



April 2024

Dear Friends,

The NBA All Star game was played this year in Indianapolis. While I did not attend the game, I was invited to be a part of the 17th annual All-Star breakfast sponsored by Athletes in Action. Despite six inches of snow the night before, I was able to attend along with about 800 others to hear some inspirational talk and testimony from players and other affiliated with the game.

Sage Steele, former host of ESPN Sports Center was the host. She did a great job interviewing Olympic gymnast Kim Anthony and former Indiana Pacer Dale Davis, both giving a testimony of how God is using them . But the personal touch for me came when she introduced Cody Zeller, former IU basketball star, and now a member of the professional New Orleans Pelicans. It was personal for me because I have been acquainted with the Zeller family in the past. Steve and Lori Zeller are from Washington, Indiana. They raised three sons. All three were tops in their class academically, all three were named Mr. Basketball in Indiana their senior year, and all three played at a Division I university. Also, all three played professional basketball in the NBA. I was first acquainted with the Zellers through their oldest son Luke when he played for Notre Dame. He was a guest on Face to Face. Later, I met Steve and Lori in their home and did an interview with them to promote their book, "Raising Boys the Zeller Way."

Their youngest son, Cody, played at Indiana University. After college, he was the fourth pick in the 2013 NBA draft, chosen by the then-Charlotte Bobcats. While in Charlotte, he became friends with, and was mentored by five time NBA all star, Bobby Jones. Jones played most of his pro career with the Philadelphia 76ers after a fine career at the University of North Carolina. He now lives in Charlotte. As a side note, I had the opportunity to have Jones on Face to Face many years ago when he was the head coach at Charlotte Christian high school. During Cody's playing days in Charlotte, Jones personally took an interest in him to help him grow spiritually.

At the breakfast, Jones was on hand to present the special Bobby Jones award to his personal friend, Cody Zeller. for the way he exemplifies the Christian life on and off the court. No one can deny the testimony of Bobby Jones. At the end of the breakfast, Jones gave a personal invitation to anyone in the audience who had never accepted Christ as their Savior to make this the day for that to happen.

The final presentation was the Jerry Colangelo award given to Jim Morris, former Vice President of the Indiana Pacers in charge of promotions. Colangelo, the former owner of the Phoenix Suns as

well as a number of other sports teams in the Phoenix area was on hand to personally make the presentation, and give his personal testimony.

I was not so much starstruck by all these celebrities as I was encouraged that Christ is indeed alive and well in the sports world. At Face to Face, part of our long-standing goal is to make you aware of how God is working. There is a lot of sports coverage in today's world, but very little of it declares how God continues to change lives. For over thirty years, God has blessed me by allowing me to meet outstanding Christian athletes.

By the time you read this, I will have returned from baseball spring training in Arizona. I will meet with a number of Christian baseball players and be a part of a Bible study with major league umpires led by retired major league umpire, Ted Barrett.

Thank you for all the prayers and donations that you contribute to make this happen. I am happy to say that I continue to be healthy and I look forward to what God has planned for me in the days to come.

I hope you are blessed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Rust". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Tom Rust