



Social Media Statement on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the

1969-70 NEW YORK KNICKS WINNING THE NBA CHAMPIONSHIP

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre

MAY 8, 2020

Today, May 8, 2020, is the 50th Anniversary of the New York Knickerbockers winning the NBA Championship in Game 7 at Madison Square Garden. I join with all of Metro New York, and especially all Long Islanders, in celebrating that dramatic victory, a victory that still carries lessons for us 50 years later.

The team included Walt Frazier, Dick Barnett, Dave DeBusschere, Bill Bradley, Willis Reed, Phil Jackson, Mike Riordan, Cazzie Russell, Dave Stallworth, Don May, Bill Hosket, Nate Bowman, John Warren and Coach Red Holzman.

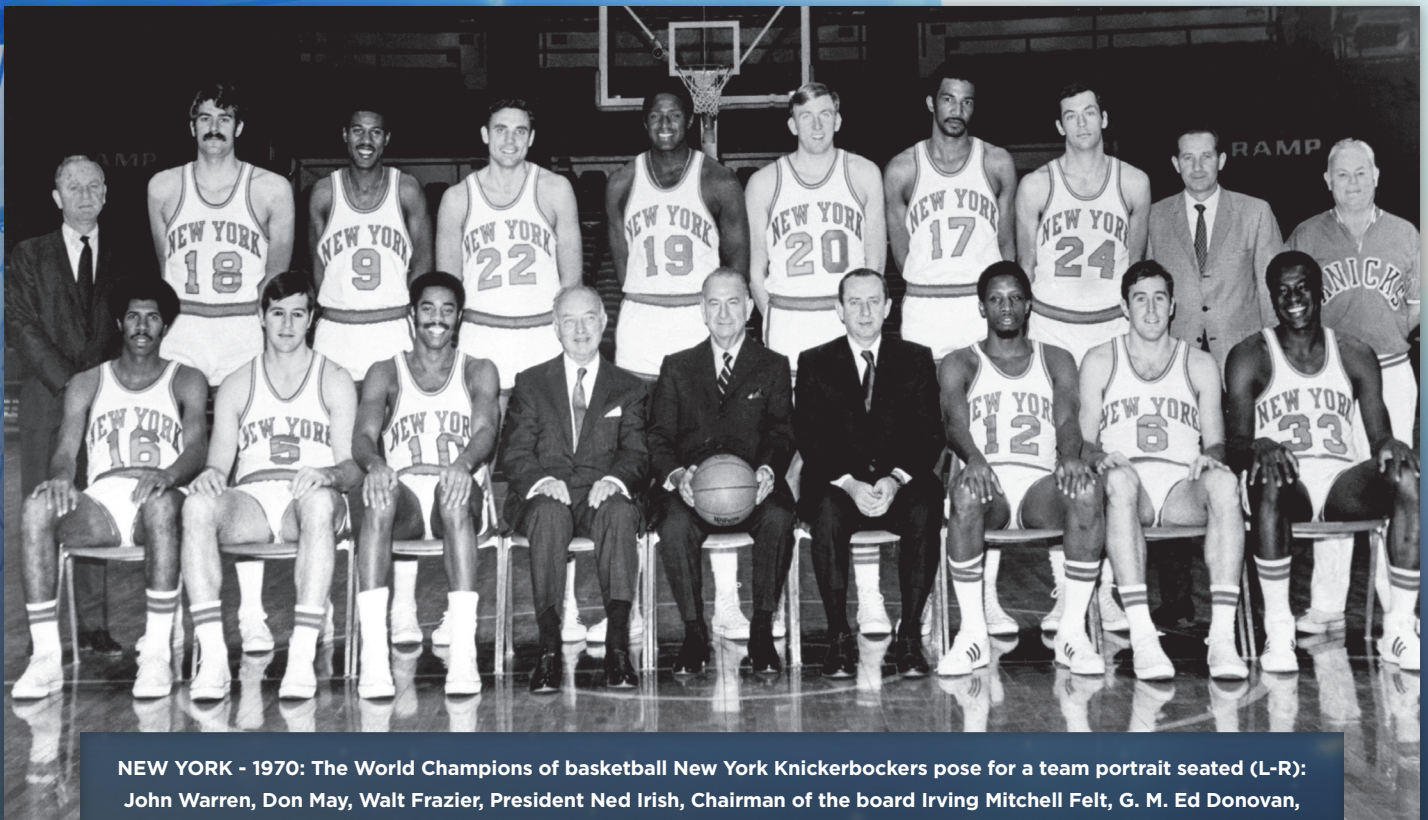
What makes this victory so memorable is not simply that the Knicks won the championship, but that they won it through exceptionally unselfish play and team chemistry. In so doing they became one of the most admired and beloved teams in New York and NBA basketball history.

There is often a misperception that New Yorkers prize individual achievement and care little for team play. That belief was challenged in the days and months after 9/11 when New York showed the world what team play was. And it has also been long challenged by the esteem that the 1970 team is held in by New Yorkers.

Today, the memory of their play connects with the inspirational team play of New Yorkers and all Americans during this COVID-19 Pandemic, and most importantly with the quiet heroism of our healthcare and public safety teams, who day after day work extraordinary hours, and take continual

**BISHOP
JOHN O. BARRES**
*is the fifth bishop
of the Catholic Diocese of
Rockville Centre. Follow
him on Twitter,
@BishopBarres*





NEW YORK - 1970: The World Champions of basketball New York Knickerbockers pose for a team portrait seated (L-R): John Warren, Don May, Walt Frazier, President Ned Irish, Chairman of the board Irving Mitchell Felt, G. M. Ed Donovan, Dick Barnett, Mike Riordan and Cazzie Russell. Standing: Head Coach Red Holzman, Phil Jackson, Dave Stallworth, Dave DeBusschere, Capt. Willis Reed, Bill Hosket, Nate Bowman, Bill Bradley and Chief scout Dick McGuire (man standing to right of McGuire not identified). in New York, New York in 1970. Copyright NBAE 2002 (Photo by NBAP/ NBAE/ Getty Images)

personal risks as they battle the virus.

Pope Francis captured this spirit of sacrifice and inter-connected team play when he prayed for those who are “writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, deacons, religious men and women and so very many others.”

Gazing back over the years and remembering “the magical world of Madison Square Garden”, I can still see the interdependent and almost ballet-like movements, efficient dribbling, precise passes, well-set and well-timed screens, sharp cuts, convincing fakes, fluid shots and tenacious team defense of Walt Frazier, Dick Barnett, Bill Bradley, Dave DeBusschere and Willis Reed. They were always unselfishly in search of “The Open Man.”

“

What makes this victory so memorable is not simply that the Knicks won the championship, but that they won it through exceptionally unselfish play and team chemistry.”

They taught us so much about cultivating team chemistry and generosity in our families, our places of work and in all our volunteer activities designed to promote the common good, and yes, even in dire moments of world crisis.

I join with Long Islanders and Metro New Yorkers in paying tribute to this great team and all they taught us on this, the 50th Anniversary of Willis Reed coming out on the floor at Madison Square Garden for warmups with an injured knee and the Garden crowd erupting at the start of Game 7 igniting the team to victory.

Today, we celebrate the spirit, team play and history made by the 1969-70 champion New York Knicks and the way that New Yorkers and all Americans are living that spirit in these challenging times!