Greg Smith spent his collegiate career at WKU breaking down racial barriers as one of the early pioneers among black athletes on the WKU campus and as one of the first African-American members to integrate the Ohio Valley Conference.

His brother, Dwight (one year older), and Clem Haskins were the first minority athletes in basketball on the Hill when they enrolled in 1963, and Smith, a graduate of Caldwell County High School in Princeton, Ky., followed the next season. At that time, freshmen were not eligible for varsity play, so the three played two seasons together (1965-1966 and 1966-1967) on two of the greatest teams in WKU history. Those WKU teams also made two trips to the NCAA Tournament, and they finished the season ranked among the Top 10 teams in the nation.

An overachiever on the basketball court, Smith was drafted in the fourth round by the NBA’s Milwaukee Bucks in 1968 and worked his way into a starting position before the conclusion of his rookie season.

Though many other former Hilltoppers have played professional basketball in the NBA, Smith, a starter on the Bucks’ 1971 team, is the only WKU alumnus to have won an NBA championship ring.

After seven years of professional basketball with the Bucks, the Houston Rockets and the Portland Trail Blazers, Smith retired from professional sports and remained in the Pacific Northwest where he began a successful career in media sales that continues today. He is currently a National Sales Representative for Salem Communications Inc., America’s leading media corporation specializing in Christian and conservative content.

Smith served as an active member of the Blazer Alumni Team, a group of retired members of the Portland Trail Blazers that traveled throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington for many years, playing basketball games as fundraisers for a wide variety of organizations. That project earned more than $2 million for regional charities. He was a member of the WKU Centennial Basketball Team, a 15-man team selected by popular vote of Hilltopper fans in celebration of the University’s Centennial in 2006. He was inducted into WKU’s Athletic Hall of Fame in 2006, and he was named to the Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame in 1996.

Smith and his wife, Linda S. Smith, reside in Portland, Ore. They have five children — Keith, Damien, Sara Kay Smith, Kristin Hayden and Lacey Pruitt — and eight grandchildren.