

## News & Sports

### Book Review: Lenny Wilkens' "Unguarded"

By: [Siccino Moyo](#)  
Posted: 02/07/01

**Lenny Wilkens** doesn't care if he sounds corny. The **Toronto Raptors'** coach lays it on the line in **Unguarded**, his reflections on pounding barriers 40 years in the NBA. His take on life and basketball is no frills, straight ahead, relentless:

- Industrial strength family ties
- Firm rooting in religion
- Massive work ethic
- An unflinching belief in the power of the individual to triumph over adversity.

He's driven to win. Contrary to the nagging rap that he's stoic and too laid back, here Wilkens comes clean on the racism spat at him -as a school kid, as a college boy, as a man at large and yes, in the NBA. But he's not stuck there, lost in those bitter travails. This memoir is agrassroots low-down on changes in the game and a living narrative of shifts in societal mores.

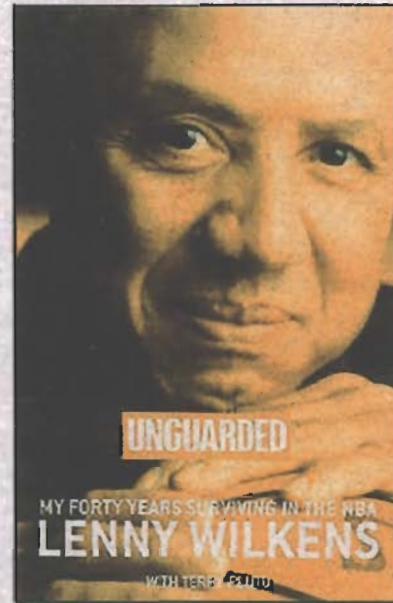
Nothing and everything changes in the span of this read. Players squawk over cash and playing time, owners often can't be trusted and the fans simply don't love a loser team.



With a lucid candor, Wilken's chronicles his journey. From his beginnings on the welfare rolls in the **Bedford Stuyvesant of the 40's**, he relates what molded him into a college economics grad and onward into the NBA in 1960. Ultimately, he blazes a trail as one of the first African-American head coaches in any pro sport.

His legacy includes numerous all-star selections, a championship, induction into the NBA Hall Of Fame both as a player and as coach. Not to mention a continuing last laugh. No one has more NBA coaching victories than Leonard R. Wilkens, Jr. - and he still digs his job.

**UNGUARDED: My Forty Years Surviving in the NBA**  
Lenny Wilkens with Terry Pluto  
Simon & Schuster (303 pages)



[Order Online](#)

[HOME](#)

[EMAIL](#)

[PRINT](#)

[AUTHOR](#)

[FORUMS](#)

[CLOSE](#)

Questions or comments about this site? Contact the [Webmaster](#).  
© 2000-2001 Inet360.com, Inc. All rights reserved. -[Privacy Policy](#)