

Kerry Trotter Gives Back to Community - Omaha World-Herald (NE) - January 26, 1998 - page 14

January 26, 1998 | Omaha World-Herald (NE) | Page 14

The year was 1991 and Kerry Trotter was living large. The former all-state basketball player at Omaha Creighton Prep was a professional star in Europe, scoring nearly 30 points a game for his Belgian team. The two-time player of the year in his league was featured on a Nike poster.

Yet even then, in the prime of his basketball career, other priorities were working in his heart. "One day, if I can, I would love to have a Kerry Trotter youth developmental program in Omaha," he said back then. "Hopefully, that would be me giving back to the community. Because a lot of people helped me."

A lot of athletes say that that sort of thing, but Trotter is living it. He has returned to Omaha to become the director of development for the Jesuit Middle School at 2311 N. 22nd Street.

While Trotter lit up scoreboards in Europe in the early 1990s, the Jesuits conducted a survey in north Omaha to determine community needs. The overwhelming response was, in effect: You are the Jesuits and this is a community whose young males are in crisis. Open a school for boys and put them through your tried-and-true, centuries-old formula of training leaders with Christian values.

Trotter, a graduate of Creighton Prep and Marquette University, is a product of the Jesuit tradition. He also is the product of a single - parent family in the Pleasant View low - income public housing project at 30th and Parker Streets. Trotter credits his mother with instilling in him and his siblings the conviction that the Trotter children are not on this Earth merely to take up space. His mother worked and made endless sacrifices, Trotter said, so that her three children could get a good education and make something of themselves.

Trotter said too many people to mention, especially at **Howard Kennedy Elementary** School and the North Omaha Boys Club, served as mentors for him and kept him moving forward.

He uses the word "blessed" to describe his life thus far. As a basketball star in Europe, he was at the high end of a salary scale that ran into six figures for top players. Trotter returns from his 11 - year basketball career in Europe with a taste for red wine, a familiarity with French and the perspective of a citizen of the world.

Friends and teams in Europe have invited Trotter back to that life. But the game plan has changed.

When Trotter heard that the YMCA where he sometimes played basketball as a child had been converted into a school, he volunteered to help in whatever way he could during his offseason

stays in Omaha. Father Jim Michalski, president of the school, said that when it became apparent that the fledgling school would need a full - time development director, Trotter was the obvious choice.

Trotter could have stayed in Europe and sent a check. Instead, he retired from basketball and took a job at the school where his aunt, Kathy Trotter, is principal.

Life happens on a much smaller scale now for Trotter, geographically and financially. He still is learning the fund - raising game. Like most people in transition, he is not certain what the future holds.

But for now he brings to a school in north Omaha his wealth of worldly experience, a passionate belief in education and a strong Christian faith. Trotter is, indeed, giving back to his community.

CITATION (APA STYLE)

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