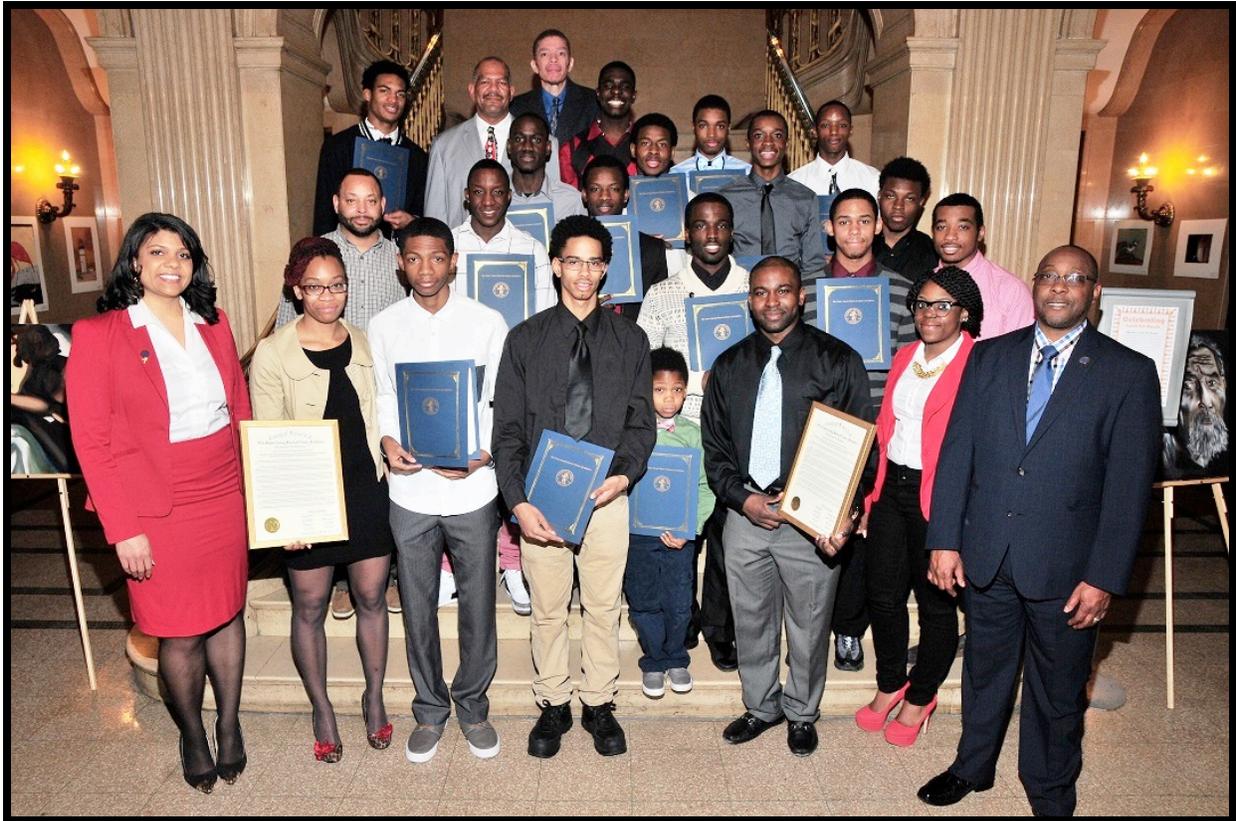


## **PRESS RELEASE**

March 12, 2015

### **ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR THE EAST ORANGE CAMPUS H. S. BOYS INDOOR TRACK TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2015 GROUP 4 INDOOR STATE CHAMPIONSHIP**

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored the East Orange Campus H. S. Boys Indoor Track Team for winning the Group 4 Indoor State Championship during its Wednesday, March 11, 2015, meeting held at East Orange City Hall. Freeholder President Britnee N. Timberlake of East Orange and Freeholder Wayne L. Richardson of Newark sponsored and presented the commendations to the team.



Freeholder President Britnee N. Timberlake of East Orange (far left) and District 2 Freeholder Wayne L. Richardson of Newark (far right) honored the East Orange Campus H. S. Boys Indoor Track Team for winning the Group 4 State Championship during the Board's meeting held on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, at East Orange City Hall. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

“As the District 3 Freeholder representing the City of East Orange, my hometown, I am especially proud to make tonight’s presentation to the State Champion East Orange Campus H. S. Boys Winter Track Team”, said Timberlake. She spoke of being a swimmer in high school and of her basketball-playing brother who plays professionally in Germany, and commented, “Sports can be your key to the world, take you places, help pay for your education and broaden your horizons, but your education is most important.” Freeholder Richardson spoke about having run track when he was in high school and reiterated the importance of academics saying, “Be committed and dedicated not only to track, but to your books, because you will always need them. Never forget to study, and to study hard, and congratulations to each and every one of you.”

Athletic Director Abdul Hassan thanked Freeholder President Timberlake “for recognizing the hard work of this team, for honoring us, and for supporting athletics at East Orange Campus High School”, and congratulated the team saying, “You did a great job.” Head Coach Darren Hammond also thanked Timberlake and applauded the work of his team of coaches, singling-out Lance Wigfall, whom he coached years ago when he was a student at the high school, saying, “I brought back one of your own, a state champion himself, asking him to come home and bring East

Orange a title, and he did.” Wigfall added, “Along the way on this journey, we stayed positive, had fun, recovered from finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> at the sectionals, and went on to come home with the state title.”

Senior runner Gabriel Ajenifuja spoke on behalf of his teammates, thanking Freeholders Timberlake and Richardson for honoring them because “It’s been a long, uphill battle. At the beginning of the season we had a meeting when we said this would be our year... that we would be state champions... and we did it. Now we’re going to start over from scratch to try to do it again and start building a legacy so we never again have to say it’s been 25 years since we won a state championship.”

The East Orange Campus H. S. Boys Winter Track Team made history by winning the first Boys Group Team State Championship in the history of the school and the City of East Orange when it finished ahead of second place West Windsor-South Plainsboro H. S., 34-26, to win the Group 4 title on February 14<sup>th</sup> at the Bennett Center in Toms River. The Team Championship was fueled by several outstanding performances: Akeem Lindo won the 55 Meter Dash in a time of 6.58 seconds; Cory Poole won the 55 Meter Hurdles in a time of 7.63 seconds; and the 4x400 Meter Relay Team of Gabriel Ajenifuja, Akeem Lindo, Jermain Flanagan and Cory Poole captured 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

By any measure, the 2014-2015 winter track season was a very successful one, including: 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall at the Super Essex Conference Championship Meet with team score of 45 points; 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall at the Essex County Relays with a team score of 35 points; 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall at the Essex County Championship Meet with a team score of 37 points; the second consecutive team title at the North Jersey Championships held in Teaneck on January 5<sup>th</sup>; and 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall at the North Jersey, Section 1 Group 4 Sectional Championships held on January 31<sup>st</sup>, also in Toms River, when Cory Poole won the 55 Meter Hurdles, Akeem Lindo won the 55 Meter Dash and Charon Jenkins won the High Jump. Poole, a sophomore, was recognized for his outstanding season when NJ.com named him the Super Essex Conference’s “Athlete of the Year”.

The team was comprised of the following members: Gabriel Ajenifuja, Tyraiq Beals, Mordecai Desvignes, Immyouri Etienne, Jermain Flanagan, David Fullwood, Shamar Graham, Dennis Hawkins, Ameer Holcomb, Charon Jenkins, Akeem Lindo, Ricordo Lovelock, Quamir Payton, Cory Poole, Marcus Simon, Mohammed Sulley and Keneek Tomlinson. It was coached by Head Coach Darren Hammond; Coaches Lance Wigfall, Leander Knight, Rolanda Bruce and George Arrington; Volunteer Coach Kerry Bethel; and Manager Destiny Hudson.

Freeholder President Timberlake, who also serves as District 3 Freeholder, began her first term on the Board on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, where she represents East Orange, Orange, South Orange and part of Newark’s West Ward; she is also the youngest and the only African-American woman to lead a freeholder board in New Jersey. Freeholder Richardson is also serving his first term on the Board where he represents Irvington, Maplewood, and parts of Newark’s South and West Wards.

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