

Willie Hetzel Will Be President

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"I'M GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME, CAGE T

By **BOB SHANNON**

Unless you want Wilfred Hetzel, the basketball trick shot artist, to become president of the United States some day—don't scorn his chances of making the grade.

Scorning Willie has moved Willie ahead so fast in his chosen occupation, he says (and Willie is very serious-minded about basketball trick shots), that the quickest way to get him to accomplish something is to disbelieve in his ability to do it.

When Wilfred Hetzel, renowned basketball stunter, goes through his paces which he'll tell you are remarkable, (and they are) before the St. Thomas college fans tonight at O'Shaughnessy hall between halves of the St. Thomas-Mankato Teachers cage tilt, it will be his thirty-sixth performance of the season at his business of proving to somebody that he can do something somebody thinks he can't do.

It all started back in Melrose, Minn., where Willie was having a heck of a time convincing the high school basketball coach that he (Willie) was good enough to play for him (the basketball coach). In fact, Willie saw action in only one game, and then for such a brief time he doesn't elaborate upon his particular accomplishments under competitive fire.

But Willie started tossing free throws and found he was pretty fair at it. In fact, he used to play on an improvised outdoor or indoor court as far back as 1923, pretending he was Minnesota in the Big Ten race. From a rubber ball he graduated to a soccer ball, he recalls, and finally a basketball, and by himself he won several Big Ten basket-

ball championships — something the Gophers always have had a bit of trouble doing themselves. Willie used to shoot for the opponent, too—Northwestern, Purdue, et cetera, and sometimes it hurt his conscience to be trying to beat the score he posted for the Gophers.

"Honestly, I'd hurry my shots a little for the other team," Willie confides. "But in spite of myself I used to make some of the baskets and beat Minnesota."

Well, it's getting off the trail a little, following Willie's eventful career from the first dribble, but it was in 1930 he first set out to prove things.

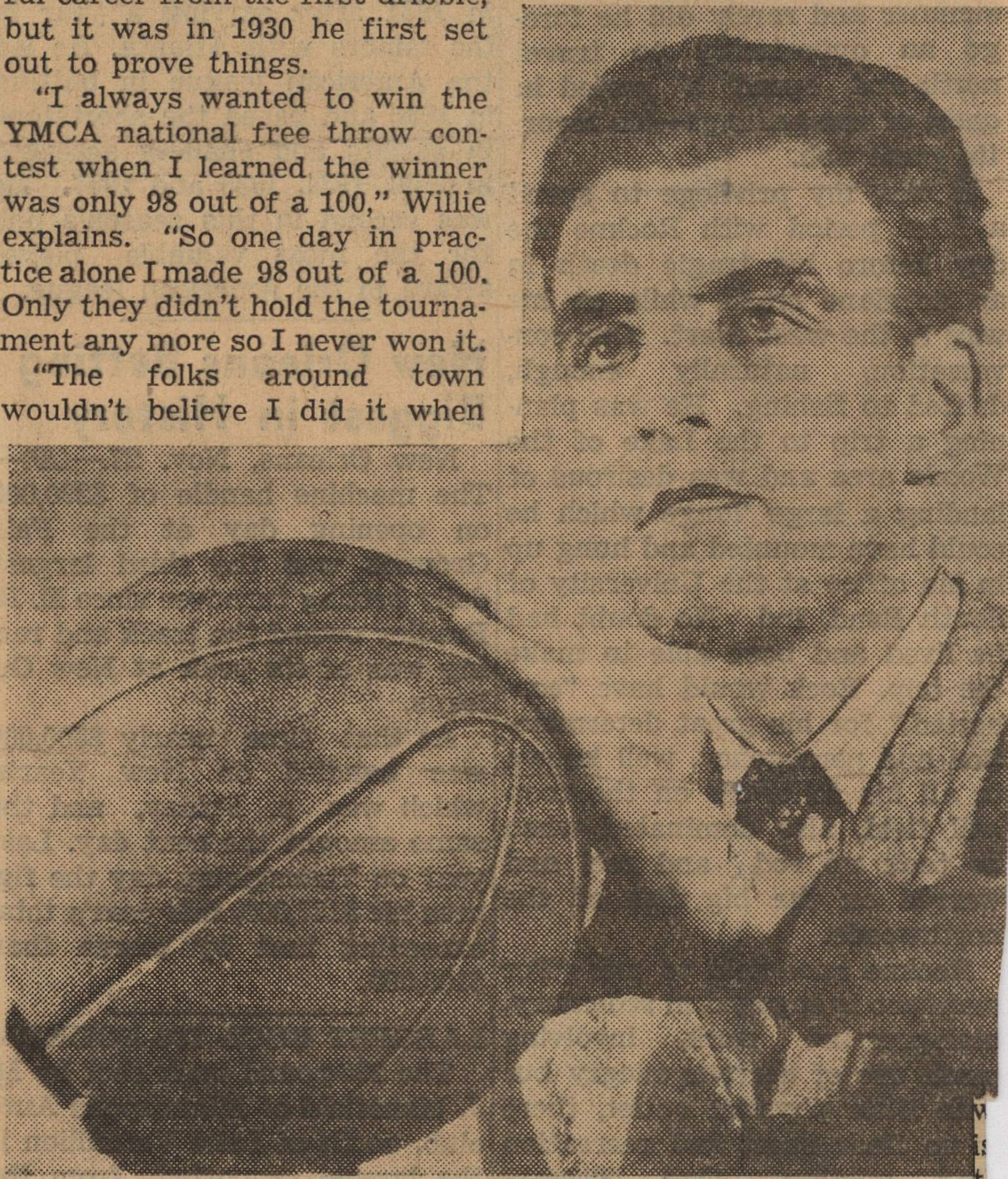
"I always wanted to win the YMCA national free throw contest when I learned the winner was only 98 out of a 100," Willie explains. "So one day in practice alone I made 98 out of a 100. Only they didn't hold the tournament any more so I never won it."

"The folks around town wouldn't believe I did it when

I told them so I just decided I'd show them and practiced all the harder."

Willie's public appearances evolved between halves of Melrose high games when he used to keep score. Having nothing to do after seeing the scorebook checked at the end of the half, he'd saunter casually out onto the floor and drop in free throws.

"Well, some traveling salesmen who saw me told me it was worth the price of admission just to see me so I thought I'd see if I couldn't make a go of



WILFRED HETZEL'S SIXTH SENSE H