JASON COLLINS

b. December 2, 1978

BASKETBALL PLAYER

"I want to do the right thing and not hide anymore."

He is the first openly gay athlete to play on any professional sports team in North America.

Jason Collins is a retired professional American basketball player who played for 13 seasons with the NBA. During the 2012-13 season, Collins came out in Sports Illustrated before signing with the New Jersey Nets, making him the first openly gay athlete to play on any professional sports team in North America.

"If I had my way, someone else would have already done this," he said when he came out. "Nobody has, which is why I'm raising my hand."

During his career, Collins played for the Houston Rockets, the Memphis Grizzlies, the Minnesota Timberwolves, the Atlanta Hawks, the Boston Celtics, the Washington Wizards and the Brooklyn Nets before retiring in 2014. He wore number 98 on his jersey in honor of Matthew Shepard, the young gay man who was murdered in 1998 in Laramie, Wyoming. Collins's jersey broke records at the NBA Store; it became a best seller with the proceeds of signed jerseys benefiting the Matthew Shepard Foundation and the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

In 2013 Collins was inducted into the National Gay and Lesbian Sports Hall of Fame. The following year, he was featured on the cover of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World.

Collins was born in California. He has a twin brother who is also an athlete.

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