


|  |  |  |                 |   |  |              |  |   |      |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|-----------------|---|--|--------------|--|---|------|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| B  |  |  |                 | O |  |              |  | X |      |  |  | S   |  |  |  | C |  |  |  | O |  |  |  | R |  |  |  | E |  |  |  |
| A Publication of the Indiana High School Basketball Historical Society   |  |  |                 |   |  |              |  |   |      |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| IHSBHS was founded in 1994 by A. J. Quigley Jr. (1943-1997) and Harley Sheets for the purpose of documenting and preserving the history of Indiana High School Basketball    |  |  |                 |   |  |              |  |   |      |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| IHSBHS Officers  |  |  |                 |   |  |              |  |   |      |  |  |  | Publication & Membership Notes   |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| President  |  |  | Roger Robison   |   |  | Frankfort    |  |   | 1954 |  |  |   | <i>Boxscore</i> is published by the Indiana High School Basketball Historical Society (IHSBHS). This publication is not copyrighted and may be reproduced in part or in full for circulation anywhere Indiana high school basketball is enjoyed. Credit given for any information taken from <i>Boxscore</i> would be appreciated.   |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Vice Pres  |  |  | Cliff Johnson   |   |  | Western      |  |   | 1954 |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Webmaster  |  |  | Kermit Paddack  |   |  | Sheridan     |  |   | 2002 |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Treasurer  |  |  | Rocky Kenworthy |   |  | Cascade      |  |   | 1974 |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Editorial Staff  |  |  |                 |   |  |              |  |   |      |  |  |   | IHSBHS is a non-profit organization. No salaries are paid to anyone. All time spent on behalf of IHSBHS or in producing <i>Boxscore</i> is freely donated by individual members.   |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Editor   |  |  | Cliff Johnson   |   |  | Western      |  |   | 1954 |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Syntax Edits   |  |  | Tim Puet        |   |  | Valley, PA   |  |   | 1969 |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Content Edits  |  |  | Harley Sheets   |   |  | Lebanon      |  |   | 1954 |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Rocky Kenworthy |   |  | Cascade      |  |   | 1974 |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Tech Advisor   |  |  | Juanita Johnson |   |  | Fillmore, CA |  |   | 1966 |  |  |   | Dues are \$10 per year. They run from Jan. 1 – Dec. 31 and include four newsletters. Lifetime memberships are no longer offered, but those currently in effect continue to be honored. Send dues, address changes, and membership inquiries to IHSBHS, c/o Rocky Kenworthy, 710 E. 800 S., Clayton, IN 46118. E-mail: rock2@tds.net All proposed articles & stories should be directed to Cliff Johnson: cliffjohns36@hotmail.com or 16828 Fairburn St., Hesperia, CA 92345. |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| Board Members  |  |  |                 |   |  |              |  |   |      |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| John Ockomon, Harley Sheets, Leigh Evans, Cliff Johnson, Tim Puet, Roger Robison, Jeff Luzadder, Rocky Kenworthy, Doug Bradley, Curtis Tomak, Kermit Paddack, Hugh Schaefer. |  |  |                 |   |  |              |  |   |      |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |
| 2019 FALL ISSUE  |  |  |                 |   |  |              |  |   |      |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The opinions expressed in *Boxscore* by individual authors do not necessarily reflect the views of IHSBHS as an organization.

Our IHSBHS website address is [Indianabasketballhistory.com](http://Indianabasketballhistory.com). You can also enter IHSBHS or "Boxscore" on any search engine.

## CONTENTS

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| IHSBHS Membership.....        | 1  |
| One & One, No Time Left.....  | 1  |
| Fillmore's 1954 Team.....     | 6  |
| Lon Showley's Hoops Career... | 9  |
| Boxscore Back Issues.....     | 10 |
| IHSBHS Membership Form....    | 11 |
| Hall of Fame Membership.....  | 12 |

## IHSBHS MEMBERSHIP

IHSBHS Secretary & Treasurer Kenworthy lists 14 new and returning members to the ranks of our subscribers. Welcome! Your interest in Indiana high school basketball history helps to keep IHSBHS growing each year.

Dave Sanders, Bradenton, FL  
Joe Manis, New Castle, IN  
Cory Criswell, Middletown, IN  
Chase Criswell, Muncie, IN  
Dr. Gene Hedrick, Salem, IN  
Mark McNeal, Bloomington, IN

Glenn Nunemaker, Wakarusa, IN  
Robert Stroup, The Villages, FL  
Fred Dunn, Bloomington, IN  
Dr. Phil Eskew, Bloomington, IN  
Adam Altobella, Muncie, IN  
Sean Bell, Hebron, IN  
Larry Randel, Zionsville, IN  
Martha Randel, Zionsville, IN

## ONE & ONE, WITH NO TIME ON THE CLOCK

by

David L. White

### Introduction: A Brief History

Not long after basketballs started bouncing around schools in Indiana in the early 1900s, a tournament for the county teams became popular. In many counties the tournament consisted of all the schools in the county, but sometimes the county seat school or the largest town in the county were not included.

For Boone County, the tournament officially started during the 1919-20 school year, with only four teams participating--Advance, Jamestown, Thorntown, and Perry Central. Advance defeated Thorntown 28-22 in the final. Lebanon and most of the other schools joined the field the following year, with Lebanon winning the next four titles. For

various reasons after the '24-'25 school year, the tourney was dropped. It was revived again in 1931, although Lebanon was no longer part of it. Advance won that one too, defeating Thorntown in the final, 36-21.

Again, the tournament was discontinued but it was revived in the '36-'37 school year and this time it lasted through the '63-'64 season. After that, because of consolidations, there were only three "county" schools left--Zionsville, Thorntown, and Granville Wells. At that point, the Boone County Basketball Tournament was permanently discontinued.

Starting with the '36-'37 school year, the tourney was held in January and all eight county teams took part. Those teams were the Zionsville Eagles, Thorntown Keewasakees, Perry Central Midgets, Whitestown Panthers, Dover Blue Devils, Pinnell Purple Dragons, Jamestown Little Giants, and the Advance Osceolians. In 1948 the number of teams dropped to seven when Jamestown and Advance combined into Jackson Township. They became the Granville Wells Rockets, after their new school was built in the mid-

1950s.

While every basketball tournament has featured exciting games, this story is about one specific game, Thorntown vs. Granville Wells. It took place on Friday the 13th of January 1961, at the Thorntown gym, as one of the quarter-final games of the Boone County tournament. An historic game, it all came down to "One & One, With No Time on the Clock." Its ending should make you sit upright in your lounging chair.

### **The Dope Bucket**

While most of the nation was getting ready to watch the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy during the third week of January 1961, many fans of the Boone County basketball teams were also gearing up to watch the annual county tourney during the second week of the month, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, Jan. 12, 13, and 14.

The tourney rotated among the three schools with the largest gymnasiums, Zionsville, Granville Wells, and Thorntown. This year it was Thorntown's turn to host, and its gym could hold about 2,500 fans. There was not a huge crowd attending the one game on Thursday, but the two games on Friday and the three on Saturday were played before a near-capacity sellout.

Shooting for their fourth straight title and playing on their home floor should give the Thorntown Keewasakees an advantage, many people thought. Plus, the team had several returning veterans from the previous season who had helped win both the county tournament and the sectional championship, finishing with a 19-5 record. But earlier in the season (November of 1960) Granville Wells, coached by Vince Myer, had beaten Ted Wesolek's Thorntown team 49-47 on the Keewasakees' home floor, in the

process taking possession of a traveling county trophy known as the "Dope Bucket," away from Thorntown.

Since the word "dope" had a slightly different connotation in 1961 compared with the word as it's sometimes used today, an explanation is in order. In some of the counties around the state, certain county basketball games known as "rivalry games" often had some kind of traveling trophy associated with them. That trophy was awarded to the winner of such a game. Not long after the Boone County tourney resumed in the 1936-37 school year, the traveling trophy for its schools became known as the Dope Bucket. At the end of the regular season the team that had possession of it would keep it until the next season, since it was not contested during sectional play. Why was it called the Dope Bucket? Well, prior to the early 1950s, when a timeout was called, the playing rules prohibited players and their coach from consulting, so the coach had to remain parked at the team's bench while the players gathered around a free throw circle quenching their thirst from a water bucket (or bottles) and soaking up perspiration with towels supplied by the team's student manager. Surreptitiously though, the manager could whisper instructions to the players from the coach or the coach might write for the players a short note concealed under the water bucket. The instructions or information on the note became known as "the dope." That, along with its place of concealment under the water bucket led to the popularized term of "the Dope Bucket."

### **Prelude to the Game**

Just before Christmas, Coach Max Price's Pinnell Purple Dragons knocked off Wells, thus claiming the Dope Bucket, and were entering the

county tourney with a record of 14-0. The *Lebanon Reporter* picked Pinnell as the favorite. The Purple Dragons had last won the tourney in 1942, defeating Thorntown in the final, 26-24. Rugged Zionsville played a tough schedule with games against Speedway, Carmel, Pike, Ben Davis, and other strong teams from the Indianapolis area. They always fared well in the tourney. While Perry Central, Whitestown, and Dover were not as strong as the other four teams, they all had good shooters and that fact can always lead to an upset.

There was only one game on Thursday night, Zionsville vs. Dover. Dover had won only once so far that season, and Zionsville had three victories. This proved to be a physical contest as 49 free throws were shot, Zionsville prevailing 53-44. Phil Scott and Bill Hodges were in double figures for the Eagles, while Sonny Coffman and Lavern Shockley both scored in double digits for Dover.

The next two games would be played on Friday, the 13th, with the one everyone was waiting on, Thorntown vs. Wells at 7:00, followed by unbeaten Pinnell vs. Whitestown at 8:30. While Thorntown had very strong teams in recent years, its record up to the county tourney this year was only 6-5. It had lost to Avon 43-44, Wells 47-49, Zionsville 52-61, Carmel 40-48, and Lafayette Central Catholic 56-65. Its six wins were over Rossville 64-42, Waveland 61-43, Darlington 72-49, New Market 69-36, Brownsburg 67-55, and in overtime, Covington 73-69. Wells record stood at 6-4, having lost to North Salem 54-62, Pittsboro 70-71, Pinnell 53-58, and Westfield 39-60. Its team had beaten Thorntown 49-47, Bainbridge 66-64, Roachdale 67-50, Whitestown 72-36, Colfax 63-36, and Fishers 63-53.

In most of its varsity games, Thorntown used a seven-man rotation. Juniors Gerald Coffman and Jim McBane usually started at guard, senior Dave Williams and junior Bob Russell at forward, and 6-1 senior Paul Youkey at center. Guard Dale Coffman and 6-2 Jim Russell, both seniors, were usually the first subs called in to play. The Wells Rockets relied mostly on a six-man rotation. Seniors John Dorn, Fred Huckstep, and Phil Scott usually carried the load, but they got excellent support from sophs Bill Burdine and Larry Whittinghill, along with junior Sam Carter. The 6-5 Huckstep towered over everyone, but the Keewasakees' 6-1 Paul Youkey had springs in his legs and hoped he could use that talent to keep the taller Huckstep off the boards.

Thorntown 17-7 in the second quarter, with Huckstep pouring in nine points, two more than the entire Keewasakees team. Wells had led at halftime 28-17. Thorntown had come out much more aggressive in the third quarter, outscoring Wells by nine and trailing only by two at the end of the third stanza. The fourth quarter was also nip and tuck the whole time, but Wells prevailed 49-47. Huckstep had led the way for Wells with 21 points. But Coach Wesolek knew that Thorntown could win this rematch if his perimeter defense could keep enough pressure on the Wells ballhandlers to prevent them from getting the ball inside to Huckstep.

### **The Game**

With a packed house and lots of noise, Indiana Hall of Fame referee Zeke Williams tossed up the ball at

The pressure defense was working well. The Rockets were missing shots they normally would make, and they did have trouble getting the ball to Huckstep. But they never let Thorntown get a huge lead. At the end of the first half the Keewasakees led by only 32-27. When the third quarter began Thorntown regained its momentum and widened the margin to nine points. It still led by seven at the end of the quarter, 45-38.

The boys from Granville Wells were no quitters though, and, led by Huckstep, they chipped away at the lead during the final quarter. But it seemed like every time Wells cut the lead down to 2 or 3 points, Thorntown would get a couple of quick baskets and push the lead back up to 7 or 8 points again. Thorntown had a problem, however: Its second leading scorer, senior Dave Williams, was in foul trouble. He had to sit out most of the fourth quarter, although he did return to the court late in the game. With no three-point arc on the floor in those days, Thorntown's six-point lead, 58-52, with 1:30 to go in the game, was looking very safe. But three FTs by Huckstep and a FG by Phil Scott with 25 seconds remaining, closed the gap to 58-57. After a Keewasakees turnover, Wells got a pass in to Huckstep at the low post who scored, giving the Rockets a 59-58 lead with 10 seconds left in the game. And this is where things got really interesting.

With no time-out called after Huckstep's goal, Thorntown's Gerald Coffman took the inbounds pass, dribbled through and around the Wells pressure defense, and had to launch a shot from the 10-second line in order to try and beat the game-ending buzzer. As the *Lebanon Reporter* recounted those last few seconds, "Coffman got the ball from out-of-bounds and took a

### **1960-1961 Thorntown Keewasakees**



FIRST ROW: Janet Allen, Tammy Ottinger, Kay Craven, Pat Davis, Yell Leaders. SECOND ROW: Jim McBane, Roy Hosfield, Dave Williams, Bob Hichson, Larry Woodard, Jim Russell, John Gillan, Manager; Ted Wesolek, Coach; Steve Bowen, Manager; Gene Emmert, Paul Youkey, Bob Russell, John Worth, Gerald Coffman, Dale Coffman.

In the first meeting between the two teams earlier in the season, the Rockets had squeaked out a 49-47 victory over the Keewasakees, due in large part to the dominance of Huckstep in the middle. With Wells holding an 11-10 lead after one quarter, they had outscored

7:00 p.m. and the game was underway. 6-1 Youkey's "springs" helped Thorntown right off the bat as he slightly out-jumped 6-5 Huckstep at the tip-off, so the Keewasakees had the first chance to score in the game. Indeed, early in the game it pretty much went Thorntown's way.



desperation shot from near the middle of the floor but missed, as time ran out." About the time Coffman's shot was bouncing off the rim, the buzzer signaling the end of the game sounded. Coffman dropped to the floor face down and began pounding his fist because of his missed shot. As the Wells fans started to pour out onto the floor to celebrate, everyone could now hear what few people had heard when the shot first went up--both referees blowing their whistles.

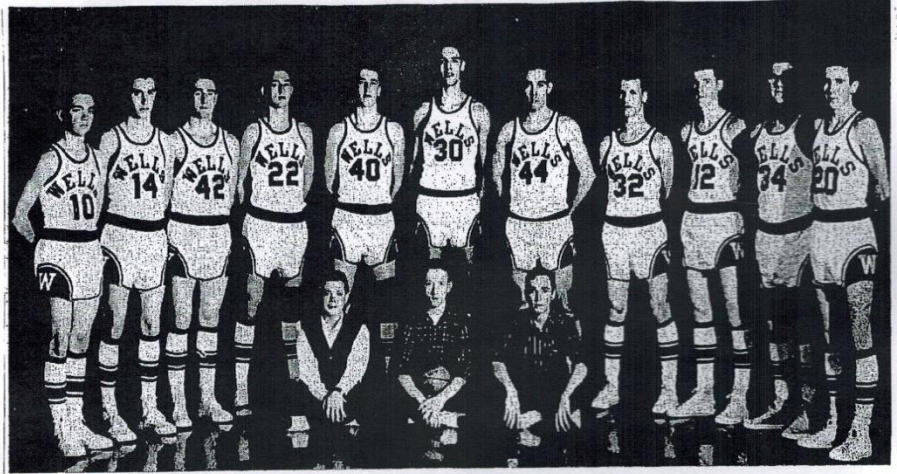
What Kewasakees forward Dave Williams heard was tremendous noise from the 2,500 in attendance. "When Gerald got the ball after Huckstep's basket," he recalled, "I ran down the left side of the floor and was open, but Gerald fired up the final shot. 'I never heard the whistles blow from the officials and I did not hear the {buzzer} at the end of the game because of the noise. 'When he missed the shot, I looked at the clock and saw all zeros, so I kept running to the end of the gym, turned left down the hall, and went to the locker room. 'I sat on a bench and started taking my uniform off because I thought the game was over. 'Dale Coffman came running in and told me to get back to the floor because Gerald was shooting free throws."

Even though there was no time left on the clock (and the clocks in 1961 did not show tenths of a second like they do today), the game was not over because official Zeke Williams explained that after Gerald Coffman released his shot, and before the {buzzer} sounded, Granville Wells' Phil Scott had made contact with Coffman. While Scott did try to block the shot, the official said the contact happened after the shot left Coffman's hand, so Coffman would get to shoot a one-and-one FT opportunity. If he misses the first shot the game is over and Wells

wins; if he hits the first but misses the second, the game goes to overtime; and if he hits both, Thorntown wins the game.

others in attendance, would be yelling for Coffman to miss. County tourney crowds were always loud and intense during the games. In this

### 1960-1961 Granville Wells Rockets



Larry Whittinghill, Bill Burdine, Larry Rodgers, Don Funkhouser, Phil Scott, Fred Huckstep, John Dorn, Dan Ramsey, Gary Pittman, Arjan Johnson, Sam Carter.

Managers: Alan Foster, Robert Ragsdale, and Mike Hawkins.

After graduating from Wells, Phil Scott enrolled at Purdue where he received an electrical engineering degree. He is now retired and lives in Colorado. "I still think about that game sometimes," he says. "I was shocked when I realized they had called a foul on me. 'I was backpedaling a few feet in front of Coffman and teammate John Dorn was on my right, ready to cover Thorntown's Dave Williams if Coffman passed to him. 'I yelled to John Dorn "Don't foul!" 'I did raise my hand when Coffman shot, but I did not try to block it. 'I thought we had won the game and was totally surprised when the foul was called."

As junior Gerald Coffman stepped to the line for the most important free throws of his high school career, three-fourths of the 2,500 spectators were making as much noise as they could. While the Thorntown crowd would be as quiet as possible so that Coffman could concentrate, the Wells fans, as well as most of the

instance, the Pinnell and Whitestown fans probably joined the Wells fans in yelling for Coffman to miss the free throws. That was undoubtedly because Thorntown had won three tourneys in a row and most of them wanted some other team to win it.

Put yourself in Gerald Coffman's position. First, he thought he had lost the game because he missed the half-court shot. Now he needs to suddenly pump up his confidence, having one shot to either tie the game (or lose it), and then a second shot to win it. In this free throw situation, with no time left on the clock, the players are not allowed to line up along the lane. Why? Because there is no reason to try for a rebound since the clock shows all zeros. It can be a lonely feeling at the free throw line when no other players are lined up and most of the fans are screaming and stomping on the wooden bleachers. How many spectators in the gym that night could hit two free throws under those

conditions? Probably not many. Coffman was a good free throw shooter but trying to hit one with that kind of pressure was asking a lot. If it had been a two-shot foul, at least he'd have two chances for a tie. But it was a one and one--and he'd need to be perfect for the win.

In a recent interview, Coffman stated "I knew I had to hit the first shot, or my teammates would kill me." Righthanded Gerald used the classic free throw stance: His feet about 12-15 inches apart with the right foot closer to the line; the ball held just below and slightly to the right of his right eye; and wrist cocked with the elbow perfectly aligned to the right leg. Now, with knees slightly bent into a crouched position, all he had to do was launch the ball with the proper arc and force, straight and true, while gently rising from the crouch. The first shot went up, and the ball nestled into the net. Now the Thorntown fans began cheering loudly since, at worst, there would be an overtime. After bouncing the ball a couple of times, Coffman's second shot dropped in, just as true as his first. At that point the only part of the gymnasium that was screaming was the Thorntown section, as it was realized the team would be playing again on Saturday afternoon.

The Keewasakees had little time to celebrate on-court since it had to be immediately cleared in preparation for the next game. In the locker room Coach Wesolek took the time to utter a few words of praise, but most of all he wanted the players to get home to rest. If they were to win the tourney now, they'd need to play well in two more games on Saturday. Not counting Thorntown, there were still two other strong teams left in the tourney--undefeated Pinnell, and Zionsville. If the Keewasakees were going to win the championship, they would need to

win each of its final three games within a 24-hour period--a tall order, by any measure. The tournament results are revealed in this story's *Epilogue*, at the end.

For Granville Wells, the loss to Thorntown was devastating. Its players knew that the county championship had been within their grasp. Thinking back to that game played nearly sixty years ago, Fred Huckstep, who went on to play at Indiana State University, offered a comment. He said "While Thorntown always played good defense, we missed lots of shots we usually {could} hit. 'And we also missed several free throws." His points are well taken. Wells' field goal percentage that game was only 32%. Huckstep led the way with 17 points, but he hit only six of eighteen FG attempts. Thorntown shot 45%, and hit all ten of its free throws, while Wells hit only 15 of 24 from the line. As bitter as this loss was, the Wells players hoped that brighter days were ahead the rest of the season.

**Box Score Account  
Boone County Tournament  
Granville Wells vs. Thorntown  
Friday, Jan. 13, 1961  
Quarter Final Game**

| <u>Thorntown</u> | <u>FG</u>    | <u>FT</u>     | <u>PF</u> |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| Williams         | 5-11         | 3-3           | 4         |
| D. Coffman       | 0-0          | 0-0           | 0         |
| B. Russell       | 4-7          | 0-0           | 3         |
| J. Russell       | 2-4          | 0-0           | 3         |
| Youkey           | 3-8          | 2-2           | 2         |
| McBane           | 0-6          | 2-2           | 2         |
| G. Coffman       | <u>11-20</u> | <u>3-3</u>    | <u>2</u>  |
| <b>Totals</b>    | <b>25-56</b> | <b>10-10</b>  | <b>16</b> |
|                  | <b>(45%)</b> | <b>(100%)</b> |           |

| <u>Granv. Wells</u> | <u>FG</u> | <u>FT</u> | <u>PF</u> |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Dorn                | 2-15      | 3-6       | 1         |
| Carter              | 1-1       | 0-0       | 1         |
| Burdine             | 6-15      | 0-1       | 0         |
| Huckstep            | 6-18      | 5-9       | 0         |

|               |              |              |          |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Scott         | 5-11         | 6-7          | 4        |
| Whittinghill  | <u>2-8</u>   | <u>1-1</u>   | <u>2</u> |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>22-68</b> | <b>15-24</b> | <b>9</b> |
|               | <b>(32%)</b> | <b>(63%)</b> |          |

**Thorntown 19 13 13 15 60**  
**Granv. Wells 13 14 11 21 59**

**Reprinted from Lebanon Reporter,  
January 14, 1961**

**Epilogue**

After Gerald Coffman's heroics in the Granville Wells game, Pinnell defeated Whitestown 43-17 that night, ruining the Panthers' attempt at a slow-down game. Saturday afternoon, Zionsville dispatched Perry Central 75-28 in the first game. Then Thorntown met undefeated Pinnell in the second game and handed the Purple Dragons their first loss of the season, 60-51, while winning back the Dope Bucket in the process. Saturday night pitted Thorntown against Zionsville for the championship. In a hard-fought contest, the Keewasakees prevailed 74-64. That win gave Thorntown its 11th County Tournament championship, the most of any schools in Boone County. It was also its fourth in a row, having previously won in '58, '59, and '60 as well. As a side note, in the championship game Zionsville's second-leading scorer, Bill Hodges, had a bad night. He scored only three points and fouled out. Better days lay ahead of him, however, when in 1979 he coached Indiana State University and Larry Bird to an undefeated regular season and then to a second-place finish to Michigan State in the NCAA tournament.

How good was Thorntown's 60-61 team? They entered the county tourney with a 6-5 record, but never lost another game until the sectional championship. After defeating Zionsville and Pinnell in the snow-delayed sectional at Zionsville, the

Keewasakees season ended in another thrilling game, this time against Lebanon 58-62. Their final season record was 18-6. The Lebanon Tigers had an excellent season too, finishing at 22-5. Coached by Keith Kincaid and led by Ted Bennington, O.A. Kincaid, Dave Milam, and Butch Clemons, the Tigers won the Lafayette regional the following week, defeating Ambia and Frankfort to secure the title. Moving on to the semi-state, they slipped by Gary Roosevelt 62-61 before losing to Logansport in the evening final 65-84, and just missing a trip to the finals.

1961 would be the final year the Keewasakees would win the county tournament championship. While its star would fade a little over the next three years, Granville Wells' star would shine brightly. Its 59-60 loss to Thorntown would prove to be the last county tournament game Wells would ever lose. The Rockets won the 1962 tourney final game over Whitestown 58-48, defeated Pinnell 94-54 in the 1963 final, and bested Thorntown 72-43 in the 1964 final. Wells also won the 1963 sectional, defeating an up-and-coming Lebanon team which had a skinny sharpshooting freshman on its roster named Rick Mount. The consolidations after the 1963-64 school year left only three county schools, thus bringing the tournament to an end. It seemed the end of an era for local Boone County basketball, too.

### **Acknowledgements**

Without the help of the following information sources, the preceding article could not have been written. My thanks is extended to:

Kermit Paddack, Zionsville Library  
Larry & Martha Randel, Zionsville  
S. Chandler Lighty, Indiana State Library  
Christine Sterle and staff, Thorntown Public Library

Lebanon Public Library  
Indiana BB HOF, Chris May, Director  
Gordon Wait  
Earl Kinslow  
Tom Wethington  
Thorntown Elementary School, Pam Taylor, Principal  
The Lebanon Reporter newspaper  
Sandra & John Britt  
1961 BB Players Gerald Coffman, Dave Williams, Paul Youkey, Dale Coffman, Fred Huckstep, Phil Scott

### **About the Author**

*David L. (DL) White is a 1963 graduate of Thorntown High School and a 1968 graduate of Purdue University, with BA and MA degrees in US History, Government, and Geography. He was a teacher and coach for the North Montgomery School Corporation, for 40 years, retiring in 2009. He coached over 1,200 grade school and junior high basketball games, as well as track and football. In 2011 he co-authored with Coach Tom Speaker "The Last County Championship", the story of Linden High School winning the final Montgomery County basketball tournament in 1971. Coach White was Tom Speaker's assistant coach for the high school varsity and was also coach of the 7th & 8th grade basketball teams at Linden, which also won the final Junior High Montgomery County championship. In 2015, Coach White wrote "Thorntown 1915 State Basketball Champions" a 15-page review of that championship season. He is currently is working on a comprehensive history of the Boone County Basketball Tournament. "One & One, with No Time on the Clock" was written in 2017 and tells the story of a very competitive high school basketball game, with an unusual and exciting finish. DL was a member of the Thorntown JV team for the 1960-61 season. Since the tourney was at Thorntown, all the JV players helped with the games. DL's*

*job was being in charge of the key to the visiting team's locker room for all the home games, giving him a unique "on the floor" look at the games. Coach White lives near Crawfordsville and can be contacted at [CoachDL312@gmail.com](mailto:CoachDL312@gmail.com) or phone (765) 376-8801.*

### **Fillmore's 1954 Team, The Greatest Story Never Told by Gregg Doyel, Indianapolis Star Columnist**

The school is tiny, and the year is 1954. The basketball players at this school have no idea the history they are creeping toward. They have no idea that a movie will be made about the 1954 Indiana high school state tournament. Nobody knows.

But they are winning games, and they keep winning, this small school in this gigantic 751-school single-class tournament. Farm boys, most of them. Honed their games on yard dirt, shooting on home-made backboards nailed to trees. One grew up shooting on a cardboard box attached to his roof, the ball thundering against the clapboard walls, jarring his parents and seven brothers and sisters inside the two-bedroom house without electricity or running water.

This is their story, and no, you've not read about it in any other account. You've seen the movie, but it wasn't their movie. They have no movie, no books. No fame. They weren't Milan. The 1954 Fillmore team at Fillmore High was something else. The greatest story never told. "Fair or not, this story has haunted me for 67 years," reminisced 1954 Fillmore forward Don Tharp in a narrative written in 2017. "We didn't even know Bobby Plump existed at the time," Dee Greenlee, a guard on that Fillmore team is telling me, and he means no disrespect at all; he's just saying how



it was. "Nobody was talking about Milan."

Not yet. Not before Plump's last-few-seconds shot beat mighty Muncie Central for the 1954 Indiana state championship, and, 32 years later, launched the movie "Hoosiers." Late in that 1954 tournament, a loss by Fillmore was a bigger deal than a win by Milan. Hey, now it's my turn to tell you: That's the way it *was*. With an enrollment of 93, Fillmore was smaller than Milan (161). Its team had a better record (24-0) than Milan (24-2). And so it was, on March 7, 1954, that the boys from Fillmore made the top of the sports page--headline: "First loss is handed Fillmore"--when their unlikely run through the state tournament ended at the Greencastle Regional. We'll get to that loss in a minute.

But first, let's revisit another item from that same IndyStar sports section, way down the page. There, just above a story about the annual Knights of Columbus indoor track and field meet, a sub-header notes: "Milan, Aurora romp over regional foes." The story is small, just five paragraphs for two games. In the fourth paragraph, the only one devoted exclusively to Milan, the story notes: "Bobbie Plump led Milan with 16." See? Nobody knew that 'Bobbie,' er, Bobby Plump existed. Not yet. Also on that page in the IndyStar sports section was a photo of Crispus Attucks center Sheddric Mitchell, who scored 15 points in a regional victory against Alexandria. Oscar Robertson, so the caption goes, "also is in the picture." With the win, Attucks was two games from facing Milan at the Butler Fieldhouse. Probably you know that. You've seen the movie. So have the kids from Fillmore.

"I have come to realize that I will never be able to totally cope with the unfairness and pain," recollected Don Tharp in 2017. Fillmore didn't

have a gym. Not one worthy of a varsity game, anyway. When the town built the high school in 1917, it put the gymnasium under the building. It was a tiny gym, 70 feet long at most, the baseline crammed within 5 inches of the wall. Coaches hung old wrestling mats on the walls to cushion the blow--"Any kind of drive, you'd bounce off the wall," says Herschel Ross, the Fillmore center in 1954-- but the kids loved it. Before practice they'd take turns running up the wall, digging a foot into the pad for purchase and springing toward the rim for a dunk. The gym was tiny in other ways, too. "You couldn't get any arc on the ball," says Bob Sibbitt, a Fillmore guard, "on account of you'd hit the ceiling."



1954 Fillmore boys basketball team was undefeated going into the state tournament, and was two games short of meeting Milan at semi-state before they lost to Montezuma. Fillmore Cardinal players Bob Sibbitt (22), left, Dee Greenlee (00), Don Tharp (44) and Herschel Ross (50). (Photo: Courtesy of Fillmore High School)

The Cardinals played their home games down the road at Greencastle, and worked on their skills in the yard, on the dirt, under the trees, around the roots. Herschel Ross is the one who hammered the cardboard to his roof, shooting until it shredded, then putting up another one. When he got older, he used wood from shop class to make a backboard. His dad scraped up the money for an actual rim, and Herschel found two poles. Dug the

holes himself. Put it all together. Had himself a real goal there on the dirt. Same with Sibbitt. He nailed some boards to a walnut tree out back and attached an old rim his uncle had salvaged from a guy's trash down the street. "A junky thing," Sibbitt says of his goal. "Every time you made it, it would come down and catch a (tree) root, and we'd have to chase it down." Says Ross: "I don't think we did a lot of dribbling. 'We did a lot of shooting and Dee was a real good outside shooter.'" That's Dee Greenlee, whose son Doug, became athletic director at arch-rival Greencastle. In the 1950s Dee beat Waveland at the buzzer. Beat Clayton, too.

Fillmore was beating everybody in those days, running its regular-season winning streak to 37 games--longest in the state--over the 1954 and '55 seasons. After victories they'd go to Olyn Wright's Café and put milkshakes and sandwiches on the school's tab. The school allowed it, so long as the players didn't spend more than fifty cents each. February turned to March, and to the state tournament, and the victories mounted. Fillmore beat Roachdale and then Stilesville. Bainbridge and then Waveland. The (undefeated) Cardinals went into Greencastle's gym and won the sectional, beating Greencastle and Cloverdale.

They were 24-0 entering the Greencastle Regional, even if the players were as small as the town (population 400) they represented. Herschel Ross was the leading scorer and the biggest guy on the team, listed at 5-11 1/2, but he wasn't (actually) that tall. That exaggeration was the idea of the team's first-year coach Shirrel "Zeke" Alexander. "Everyone had a half-inch added to their height," Greenlee says. "I was listed at 5-8 1/2." 'I don't know why Coach did

that. 'I guess to make us feel a little bit taller.' Meanwhile, on the other side of the semi-state bracket a storm was brewing. Never mind that half-inch added to their height, the Fillmore Cardinals were two games away from playing Milan. They could have been giants. *"I am sure that some who are reading this or hearing it are wondering why a basketball game played in 1954 could be so important and such a source of long-term heartbreak for a 79-year-old retired dentist."--1954 Fillmore forward Don Tharp, written in 2017.*

Montezuma scored nine of the final 10 points to win 55-52. The key play happened in the final seconds, Fillmore trailing 54-52. Sibbitt passes to Tharp who drives the lane and collides with Montezuma center Vic Edwards. A whistle blows. And the call is....."Offensive foul--and in those days it was two free throws!" Greenlee is saying, and he's shouting, all these years later. "(Edwards) missed the first one, but he shot the second one and daggone, he made it. 'So, we're down three with four or five seconds left--come down and take a fast shot--and that's

Don Tharp writes (in 2017) *"But consider that 62 years later we still see new articles, books, etc. about the 'Milan Miracle,' not to mention the most popular sports movie of all time, 'Hoosiers.'"* That regional loss (to Montezuma) hurt badly enough. It was Fillmore's first and only defeat of the season, after reaching the final 64 in a single-class tournament that began with a field of 751 and denying the Cardinals a shot at playing in the big city cathedral of Butler (later Hinkle) Fieldhouse. Milan would have been waiting at the semi-state, but the Cardinals wanted the facility more than the foe. "The chance to play on the Butler Fieldhouse court," Ross says, wistful even now, "we didn't know anything about Milan. 'But I get to thinking about playing in the Fieldhouse, and that's sad. 'It's depressing. 'What could have happened after that? 'Who knows?'" Echoes Greenlee: "Two games from Milan. 'Who knows?" Sibbitt knows. "I think we could have beaten Milan," he says.

They were at the Fieldhouse for the 1954 final, for Plump's shot, because Zeke Alexander had decided to take his team into the city to watch what could have been. What happened 30 years later? Nobody saw that coming. Not the movie, not the museum in Milan, not the fame. "They had a great team, and I'm very proud of what they did," Greenlee says of Milan. "We talked about Milan after the fact. 'Just a wonderful story. 'But we don't know what we could have done if we'd had the chance. 'It's something to dream about, what we did and what we might have been able to do." They saw the movie "Hoosiers." All of them. "I love that show," Sibbitt says. "It kind of reminds me of our team."

From the grave, Don Tharp communicates words that none of the last three living members of the 1954



1954 Fillmore boys basketball team was undefeated going into the state tournament, and was two games short of meeting Milan at semi-state before they lost to Montezuma. Fillmore Cardinals players celebrate in their locker room. (Photo: Submitted Photo)

A few weeks after the season, once Milan had knocked off Muncie Central for the state title, Milan coach Marvin Wood spoke at Fillmore's basketball banquet. There, he let the Cardinals in on a little secret: Milan had focused its scouting at the Greencastle Regional on Fillmore, convinced that the Cardinals would be waiting at the semi-state. Indeed, Fillmore had Montezuma beat at that Greencastle Regional. Well, almost.

The Cardinals led 51-46 with less than three minutes left, but

how the game ended."

Montezuma was a story in itself. The Aztecs were the smallest school still standing, with a senior class of 14 and a gym back home that was 60 feet long. They came into the 1954 state tournament with five losses but knocked off undefeated Fillmore and then beat New Ross in the regional's final before being bum-rushed out of the tournament by Milan in the semi-state. "Without a doubt," Ross says, 'we should have won that regional--we really missed out." Well, yes, but on how much? On...everything?



Fillmore starting five will say. Shortly before he died in 2017, Tharp wrote a recap of his life. It was a life well lived, and the bulk of his tome focuses on the highlights: husband and father, athlete and dentist, professor emeritus of the I.U. School of Dentistry. He served in Vietnam, and for the Danville (IN) Town Council. But what happened in 1954..."It pains me deeply that we missed a chance to make Indiana basketball history," Tharp declared.

## **LON SHOWLEY'S HOOPS CAREER**

by

**Beau Wicker, Sports Editor  
Logansport Pharos-Tribune**

When Lon Showley read the Pharos-Tribune article regarding John Williamson, it rekindled many fond memories for him. Showley well remembers his Grass Creek Panthers going up against Williamson's Metea Hornets in 1961. While Showley won the battle — he outscored Williamson 35-27 — Williamson won the war as Metea won 65-58. "John Williamson was the state leading scorer," Showley recalled. "None of us knew that until several weeks later when it was published in the newspaper."

Both Showley and Williamson stood at 6-foot-5 inches tall and attended high schools separated by about 10 miles in what is now the Caston school district. Showley led Fulton County that year averaging 23 ppg and 17 rpg, while Williamson led Cass County that year averaging 32.5 ppg.

Showley recalled his junior class at Grass Creek consisted of 16 students, which was considered a big class. The next year, Showley's senior year, Grass Creek consolidated with Fulton into North Caston and Metea consolidated with Twelve Mile into South Caston. While Grass Creek finished around

.500 in 1961, Showley's North Caston squad went undefeated his senior season at 21-0 in 1962. While Logansport was the powerhouse, winning four straight sectional titles from 1959-62 and reaching the Final Four in 1959 and 1961, one wonders what could have happened had Caston consolidated earlier.

Showley went on to play at Butler, Williamson played at Evansville and Williamson's cousins, the Rudicel cousins, made Twelve Mile one of the toughest teams in the area as well. In fact, Logansport's semistate team in 1960 beat Twelve Mile by just two points in sectional play that year. "We would have had two 6-5 guys up front and the older Rudicel was a big guy and a good forward and Rex Rudicel was an incredible guard. We would have been a very good team," Showley said.

Five years following Showley's graduation, in 1967, North Caston and South Caston consolidated into Caston High School into its current building 50 years ago. Showley said North Caston's success in the 1961-62 season made the consolidation a little more popular than it was before basketball season started. "That alleviated the consolidation issues," he said. "Consolidation was very frowned upon because when you lost your high school you lost your basketball team and that was your identity. When you watch the movie 'Hoosiers,' everyone followed their school team's home games and away games. When schools consolidated, they lost their identity. But when Grass Creek and Fulton consolidated that made your basketball team better than before which made the consolidation go over better." Showley remembers playing with and against Logansport star Danny Farrell at Riverside Park, including at the big summer tournaments.

Showley went on to play at Butler for coach Tony Hinkle. He said he

had other offers from LSU, Davidson, New Mexico and Vanderbilt. He added he didn't understand how a farm boy from Grass Creek could be recruited to all these schools but that he figured out that a lot of college coaches came from the Indiana high school ranks and they went back home to recruit Indiana players. He added that Butler became a favorite of his after watching the Milan-Muncie Central game at the Butler Fieldhouse on TV in 1954. When he expressed to former Logansport coach Jim Jones that Butler was his favorite, he said Jones expressed doubt that Showley could play there. But two weeks later Showley was offered a full-ride scholarship to Butler. He said he didn't play much his sophomore season at Butler as he was behind Jeff Blue, an Indiana Basketball Hall of Famer from Bainbridge. His junior year he did start and said the Bulldogs had an OK year. He said his senior year they went 16-10 and finished one game out of the NIT. "The NIT back in those days was a bigger tournament than the NCAA," Showley said. "The NCAA was just starting to grow in popularity and status. The NIT in Madison Square Garden was the huge thing." Butler's highlight in 1966 was beating No. 3 Michigan and All-American Cazzie Russell 79-64 at home. Showley played all 40 minutes and scored 16 points in the win. Showley averaged 8 ppg and 7 rpg his senior season and blistered the nets at 50 percent shooting from the field.

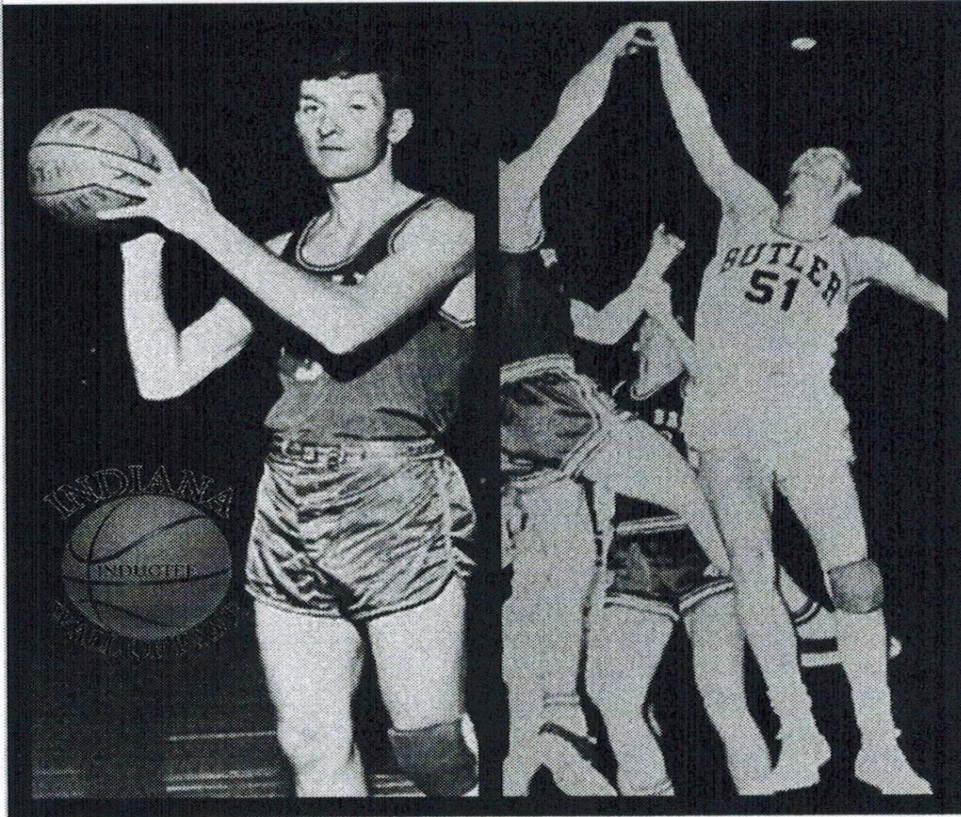
Forward was Showley's regular spot and he played pivot when Ed Schilling needed rest or got in foul trouble. Hinkle said Showley was a coachable and versatile player and was the Bulldogs' most improved player that year. Showley went on to receive his law degree from Indiana University. He said his brother



### Indiana Basketball Wall of Fame is with Don Thompson.

December 26, 2014

Our 14th member of the inaugural Indiana Basketball Wall of Fame charter class is Lon Showley of Grass Creek (Fulton County) & Butler fame. Lon is the second all-time scorer at Grass Creek behind Phil Wills. Lon scored 1,245 points during his four year career and averaged somewhere between 10 to 15 rebounds per game. His team his senior year went 21 - 0 and lost in the finals of the Peru Sectional. He went on to play three years for the Butler Bulldogs (1963 - 66). Lon played AAU ball with the F&M Oil Company which had players like Gary Long, Jerry Bass, Ken Pennington, Jack Krebs, Carl Short, Gordon Pope and many others from central Indiana. Now a retired attorney in San Diego.



received a Navy ROTC scholarship and was stationed in San Diego. And at the age of 27, Showley joined his brother in San Diego and has been there since. He said he was set up on a date in San Diego with his future wife, Carolyn (Wilkinson), who happens to be from Peru. His son from a previous marriage, Matt, is 6-4 and was a good basketball player and was an AAU teammate of Luke Walton's. Matt got the advice from Bill Walton that he should give the sport of volleyball a try to work on quickening his reaction time and to work on his jumping ability. Though he was a good basketball

player and played varsity basketball as a freshman and was a 20 ppg scorer in San Diego, Matt ended up being better at volleyball and played at men's volleyball powerhouse Pepperdine.

Showley said he still visits home every year as he comes back to visit his sister Lori Zeronik in Indianapolis. He said it was his sister who notified him of the Williamson story as she often does for local basketball stories of interest. He said he also visits his high school coach, Shannon Jones, who was the Grass Creek coach right out of college and went on to coach at Lewis Cass and

still resides in Walton. He said they mall walk every year at the Logansport Mall. He added Jones was likely going to take a job at a bigger school until the Grass Creek principal had him take a look at the 6-foot-5 Showley running track the spring of his sophomore year, which made him change his mind.

Showley, now 73, enjoyed a long career as an estate planning attorney in San Diego and was the estate planning chairman on the county bar. After 42 years he retired and sold his business five and a half years ago. He now golfs five times a week and is an eight-handicap golfer. He nearly shot his age by shooting a 75 earlier this year. His father, Harold, was a captain on the 1932 county champion Fulton team. One of his father's teammates was future Governor Doc Bowen, who invited his Fulton team to the state house in the '70s. "I love being in Indiana. The lessons I learned of working hard early on in life have carried on," Showley said. "Growing up watching Phil Wills play with my brother on the Grass Creek teams gave me a good start in setting the goals high, and I tried to continue on from there. "Those lessons carried on into getting a college education and having a successful law career. It's the same qualities."

### BOXSCORE BACK ISSUES

The full range of Boxscore back issues, all the way back to our very first one in 1996, will soon become available on the IHSBHS website, [indianabasketballhistory.com](http://indianabasketballhistory.com). Just click on the "Boxscore" sub-header which appears on the initial page of the site. You may read them on-site or print them out, whichever you prefer. The only issues not available will be the four most recent ones released. While at the website, be sure also to read the Feature Story, which is changed periodically.

## **BECOME AN IHSBHS MEMBER**

### **(Indiana High School Basketball Historical Society)**

Join a statewide group of sports-minded individuals who have a common interest in the history of high school basketball, Indiana's favorite sport. Membership dues are currently just \$10 per year. Established in 1994, and loosely associated with the Hall of Fame in New Castle, IHSBHS (pronounced "ish-bish") publishes four seasonal newsletters for its members, each issue usually 12 to 16 pages in content, known as Boxscore. This newsletter contains diverse items, including short stories that recount tales of former Hoosier ballplayers and their schools' teams. Members are invited, but not required, to submit their own personal stories for inclusion in Boxscore.

#### **Membership Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail (optional for receiving Boxscore) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

High School and graduation year \_\_\_\_\_

Check or money order to IHSBHS for \$10 enclosed? \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: IHSBHS Treasurer Rocky Kenworthy, 710 E. 800 S., Clayton, IN 46118**

**Board of Directors: Roger Robison (Frankfort '54), Harley Sheets (Lebanon '54), Cliff Johnson (Western '54), Rocky Kenworthy (Cascade '74), Tim Puet (Valley, PA '69), Leigh Evans (Castle '86), John Ockomon (Pendleton '60), Doug Bradley (Columbus East '77 ), Jeff Luzadder (Dunkirk '74 ), Curtis Tomak (Linton '59), Kermit Paddack (Sheridan '02), Hugh Schaefer (Freelandville '61).**





## Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Annual Membership Program

The Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame is committed to recognizing Indiana's Basketball Legends and inspiring Indiana's basketball future.

The Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. The operation of the Hall of Fame is dependent upon attendance, gift shop sales, funds generated through activities and events, gifts and donations. The Annual Membership Program was established to allow all basketball enthusiasts to participate in the support of preserving and sharing Indiana's basketball history.

As an Annual Member of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame you will receive the following recognition and benefits during the next year.

- name recognition on the Annual Membership display in the lobby of the museum
- name recognition in the Indiana Basketball History Magazine, & Induction Banquet Programs
- free museum admission for the member and 3 guests, 20% discount in the gift shop
- Hall of Fame stationary kit
- subscription to Indiana Basketball History Magazine
- invitations to Inductee's Reception and other special events

Please complete the membership form and keep the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in the GAME!

### 2019 Membership Form

#### Membership Categories

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active Coach   | \$25                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active Referee | \$25                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Member | \$100                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor     | \$250                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron         | \$500                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime       | \$3,000 (Cumulative) |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, One Hall of Fame Court, New Castle, IN 47362. The Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Check method of payment:

☐ Check or Money Order enclosed

☐ Credit Card (VISA, MC, Discover)

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Vcode \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_