How far is it from an 8-18 record to the national runner-up in the NCAA College Division national basketball tournament? According to Head Coach Wyatt Webb, it was four years of hard work, pride, and determination. The breakthrough for Webb began with the recruiting of two freshmen forwards, Len Paul and Harvey Glover, for the 1969–70 season. A year later, Webb added junior college veterans, Larry Quarles and Randy Anderson, as well as freshman Larry Jenkins. When the 1971–72 season began, Webb had his most talented squad since taking over the helm in 1968. While winning an all-time record-breaking twenty-six games during the thirty-one game season,
The University of Akron would capture the NCAA Mideast Regional crown and finish national runner-up to Roanoke in Evansville, Indiana. Paul paced the Zips in scoring, a record-breaking 564 points, and earned first team Little All-American honors. Also scoring in double figures were Quarles, Glover, Anderson, and the last starter, senior Wil Schwarzinger, who would receive Academic All-American accolades at season’s end. Super-substitute honors went to senior Brian Westover, who’s layup with two seconds remaining led to the defeat of the nation’s top-ranked Tennessee State, 71–69, in the NCAA Semi-Finals.