

Career and philanthropic work of magic johnson

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Earvin “ Magic” Johnson is not only amongst the all-time greatest basketball players, but he is also a well-respected philanthropist. This essay discusses his early career, major career achievements, being diagnosed with AIDS, and philanthropic work.

Magic Johnson’s glorious basketball career began as a student at the Michigan State University. He led the team to a National Championship title in 1979. Johnson’s skill qualified him to play at the National Basketball Association (NBA). While playing with the Lakers, the team won five NBA championships and participated in nine NBA finals. He was honored by being named the NBA Most Valuable Player three times. Johnson also played on the U. S. A.

Olympic team that won the gold medal in the year 1992. In 2002, he was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame. He was particularly known for his excellent passing skills. Johnson’s match winning performance in the 1980 NBA finals is an integral part of basketball history. He received several honors including being selected as a member of the All-Time team for NBA’s 50th anniversary in 1997 (NBA Encyclopedia).

On October 25, 1991, his doctors told Johnson that he had the HIV virus. Says Johnson, “ That was the hardest day of my life. After I got myself off the ground, I decided to have a positive attitude (NBA Legend).” Two weeks later, on November 7, 1991, Johnson announced to the world at a press conference organized by the Lakers about his affliction.

At the conference, he said that he would not give up to the disease easily and would battle it. He announced that he would become a spokesman about

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HIV. As the doctors had advised him not to play basketball any longer, Johnson announced his retirement from basketball. Johnson decided that he would use his fame and his status as an icon for millions of people to educate the youth about HIV. One month after his diagnosis, he started the Magic Johnson Foundation.

According to a research conducted by Pollock (426), the revelation of Magic Johnson had changed the attitude of people about AIDS and influenced them to alter their behavior in order to avoid the virus. The foundation has raised millions of dollars to build four modern clinics for people afflicted with AIDS. Free HIV/AIDS testing has been provided to approximately 38, 000 people across America through the “ I Stand with Magic” program. The foundation has helped nearly 280, 000 people understand the risk factors of contacting HIV.

The foundation also provides educational and medical help to children and young adults. The foundation has opened 20 Community Empowerment Centers in underserved communities (Magic Johnson Foundations). When Hurricane Katrina occurred, the foundation partnered with various grocery and drugstores, provided prescriptions and groceries to victims. The renowned basketball player also stated that he would find ways to generate jobs to those who have been displaced by Katrina (Tucker 1).

Magic Johnson received the USA Today’s National Hero Award for his contribution to the society through the Magic Johnson Foundation. Magic Johnson is also an active businessman. He runs a company called Magic Johnson Enterprises (MJE). MJE has several businesses in its portfolio, which

include Canyon-Johnson Urban Fund, SodexoMagic, Aetna, and BestBuy, 30 Burger King restaurants, Magic Johnson Theaters, and a dozen sports centers. The company aims to provide products and services to ethnically diverse communities and minorities (Earvin “ Magic” Johnson Biography).

Even after 17 years of being diagnosed with HIV, he has not developed AIDS. Magic Johnson can be called a self-made success story and a great sportsman and social worker who has selflessly used his iconic status to help countless people lead a better life.

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