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**BASKETBALL GREAT ‘JUMPIN’ JOHNNY’ KLINE OF BRENTWOOD STARTS**  
**‘GOOD WILL FUND’ FOR 27 RETIRED MEMBERS OF HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS**

**Former Globetrotter and College All-American Leading Fundraising Campaign  
to Help Provide Small Monthly Pensions to Legendary Basketball Players in Need**

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (2008) – Former Harlem Globetrotter and college All-American basketball player **Dr. “Jumpin’ Johnny” Kline** of Brentwood, Tenn., is spearheading a campaign to help raise funds for retired members of the Harlem Globetrotters, many of whom face financial hardships and life-threatening illnesses.

Kline, who serves as president and founder of the non-profit Black Legends of Professional Basketball Foundation, says his organization has established a “good will fund” to help provide small monthly pensions for 27 retired members of the Harlem Globetrotters. The Globetrotters organization does not currently provide retirement benefits for its former players. Former Globetrotters include Don Barnette, Mel Davis, Carl Green, Chuck Holton, Ernest Jones, Al Price, George Smith, Harry Sykes, Herschell Turner, Ernie Wagner, Bob Williams and Vertis Zeigher.

“The Harlem Globetrotters who played during World War II and the Cold War in the 1950s entertained our troops and citizens during a time of great peril,” said Kline, who moved to the Nashville area from Detroit in 2007. “The 27 surviving pioneers, ranging in age from 70 to 92, were once ambassadors of good will. Now, mostly forgotten, they are in need of good will as they live out their final days.”

Individuals are encouraged to make donations to the “Globetrotter good will fund” by mailing a check, made payable to the Black Legends of Professional Basketball Foundation, to Dr. John Kline, Black Legends, P.O. Box 3513, Brentwood, TN 37024-3513. Because the Black Legends of Professional Basketball Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are 100 percent tax deductible. For more information about Kline or his foundation, call (615) 371-9083, send an e-mail to [johnkline@comcast.net](mailto:johnkline@comcast.net), or visit <http://www.johnkline.org> or <http://www.blacklegends.org>.

Kline noted that the retired athletes helped establish relationships with developing countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.

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“They took the game of basketball to countries that had never seen the Globetrotters before,” Kline added. “The United States, the Harlem Globetrotters, and the NBA are all benefactors of these legendary pioneers. We are asking a small payment for all the good will these men have provided for our country and was never paid in dollars or respect for their contribution.”

Kline continues to lobby the Harlem Globetrotters organization to provide a small pension for athletes who played from 1900-1960. In 2005, he successfully lobbied the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress to pass a bill recognizing African American athletes for their contributions to the sport of basketball. He recently received a similar proclamation from the city of Nashville.

The 75-year-old Kline was an All-American basketball player at Wayne State University and a member of the Harlem Globetrotters in the 1950s. The basketball legend overcome drug and alcohol addiction to become a highly respected author, speaker, children’s educator, and health and wellness professional.

Kline also is working toward the national launch of his **Youth Athletic Enrichment Program**, an after-school educational outreach for middle school student athletes. The program, which was first introduced in Detroit’s inner-city middle schools in 1986, uses one-on-one instruction, videos and printed educational materials to help plant the seeds of a better lifestyle in young teens through the student/athlete leader concept.

Kline has been inducted into the African American Hall of Fame, the Wayne State University Hall of Fame, and the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame. He has written seven books, spoken at educational forums across the nation, and appeared on numerous radio and TV programs.

“It’s great to be in Middle Tennessee,” said Kline, who lives with his daughter and son-in-law, Dr. Melvin and Sharon Hill, who run a dentist office at 2270 Murfreesboro Road in Nashville. “I’ve really dedicated my later years to social issues and social change. I’m going to do everything I can to see that former members of the Harlem Globetrotters receive the financial support they need and deserve.”

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