

## PRESS RELEASE

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“Kilowatt Court” Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



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### **Ogden City to dedicate “Kilowatt Court” in honor of Wataru Misaka, the first Non-Caucasian player in the NBA**

**OGDEN, UT** – On August 14, 2018, Ogden City will name the basketball court at Liberty Park in the honor of Ogden native Wataru “Wat” Misaka, local basketball standout and the first non-Caucasian player in the National Basketball Association (NBA), known then as the Basketball Association of America (BAA).

The newly resurfaced public court will be named “Kilowatt Court” after Misaka’s nickname “Kilowatt,” earned for his speed as a small, but fast point guard. Born in Ogden, Utah on December 21, 1923, Misaka played basketball for Ogden High School, Weber College and the University of Utah before he was drafted by the New York Knicks in 1947.

“It’s humbling to consider the environment that young Wat navigated on his journey to greatness,” said Ogden Diversity Commissioner, Ami Nordlund. “He was drafted only one year after government internment camps for Japanese Americans were closed.”

Misaka was inducted into the Utah Sports Hall of Fame in 1999 and inducted into the Weber State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2011. He led Ogden High School to state and regional championship titles and the Weber College Wildcats to back-to-back titles in the Intermountain Collegiate Athletic Conference in 1942 and 1943. When he transferred to the University of Utah, he was part of the 1944 team that won the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Championship, and the 1947 team that claimed the National Invitational Tournament Championship. Between the two titles at the University of Utah, Misaka was drafted into the United States Army and served in World War II.

The ceremony dedicating “Kilowatt Court” in Misaka’s honor will be held at Liberty Park (751 21st St) at 4 p.m. on August 14, 2018. Representatives from Ogden City Council, City Administration and the Ogden Diversity Commission will be in attendance as a commemorative plaque, signage, and new court design will be unveiled to the community along with Misaka and his family and friends at the celebration.

“We were thrilled when we heard this idea to name a basketball court in Mr. Misaka’s honor, and took action to make it a reality,” said Ogden City Council Member Bart Blair. “Mr. Misaka will always be an Ogden legend for the barriers he broke as a basketball player and we hope the court will always stand as a tribute to him.”

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