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Tim Duncan Enshrined Into Basketball Hall of Fame Alongside the Late Kobe Bryant, 7 Others

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Tim Duncan received one of the NBA's greatest honors — the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame — alongside eight other individuals, including Kevin Garnett and the late Kobe Bryant on Saturday night during a ceremony broadcast on ESPN.

The list of inductees included the aforementioned along with Patrick Baumann, Tamika Catchings, Kim Mulkey, Barbara Stevens, Eddie Sutton and Rudy Tomjanovich.

Mr. Duncan was born on St. Croix in 1976 to Anguillan parents William and Ione Duncan. The superstar player sought to highlight the important moments of his career during his 12-minute speech, all of which centered around the people who helped him achieve success. From his parents' diehard support to his sisters' continuation of his mother's dedication to his success after

she died when Mr. Duncan was 14.

On the court, he spoke of fellow hall of fame inductee David Robinson, who Mr. Duncan praised for helping steer a young athlete to success. He described Mr. Robinson as "a consummate pro and incredible father, incredible person," who showed Mr. Duncan "how to be a good teammate, a great person to the community — all those things — not just sitting there and telling me how to do it, but just by being that. So thank you."

Of Bryant and Garnett, Mr. Duncan said, "You're at your best when you face the best, and I want to say thank you to the late, great Koby Bryant and to K.G. (Kevin Garnett), you guys demanded the best out of me and brought the best out of me."

He said his parents taught him the most about the game of basketball though they had zero knowledge of the sport. "My mom and my dad, William and Ione Duncan, a combined zero basketball knowledge, but they taught me more about the game than anyone else," he said. "You heard the mantra that my mom instilled in me, 'good better best, never let it rest until you're better and your better is your best.' They told me and made me have pride in everything I did, be the best at everything I did, be happy with what your role is or where you are and try to be the best, and I'm here because of them."

He added, "I lost my mom at 14, and in her place my sisters stepped up to be my mom, my sisters, my best friends, Cheryl and Tricia, thank you. Thank you for all that you brought to me, for being there for me no matter what it was. I love you, thank you."

Mr. Duncan said he did not start playing basketball until age 14, when his mom died and he lost his passion to become an Olympic swimmer like his sister, Tricia. "I lost my motivation to be a swimmer when my mom passed, when my island was hit by a Category 5 hurricane (Hurricane Hugo) and my competition side of my swimming was taken away. My fellow classmates at Saint Dunstons, my sister's husband Ricky, were there to step in to guide this lanky, uncoordinated kid who was way behind and teach me all about the game, take me all around the island (St. Croix) to play in pick-up games and leagues and everything else. So to those guys, to Ricky, thank you for being there for me," he said.

He also spoke highly of the San Antonio Spurs. "What an amazing organization just through and through, top to bottom," Mr. Duncan said. "The ownership group, led by the Holts, your generosity is amazing. You put us in positions every year to compete and I so appreciate that."

He thanked the people behind the scenes who helped throughout his career. From coaches, trainers, PR handlers and others. And he honored the older teammates who Mr. Duncan met when he arrived at the Spurs and before the team became a younger group. "We knew how to run a team because of those guys. We knew how to be a team because of those guys," he said. "I thank you for all those lessons you gave us."

To the teammates, he said, "To look to your left and to look to your right and to have the same guys year in, year out is unbelievable, but it's a blessing beyond what I can put into words."

Mr. Duncan highlighted Manu Ginóbili and Tony Parker, "I can't wait to see you guys up here and for me not to be up here," he joked, though it was an expression of the two former teammates' level of skill in the game of basketball. Mr. Duncan along with Mr. Parker and Mr. Ginóbili won multiple NBA championships together and were an unstoppable force. "It was an honor sharing the court with you guys. Thank you for your friendship, thank you for your brotherhood, thank you for all the experiences that we shared on that court," he said.

To his children, Mr. Duncan said, "I am so excited about what is to come." Becoming emotional, the NBA legend added, "You guys are amazing people and I can't wait to see what you guys do because I know it's going to be great."

He also honored his partner, "To my love Vanessa, thank you for your support, thank you for the love that you show our family, thank you for continuing to try to push me outside my box. I need that and you do that for me. Thank you."

Lastly, Mr. Duncan praised Gregg Popovich, the longstanding Spurs coach who was like a father to him, for being an exceptional person who taught Mr. Duncan that it was not just about basketball. "Finally, Coach Pop, the standard you set, you showed up after I got drafted, you came to my island, you sat with my friends, my family, you talked with my dad. I thought that was normal, it's not. You're an exceptional person. Thank you for teaching me about basketball but even beyond that, teaching me that it's not all about basketball, it's about what's happening in the world, about your family. Just for everything, thank you for being the amazing human being that you are," he said.

In conclusion, Mr. Duncan said, "This story and journey doesn't make sense. I worked by butt off but I was blessed and guided by so many people and improbable scenarios to get where I am today. To all the people that I mentioned, to all the ones that I didn't, my Spurs family, my Wake Forest family, my Virgin Islands family, thank you. I appreciate and love you all."