



## *Members of the Class of 2003*

### *Mychal "Sweet Bells" Thompson*

**Mychal "Sweet Bells" Thompson** expanded the realm of new possibilities for the youth of The Bahamas, using as his medium the artistry of his basketball skills to bring world attention to his native land. Initially an avid baseball aficionado while a student-athlete at Queen's College, Mychal discovered his talents as a basketball player in church league play. His skills mushroomed when he transferred to Miami Jackson High in Florida circa 1972. There he joined with three other Bahamians, Osbourne Lockhart, Charles Thompson and Cecil Ross, to set new standards in Florida basketball.

**In 1973 Mychal** led Miami Jackson Generals to a perfect 33-0 season, winning the state title and earning for himself the superlative credentials that would cause him to be recruited by all the college basketball powerhouses of the United States. He eventually settled on attending the University of Minnesota where he acquired the nickname "Sweet Bells", as much from the baby bells that he wore on his sneakers, as from his soft shooting touch around the basket. While at University, he was named First Team All America, capturing the eyes of the professional teams of the National Basketball Association (NBA).

**Mychal completed his** college matriculation in 1978 and when he became eligible for entry into the NBA he was selected as the first player in the first round of the draft, chosen by the Portland Trailblazers. He responded to the confidence placed in him by Portland by performing so well that he was named to the NBA's All Rookie Team in 1979. The seven years that he remained with Portland was slightly marred by a leg injury he suffered early on in his career while home on summer break.

**Sweet Bells recovered** from the injury and was eventually traded to San Antonio Spurs before being signed by the Los Angeles Lakers. It was with the Lakers that he achieved the ultimate goal in his career, winning the NBA championship against the Boston Celtics in his first year with the Lakers, followed by another championship title a year later.

**Sweet Bells** demonstrated his support for local youth development by partnering with the Ministry of Sports to host what was then the largest summer basketball camp from 1980 to 1990 and at no charge to the campers.