

Cleamons makes choice despite mixed emotions

By **TIM LEONARD**
Jambar Managing Editor

It's off to the Chicago Bulls for Jim Cleamons after two years as YSU's head basketball coach.

Cleamons, who made his decision public last Thursday morning at a press conference in the Penguin Room in Stambaugh Stadium, is expected to start his new position as assistant coach with the Bulls Sept. 5.

Cleamons finished his career at YSU with a two-year record of 12-44. He said he leaves with

mixed emotions.

"I came to do a job," said Cleamons, "and I have not done that job. And that saddens me. But in the same point in time, this is an opportunity I can't look beyond in my coaching career."

Cleamons did, however, feel that he was leaving the YSU basketball program with a good foundation.

"I'm leaving the program on solid ground, and for that I am very happy. But there is still a lot of work to be done," said Cleamons, who was replaced by

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his assistant coach John Stroia it was announced Tuesday morning, only five days after resigning from his head coaching position with the Penguins.

The Chicago Bulls, according to Cleamons, contacted him about the assistant coaching position, and it wasn't until a week and a half ago that Cleamons found out he was the leading candidate for the position.

Cleamons said the position with the Bulls was too good of an offer to pass up.

"This is an opportunity for Jim Cleamons to earn his Ph.D. in coaching," said Cleamons, who held assistant coaching positions with Ohio State and

Furman before arriving at YSU. "This may present me with the possibility of getting back into the collegiate ranks later."

Cleamons said he had talked to all but two of his players before he announced he was leaving the University.

Cleamons said the fans should be patient with the basketball program in the future.

"I understand people just reading the scoreboard," said Cleamons, "but I don't think that tells the entire story in athletics. Yes, we won 12 games in the last two seasons, but the fact remains that these young men have grown and I hope you'll be patient with them when they continue to grow."

Cleamons was originally hired after the death of YSU basketball coach Bill Dailey, who suffered a heart attack Aug. 10,

1987. Ironically, the date was Aug. 10, 1989, when Jim Cleamons announced his decision to leave YSU for the Bulls.

Cleamons was hired 17 days after the death of Dailey, while his replacement, Stroia, was hired only five days later.

Cleamons will work under Bulls head coach Phil Jackson, who was hired after the firing of Doug Collins. Jackson and Cleamons were teammates during the 1977-78 National Basketball Association season when they both played for the New York Knickerbockers.