



**The Hollywood Heat pose with the winning trophy after they captured the men’s legends division April 14 at the Howard Tiger Memorial Basketball Tournament in Hollywood. From left, Jason Don, Jay Liotta, Jess Heart, Bill, Jason Cypress, Eric Beatty, Vince Billie, Kenny Tommie, Charlie Tiger, Mike Tiger, Sean, and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.**

**HOLLYWOOD** — Sports have been an important part of Seminole life for decades and have allowed Tribal citizens to fellowship with other Native Americans from other parts of the country.

In April, that comradery continued through the 48th annual Howard Tiger Memorial Basketball Tournament. The Native-only tournament was held at Howard Tiger Recreation Center in Hollywood. Twenty-one teams vied for a shot at championships while also honoring the legacy that Howard Tiger left behind.

“It’s really a tribute to the whole Tribe. He placed an emphasis on the youth through sports,” said Howard Tiger’s son Mike Tiger. “[My father] believed [sports] is how we come together as a people. Sports helped bring respect [to the Tribe].”

Competition was fierce in the tournament.

In the 18 and under division, Chase beat Ethan in the best-of-three, 103-81. In the boys 15 and under division, Trail beat Cedric, 71-62. Native Elite beat B.C Girls, 35-24, in the best-of-three in the 15 and under girls division. Nakai’s Squad defeated Sharp Shooters, 47-37, in the 12 and under division.

The adult men’s championship featured Eman’s emerging with an 86-78 win against Rez Boyz. Sharp Shooters beat Cassandra in the adult women’s championship, 47-37.

“Winning the championship felt pretty good since it was a physical and competitive game,” said Hollywood Recreation aide Courtney Osceola, who played for the Sharp Shooters. “It’s also great to

see how much support this tournament gets from the communities and I love how the audience is a mix of youth all the way to the elders.”

The men’s legends games featured Hollywood Heat and Ol Skool playing the best-of-three. Hollywood Heat was crowned the champion of the legends. Outlaw Women won the women’s legends championship as they cruised past Southern Smoke, 31-9.

A member of the Snake Clan, Howard Tiger was born in Indiantown, Florida. Betty Mae Tiger Jumper was his sister. He was a well-rounded athlete and has even been referred to as the Jim Thorpe of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Tiger also was the first Seminole to join the Marines.

On the reservation, Tiger coached and instilled discipline within the youth. He would teach the youth, and some adults, the importance of sportsmanship. Tiger collaborated with schools within the community to help Seminoles have an outlet through sports. This eventually led to the creation of the Seminole Recreation Department which began in a palmetto patch on the Hollywood Reservation.

“He helped a lot of young people have success and happiness in life,” Mike Tiger said. “It’s quite an honor to be a family member and Tribal member and to [be able] to impact the lives of young people.”

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