

OK AS TO FORM  
AMA 9-4-2025



Jefferson County Public Schools  
J. Graham Brown School

546 South First Street  
Louisville, KY 40202  
(502) 485-8216

Dear JCPS Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the proposal to name the J. Graham Brown School gymnasium in honor of Wade Houston. As principal of this school, I firmly believe that Coach Houston's story offers a powerful example of resilience, leadership, and community impact - qualities that deeply align with our schools' **four dispositions of self-directed learning: independence, empathy, innovation, and advocacy.**

Coach Houston's life reflects **independence** in its truest sense. From becoming the first African American to receive a basketball scholarship to the University of Louisville, to leading as the first African American head coach in the Southeastern Conference, he forged a path where none existed. His courage to lead with vision and determination is a model for our students, reminding them that independence is about charting your own course while opening doors for others.

Equally, his career demonstrates profound **empathy**. Whether coaching young athletes, mentoring entrepreneurs, or co-founding scholarship programs, Coach Houston has consistently uplifted others. He has shown that leadership is not about personal gain but about lifting entire communities - an important lesson for our students as they learn to lead with compassion and care.

Coach Houston also embodies **innovation**. He not only broke barriers in sports but also built businesses, established community alliances, and cultivated opportunities in spaces where Black leaders were often underrepresented. His forward-thinking approach to both athletics and business offers our students an example of how innovation is born from persistence, creativity, and the courage to reimagine what is possible.

Finally, his life is a testament to **advocacy**. Through his work with the African American Business Alliance, scholarship initiatives, and civic leadership, he has been a tireless advocate for equity and opportunity. Naming our gym after Coach Houston will serve as a daily reminder to our students that advocacy means using your voice and influence to create lasting change.

Naming the gymnasium in his honor will inspire every student who enters those doors. They will see in Coach Houston not only a champion of sport but also a champion of the very dispositions we strive to nurture in them. For our community, this recognition signals that Brown School is committed to celebrating leaders whose lives illuminate the power of education, perseverance, and justice.

Thank you for considering this meaningful and transformative recognition. It will ensure that generations of Brown School students see in their own gym a legacy that reflects both their potential and their responsibility to the world.

Sincerely,

Angela G. Parsons, Ph.D., MBA  
Principal



J. Graham Brown PTSA  
546 S. 1st Street  
Louisville, KY 40202  
[brownptsa.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:brownptsa.treasurer@gmail.com)



July 29, 2025

Dear Jefferson County Board of Education,

On behalf of the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) Board of the J. Graham Brown School, we write to express our strong and enthusiastic support for naming our school's gymnasium the Wade Houston Gymnasium.

Wade Houston is not only a pioneering figure in American basketball but also a champion of education, leadership, and community development. His extraordinary legacy began in 1962 when he became the first African American to receive a basketball scholarship at the University of Louisville. He went on to earn both a bachelor's and master's degree from the university, setting a precedent for academic and athletic excellence.

Coach Houston's impact on youth and education started in our very own building, where he began his coaching career at Ahrens High School—what is now the J. Graham Brown School. His tenure at Ahrens (1971–1973) laid the foundation for a remarkable coaching journey. He later led Louisville Male High School to a state championship and then became the first African American assistant coach for the University of Louisville men's basketball team, contributing to two NCAA championships. In 1989, he made history again as the first African American head coach in the Southeastern Conference.

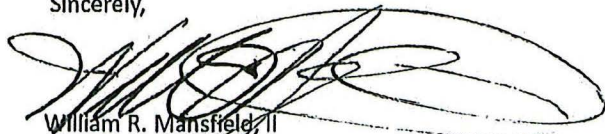
Beyond the court, Wade Houston is a respected businessman and civic leader. His work with the African American Business Alliance, the Houston-Bridgeman scholarship program, and various entrepreneurial ventures underscores his lifelong dedication to empowering underserved communities.

Naming our gymnasium in his honor not only commemorates his groundbreaking achievements but also serves as an enduring symbol of excellence, perseverance, and social progress for current and future generations of Brown School students.


We wholeheartedly support and respectfully urge the Jefferson County Board of Education to officially designate our gymnasium as the Wade Houston Gymnasium.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



William R. Mansfield, II  
President, J. Graham Brown School PTSA



William R. Mansfield, II, Treasurer  
Bridgeman, Secretary  
Jim Morgan



Lauren Gates



Jefferson County Public Schools  
J. Graham Brown School

546 South First Street  
Louisville, KY 40202  
(502) 485-8216

July 28, 2025



Dear Jefferson County Board of Education:

On behalf of the School-Based Decision Making Council of the J. Graham Brown School, we are requesting that the official name of our gymnasium be the Wade Houston Gymnasium.

Wade Houston is a trailblazer in American basketball, education, and business. Born in 1944, he made history in 1962 as the first African American to receive a basketball scholarship at the University of Louisville, where he later earned both bachelor's and master's degrees.

Houston began his coaching career at the high school level at Ahrens High School (1971–1973) before becoming head coach at Louisville Male High School (1973–1976). There, he led the team to a Kentucky state championship in 1975 and compiled a 90–12 record.

In 1976, Houston broke another barrier by becoming the first African American assistant coach for the University of Louisville men's basketball team. Over 13 years under head coach Denny Crum, he helped guide the Cardinals to two NCAA championships (1980 and 1986).

In 1989, Houston became the first African American head coach in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) when he took over the University of Tennessee men's basketball program. He led the Volunteers to two NIT appearances during his five-year tenure.

Beyond basketball, Houston is a successful entrepreneur and community leader. He is president of Dry Ice Blasting Technologies and co-founder of the African American Business Alliance and the Houston-Bridgeman scholarship program. His legacy is defined by breaking racial barriers, mentoring youth, and uplifting communities through sports, education, and business.

Coach Houston began his groundbreaking coaching career in what is now our school's unnamed gymnasium. We appreciate your consideration in this change.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Melanie J. House*  
*Angela Parnowski*  
*Anthony Allen*  
*Stephan Lee*  
*Nashar Anderson*  
*Cory Menden*  
*Dr. P. Allen*  
*John*

J. Graham Brown School SBDM Council

Jefferson County Public Schools  
J. Graham Brown School

546 South First Street  
Louisville, KY 40202  
(502) 485-8216



August 6, 2025

Dear Jefferson County Board of Education:

On behalf of the J. Graham Brown Booster Club, we are requesting that the official name of our gymnasium be the Wade Houston Gymnasium.

Wade Houston is a trailblazer in American basketball, education, and business. Born in 1944, he made history in 1962 as the first African American to receive a basketball scholarship at the University of Louisville, where he later earned both bachelor's and master's degrees.

Houston began his coaching career at the high school level at Ahrens High School (1971–1973) before becoming head coach at Louisville Male High School (1973–1976). There, he led the team to a Kentucky state championship in 1975 and compiled a 90–12 record.

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Coach Houston began his groundbreaking coaching career in what is now our school's unnamed gymnasium. We appreciate your consideration in this change.

Sincerely,

*Michael Brown* *Kisha Alving* *Justin McTadden*  
*Angela Brown* *Robert J. Mattingly* *Amarah Wooten*

J. Graham Brown Booster Club



Pam Ennis Larry Wilson

August 6, 2025

Dear Jefferson County Board of Education:

On behalf of the Ahrens High School Alumni Association, we are requesting that the official name of our gymnasium be the Wade Houston Gymnasium.

Wade Houston is a trailblazer in American basketball, education, and business. Born in 1944, he made history in 1962 as the first African American to receive a basketball scholarship at the University of Louisville, where he later earned both bachelor's and master's degrees.

Houston began his coaching career at the high school level at Ahrens High School (1971-1973) before becoming head coach at Louisville Male High School (1973-1976). There, he led the team to a Kentucky state championship in 1975 and compiled a 90-12 record.

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Coach Houston began his groundbreaking coaching career in what is now our alma mater's unnamed gymnasium. We appreciate your consideration in this change.

Sincerely,

*Em J. Woods*  
*Lesley Payne '67*  
*Richard Keel*  
*Rita Yates*  
*Sue Hohman*  
*Connie Griffin*  
*Sherry Leister '67*  
*Pam Herman*  
*Larry O. Radmon*  
*Jerry L. Curry '69*  
*Roe Wacker*  
*Colleen (Murray) Geary - '70'*  
*Bruce W. Smith '69*  
*Linda J. Norman*  
*Ahrens High School Alumni Association*  
*Wanda Miller '67*  
*OSCAR WALKER*  
*Joyce A. Welch*  
*Don McNamee*  
*Renate Oldach Sexton - '67'*  
*Jean Wakeford*  
*Rosemary McGeehan*  
*Benita Karlin Wilson - '72'*