

way to major league softball. They won multiple national championships. Players were celebrities. By the late 50s, as I was growing up, softball was no longer as significant but I remember my father talking about Leo Luken and Bernie Kampschmidt as if they were Nellie Fox and Ernie Banks, my baseball heroes.

After having success in softball, in 1939 Zollner fielded a team in a Chicago industrial league tournament and never looked back. The Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons were not Fort Wayne's first pro basketball team—the Fort Wayne Knights of Columbus (the Caseys) and the Fort Wayne Hoosiers were. And the Fort Wayne General Electrics played in the NBL (National Basketball League) in 1937. The Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons left Fort Wayne at the end of 1957 but continue today as the Detroit Pistons.

There were many eventful years in Fort Wayne.

For most of the Fort Wayne era, the Pistons played at the North Side High School gym. The enthusiastic fans and confined quarters gave the Pistons a significant homecourt advantage. Minneapolis Laker's star Slater Martin was quoted on the courtside seating at North Side: "I never really saw the fans get physical with the players. I had them pull the hair on my legs through."

Fred Zollner was key in keeping the NBL (National Basketball League) solvent. He gave direct financial aid to other teams, he purchased players for cash to help keep teams afloat, and did other things to keep the league going. Carl Bennett who's personal history with the Pistons is so intertwined with Zollner as to be inseparable said that Zollner never wanted anyone to know how he helped the league—and pro basketball—alive.

Zollner treated his players well, being known throughout the league as a generous owner. He was the first owner to purchase a plane for the team. He did this even though he did not like to fly. It gave the Pistons such an advantage—players weren't as tired from traveling—that the league re-configured its schedule to the disadvantage of Fort Wayne.

Zollner was constantly upgrading his team—which eventually led to repeat national titles. The nation knew he was serious when he signed "Mr. Basketball"—Bobby McDermott of the New York Celtics, then the most famous player in all of basketball famous for the towering two-hand set-shots typically from half-court—or beyond. Paul "Curly" Armstrong was another favorite.

The Zollner Pistons were also responsible for the 24-second shot clock. When George Mikan, who was not only a giant of his day at 6'10" but a talented athlete as well, changed the nature of basketball with his huge height advantage, the Pistons decided to try a different way to win. In Minneapolis, as the crowd hollered, they stalled. It remains—and always will—as the lowest scoring game in NBA basketball history. 19–18. But the Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons won. But the league said never again.

Fred Zollner, coordinated by his able basketball specialist Carl Bennett, was key in creating the NBA as we know it today. The NBL and the BAA (Basketball Association of America) were competing for players in a market in which few were able to make money. The BAA had franchises in big cities with big arenas (Madison Square Garden for example) but few fans and not the best players. The NBL

was a mixed bag but had four very strong teams—the Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons, the Rochester Royals (later moved to Cincinnati in Hoosier Oscar Robertson days), George Mikan's Minneapolis Lakers (now the Los Angeles Lakers—ever wonder where the lake was in LA?), and the Indianapolis Krautskys (named after local grocery store owner Frank Krautsky). These teams actually dominated the NBA for most of its first years.

Maurice Podoloff, the Commissioner of the BAA, came to Fort Wayne to Carl Bennett's home. After preliminary discussions, they were joined the next day by Fred Zollner and then the Indianapolis Krautsky's owners in Fort Wayne. The agreement to pull the four teams from the NBL and join with the BAA was the start of the NBA. Additional changes occurred over the next few years but the core remains until today.

The Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons brought many thrills to northeast Indiana, including one of the early NBA All-Star games which features such stars as George Mikan (whose 1948 basketball card is the most valuable of all time), Bob Cousy and Dolph Schayes. The then brand new Allen County War Memorial Coliseum was a showpiece arena, packed to the ceiling with over 10,000 fans. Over 8,000 came to see the Zollner Pistons defeat the Boston Celtics, during Bill Russell's first visit there.

Fred Zollner's vision for Fort Wayne was for the Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons to be to the NBA what Green Bay was to professional football. But, alas, it was not to be. New York, Chicago, Boston and other cities had millions of people to draw from whereas Fort Wayne had less than 200,000. But Fred Zollner not only brought big-time basketball to a smaller size city, but he was instrumental in the founding of the NBA and much of its development.

Zollner saw the writing on the wall in the mid-fifties. He knew that the big-city teams weren't thrilled to come to Fort Wayne. What may have finally pushed him over the edge, according to long-time sports broadcaster and Fort Wayne civic leader Hilliard Gates, was a situation that developed in 1955. Fred Zollner wanted badly to win an NBA championship. The Zollner Pistons made it to the finals. But the Fort Wayne Coliseum had booked the national bowling tournament so the Pistons were booted out of Fort Wayne for the NBA finals. Now bowling was big in Indiana—bowling still is very popular in Indiana—but it probably wasn't the wisest move. The Fort Wayne Pistons lost four games to three, so the record should show that they did win all the games played in Indianapolis.

Dick Rosenthal, who played as a Piston and later was the University of Notre Dame's athletic director, said about Fred Zollner: "He was a man of vision. Fred nurtured professional basketball from a very iffy proposition to a major business venture. He embodied the soul of the organization and the league. Professional basketball had come a long way. The game owes a great deal to the pioneer spirit of an owner like Fred Zollner."

Carl Bennett, who crusaded to get Fred Zollner into the Hall of Fame, and who for most of the years of the Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons did most everything from coaching to managing to player personnel decisions, said: "If somebody would have asked me when I was a kid what I wanted to do with my career, I would have told them exactly what I did for

Fred Zollner's organization. It was fun and extremely rewarding."

For basketball buffs, there are two books that most of this special order was based upon. Rodger Nelson has written the Zollner Piston Story, covering both the basketball and softball teams. Todd Gould has written a book titled *Pioneers of the Hardwood*, about not only the Pistons but other early pro Indiana basketball teams as well. Indiana, in the second year of the merged leagues, had 3—three—of the NBA teams.

Let me close with several quotes from the *Pioneers of the Hardwood*, from former Fort Wayne Zollner Piston basketball stars.

Frank Brian: "Whenever I hear the song 'Back Home Again in Indiana' I get real nostalgic, because Indiana was like a second home to me. The fans were so congenial and really loved their basketball. Basketball was its own special culture there. When anybody ever asks me about the fans in Indiana, there's only one word I can say—unbelievable. Yes, sir, unbelievable. It was great."

Hall-of-Famer George Yardley, the first Piston and the first NBA player in history to score 2000 points in a season, said, "If it's wintertime, and it's Indiana, it must mean basketball. The fans there were really wonderful. I loved it, truly loved it. It was the greatest experience in the world."

Yardley, a California boy and Stanford grad, also said about Fort Wayne: "My wife and I didn't know what to expect when we got to Fort Wayne. We had never seen snow before. Major league sports to Fort Wayne was the Pistons. They were great basketball fans. But more importantly, they were great people. They wanted you to know that Fort Wayne was a great place to live, and they did everything they could to illustrate that to you. To this day I believe that Fort Wayne has some of the coldest weather and warmest people in the country."

In Fort Wayne we no longer have the Pistons basketball team. We still have nearly 1000 Zollner Pistons jobs that are part of the backbone of our community. We have the pride of having been there in the early days of the NBA and now having one of our community leaders being honored by his selection into the Basketball Hall of Fame. And we still have some of the coldest weather and warmest people in the country.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. WOMEN'S NATIONAL SOCCER TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the United States women's national soccer team. Our soccer team won the women's World Cup. This tournament was held this past weekend in Pasadena, California.

We are all very proud of our women's soccer team. The 1999 women's soccer team has boldly gone where no United States soccer team has gone before. And along the way, Mr. Speaker, they have taught us all that anything is possible if you dare to dream; that by raising the bar of expectations, there can be no limits; that if you are allowed to

fully realize your potential, you can have it all. They did, Mr. Speaker. They fought very, very hard.

The championship of our women's soccer team won on the field in competition this weekend was more than a feel-good athletic victory but a victory for American women everywhere. From Liberty City in my district to Houston, to Los Angeles, the lives and hopes of young women everywhere have been expanded and transformed by a new set of American heroes, real-life role models who are confident, strong and female.

Their victory, however, was not just a victory for one team but a victory for all girls and all women and a victory for all America. And the culmination of a very long process, of title IX. Not too long ago, people said women athletics was perhaps a waste of time and money, that women could not perform. This victory shows, Mr. Speaker, that all that was needed for women was the opportunity to compete on an equal level.

I am a former athlete, Mr. Speaker. I ran track and played basketball in college more than a few years ago. I know the importance of role models in life and sports. I had outstanding role models like Lua Bartley and Babe Minor. Now, Mr. Speaker, little girls and women all across America have a new set of real-life American role models who are driven, determined, aggressive, tough and committed. That is our United States 1999 women's national soccer team.

This weekend's victory was a coming of age for women. In a real sense, it is something you cannot touch or you cannot quantify. Because little girls all over the world, Mr. Speaker, saw strong, independent and capable women playing soccer these past 3 weeks, they will realize that they are not crazy for wanting to do something out of the ordinary, to excel themselves in athletics. They are saying to themselves, "If they can play soccer and win, I can be a CEO of a Fortune 500 company."

Thank God for all of the dedicated soccer moms, Mr. Speaker, in this country that have driven their girls back and forth to rehearsal over and over again. May they continue to provide the continued support that fosters World Cup winners.

I am proud of our women's soccer team and what they have done for our national psyche and for the psyche of Americans from coast to coast. Girl power and the power of women, Mr. Speaker, live on.

IN MEMORY OF ASTRONAUT
CHARLES "PETE" CONRAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago today, the NASA space laboratory Skylab fell to the earth in a

rain of blue, red and orange fire over the Indian Ocean in Australia. I rise today to honor the memory of an astronaut who largely contributed to the success of that program.

Charles "Pete" Conrad, who died last Thursday in a motorcycle accident at the age of 69, began service to his country as a U.S. Navy aviator after graduating from Princeton with an engineering degree. It continued when he was selected as a member of NASA's second class of nine astronauts. He flew on two Gemini missions, setting a space flight endurance record on Gemini 5, and commanded Gemini 11 which docked with another spacecraft, leading the way to the Apollo missions.

He is best known, though, for the distinction of being the third man to walk on the Moon. Apollo 11 captured the world's imagination, but the mission missed its landing site by several miles. Commander Conrad's mission proved that not only could we go to the moon but we can land on our target. This mission goal was essential if any scientific exploration of the moon was going to take place. Unlocking the mysteries that the moon presents requires the ability to excavate specific sites. Apollo 12 and Pete Conrad proved this to be possible.

Five years later, when Skylab was launched into orbit atop a Saturn V rocket, major damage was sustained which would have to be repaired in space if the microgravity laboratory program was to be useful. Pete Conrad answered the call to duty on the first manned mission to the space station. He and his crew mates repaired the damage in three exhaustive EVAs in addition to conducting a number of other experiments over the 3 weeks they spent aboard the station.

When he left NASA, Pete Conrad was never far away. His enterprising spirit took him into the fertile environment of the commercial space industry, first with McDonnell Douglas and then on his own with Universal Space Lines and several sister companies. The visionary Pete Conrad recognized that it will be up to private industry to truly open the commercial markets of space, so he created companies to design reusable launch vehicles and build ground tracking systems, with the goal of making it easier, cheaper and safer to put people and equipment into space.

Through my work on the Committee on Science, I had the pleasure of meeting Pete Conrad, as a matter of fact, most recently several months ago. I have always been impressed by the force of his personality. He seemed to exemplify the maxim of "attitude is altitude." At 5 feet 6 inches, Pete Conrad personified this quip with his eye toward enterprise and adventure.

□ 1915

Though highly regarded as a truly terrific pilot, he had a reputation as a jokester. Upon setting foot on the Moon, he cheered, "Whoopee, that may have been a small one for Neil, but that's a long one for me."

Just last year he joked that he looked forward to his 77th birthday saying, "I fully expect that NASA will send me back to the Moon as they treated Senator Glenn, and if they don't do so, why then I will have to do it myself."

The life of Charles P. Conrad, Jr., serves as an example of the patriotism and sense of adventure that sets the United States apart and makes us all, as Americans, unique. I am proud to have known him in life, I honor him in death, and I marvel, as we all do, at his legacy.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 2448

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 2448, a bill to restore fairness to our immigration system. Family reunification is a fundamental principle of U.S. immigration law. Another key principle gives American citizens priority over non-citizens when they seek to bring their relatives here.

Most of the time, Americans get their petitions handled first.

But an aberration arises when Americans seek to bring their unmarried sons and daughters here from the Philippines. In this case, U.S. citizens wait several years longer than legal residents.

The Department of State reports that such U.S. citizen petitions are backlogged to October 1, 1987, while legal resident petitions are backlogged only to August 1, 1992, a difference of five years. The law was never designed to make citizens wait longer than legal residents, and we must correct this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues to imagine how devastating it is to achieve American citizenship, only to find that this move significantly postpones your own child's visa. It is a heartbreaking task to have to inform constituents of this sad fact.

My bill fixes this irregularity. Simply put, it ensures that a legal resident who files for a son or daughter to immigrate will not have to wait longer for his children to arrive after he gains U.S. citizenship.

U.S. citizenship is a great honor. By passing H.R. 2448, we can ensure that it remains a great privilege as well. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

H.R. 2448

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PREVENTING IMMIGRANTS FROM WAITING LONGER FOR IMMIGRANT VISAS AS A RESULT OF RECLASSIFICATION FROM FAMILY SECOND PREFERENCE TO FAMILY FIRST PREFERENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 203 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(h) ASSURING IMMIGRANTS DO NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONGER FOR AN IMMIGRANT VISA AS A RESULT OF RECLASSIFICATION FROM FAMILY SECOND PREFERENCE TO FAMILY FIRST PREFERENCE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the case of a petition that has been approved to accord preference status under subsection (a)(2)(A) may be deemed to