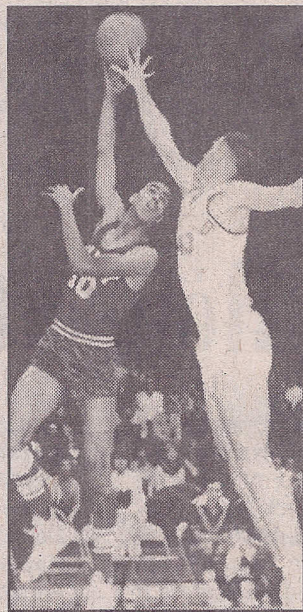


WABASH VALLEY

P R O F I L E S

A series of tributes to hometown heroes who have made a difference.

Ted Sweatt



Ted Sweatt (left)

*Photo from Community Archives,
Vigo County Public Library*

Described as one of the most gifted athletes in Wabash Valley history, Theodore Alfred "Ted" Sweatt was killed in the Vietnam War at age 21 on Thanksgiving Day 1968.

The son of Everett G. and Dorothy (Stepp) Sweatt, Ted was born at 1618 South 13th St. on Dec. 21, 1946. Four older brothers—Larry, Everett Jr., Keith and William—had already earned favorable reputations in athletics at Wiley High School before Ted matriculated there in 1961. By the time he was a senior in 1963-64, Ted dominated on the hardwood during the winter and the cinders in the spring. Blessed with a deft shooting touch, the 6-foot-5 Sweatt averaged 19.2 points a game in basketball; however, his rebounding ability particularly earned notice from college scouts. Using his lithe frame to maneuver for rebounding position, Sweatt uncoiled with amazing leaping ability to snare errant shots far above the rim. In 1964 he established a new Indiana high school state meet record in the high jump at 6-feet-6 3/4 inches.

Recruited by colleges from coast to coast, Sweatt accepted a full athletic scholarship to Southern Illinois University in Carbondale but returned after one year to enroll at Indiana State University, expecting to participate in basketball and track. However, he never gained scholastic eligibility. On June 4, 1966, Sweatt set the Indiana Amateur Athletic Union high jump record at Indianapolis with a leap of 6-feet-8 1/2 inches. After receiving a draft notice, he enlisted for two years in the U.S. Army on July 11, 1967, intending to resume college and athletic career in 1969. Meanwhile, younger brothers Doug and Gary Sweatt perpetuated the family tradition in athletics at Wiley.

After receiving advanced infantry training in Fort Ord, Cal., Corporal (Specialist 4) Sweatt was dispatched to Vietnam as a member of the 25th Infantry of the First Air Cavalry Division. While patrolling the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Tay Ninh province on Nov. 27, 1968, his unit was ambushed. The 13th Vigo County serviceman killed during the war, Sweatt had been in Vietnam for eight months. During military ceremonies, he was interred in Soldiers Circle at Highland Lawn Cemetery on Dec. 12. In January 1969 Ted was awarded the Bronze Star and Air Medal posthumously for heroic and meritorious achievement. He also received the Purple Heart. His name is inscribed on Panel 38W of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

Upon learning of his death, *Terre Haute Tribune* sports editor Jimmy Claus characterized Ted as a "particularly gifted athlete, oblivious to his infinite talent" and "one of the unheralded greats of our time." In December 2000 a *Tribune-Star* panel named Sweatt as one of Vigo County's top 50 athletes of the 20th century.



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