: You have just heard the world's greatest dribbler, Marques Haynes and his remarkable story, which took him from Sand Springs, Oklahoma to around the world entertaining millions of people through the Harlem Globetrotters and the Harlem Magicians. We are proud to have Marques Haynes' story included on this website. We would like to thank our Founding Sponsors who believe in preserving Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time on VoicesofOklahoma.com.