

# Greece News

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## NBA Assistant Coaches Program

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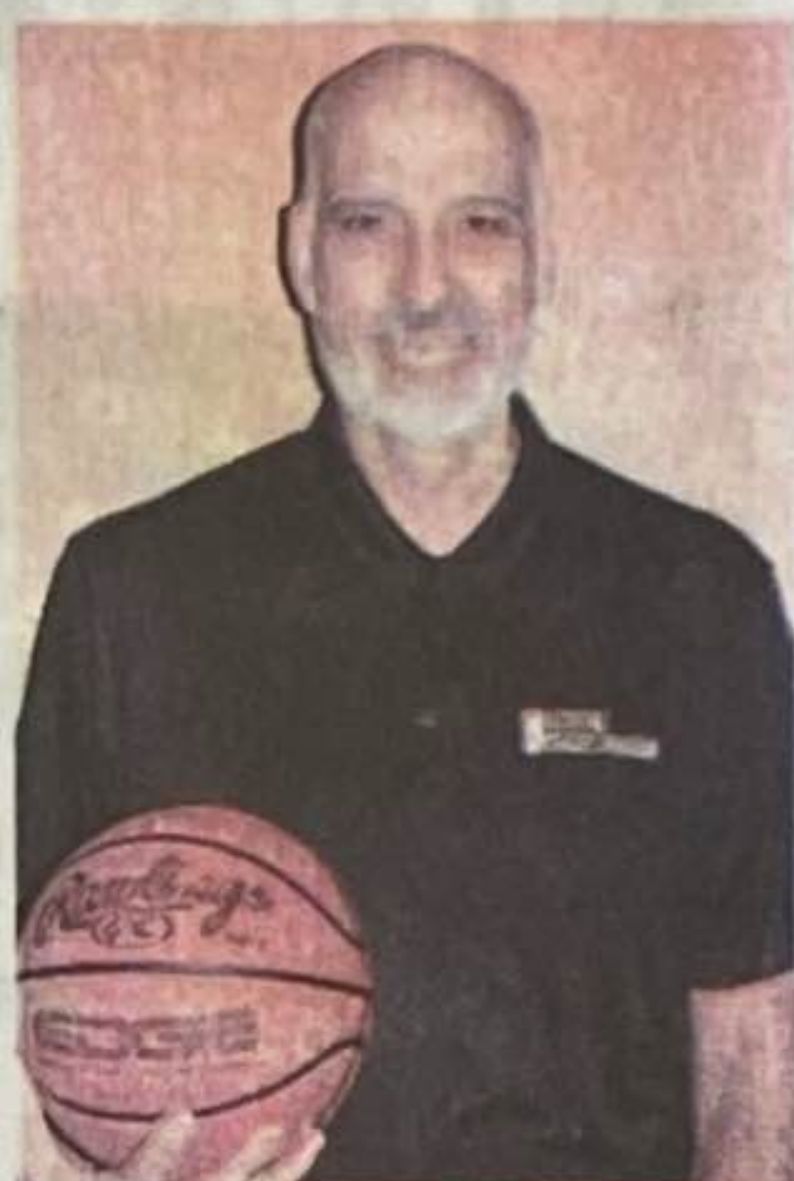
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## Greece Resident Participates in NBA Assistant Coaches Program

by Tami Raco

Daniel Dunne, a 30-year Greece resident, started playing basketball when he was 14 years old. His lifelong love of the sport led to his dream of participating in the famous NBA Assistant Coaches Program. The program helps retired NBA, WNBA and G League players pursue coaching opportunities, at various levels, by assisting former players in their transition into coaching careers. The program began in 1989, and has helped more than 200 retired professional basketball players with potential coaching careers.



Dan Dunne

Dunne was selected for this opportunity based on his qualifications from his extensive lifelong basketball experience and successes. His start in basketball began on Long Island when he was an 8th grader struggling to pass math. His math teacher, who was also the boys basketball coach, said to the 6 foot 4 inches, 14 year old Dunne, "If you want to pass math you need to play basketball." Dunne took the opportunity to pass math and played for the first time. The following year he was playing varsity. Due to his passion, and emerging talents in basketball, Dunne's father enrolled him to participate in a summer basketball camp at Long Island Lutheran. This led him to switching schools that fall, in his sophomore year, to play for Long Island Lutheran, which was advanced both academically, and in basketball.

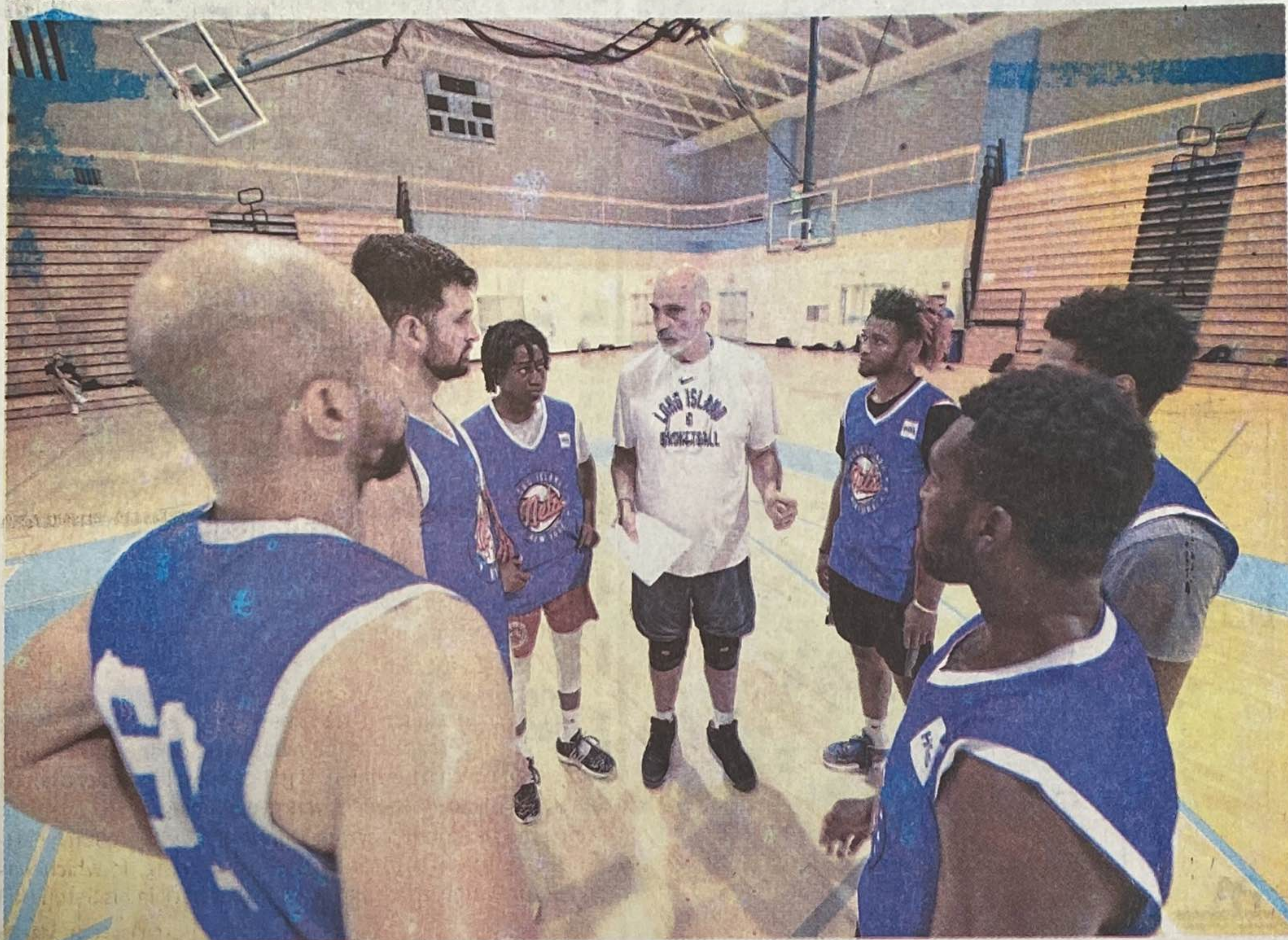
The move then brought Dunne a full scholarship to attend college and play basketball at Seton Hall. He was 6 foot 10 inches when he graduated high school. Dunne completed college at Seton Hall with his double major in History and American studies. He went on to pursue his Masters degree that brought him to Western New York when he was offered the opportunity to teach, play and coach while attending Niagara University. "I fell in love with Western New York once I saw it," he said. "It was amazing to see the horses, deer and wide open areas and just how friendly the people were here."

The multi-faceted training program is designed to provide retired players experiences in hands-on coaching, scouting, software training and professional development, so that they can go on to be a successful coach at the highest level. "It basically teaches the nuts and bolts needed to be a NBA or G League Assistant Coach," Dunne said.

Dunne was selected as one of four observers in the 2021 program. He was the oldest participant in the group by twenty years and the only one from New York. "I was the geezer of the group," he chuckled.

Dunne's basketball career led him to play five seasons profes-

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Dan Dunne at the Long Island Nets Open Tryout, this past September at C.W. Post College on Long Island.

Photo by Jennifer Voce

# Assistant Coaches Program

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sionally in Puerto Rico. His team won the Superior Basketball League Championship in 1978, and Dunne was named to their Olympic Team in 1980. He also played professionally in Australia. Dunne settled in the Rochester area where he worked as a Social Studies teacher for Rochester City Schools from 1989-2019 at Monroe Middle School. He married and moved to Greece to raise two daughters here. "I liked Greece because it is close to everything," he said.

During his 30-year teaching career, Dunne continued with his basketball passion coaching all ages, from pre-teen girls to men's professional. "The love of coaching is like a virus, once you get it you can't get rid of it." His coaching experiences include head varsity coach for girls at Monroe High School, coaching his daughter's AAU team Rochester Revolution, college level at Niagara University, Molloy College, and Brockport State, NBA G/D League level, as well as professionally at the Canadian National Basketball Draft and as Assistant Coach with the Rochester Razorsharks.

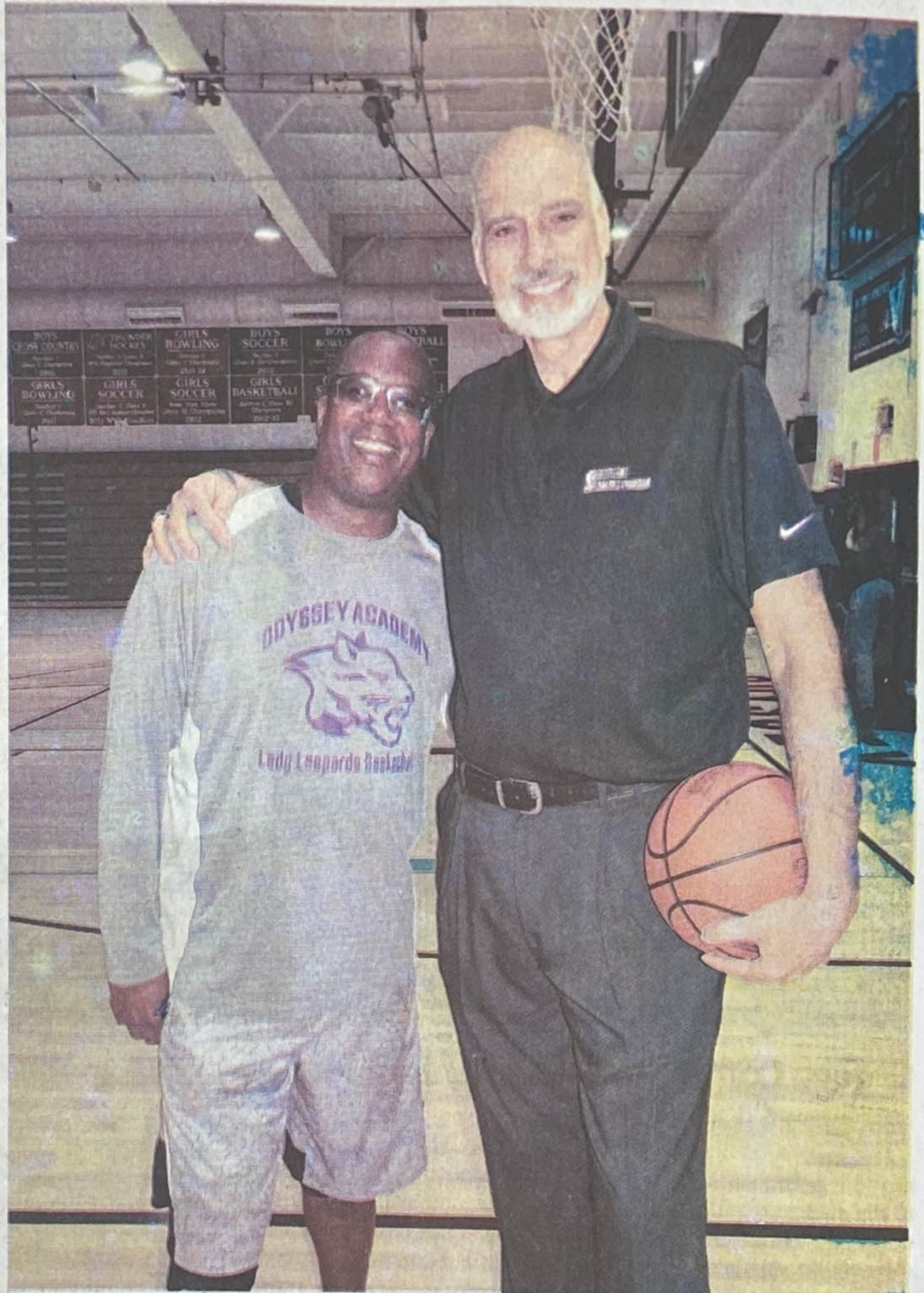


In 1992 Dunne started a player agency called Full Court International. In this capacity he works as a certified player representative, assisting with development, coaching and scouting. He became the Regional Scout for the Harlem Globe Trotters and pro teams in Puerto Rico, Canada, and Saudi Arabia.

Despite all of Dunne's years and experiences in coaching, the NBA Assistant Coaches program was a once in a lifetime experience for him. He describes the insight and skills received participating in this program as "intense." He said coaching is, "Like an iceberg 30% visible and 70% you can't see because it's un-

derwater." Dunne explained his experience in the NBA Assistant Coaches Training Program as intimidating, shocking and the ultimate level of coaching training. "I got to see all the hats a coach of that level has to wear and it was eye opening."

During the six month program, Dunne worked with Butch Carter who leads the training and met Patrick Ewing, Jr. which was nostalgic for Dunne, as he played his father back in his Seton Hall



**Dan Dunne, right, coached Curtis Rapp Birthwright, left, at SUNY Brockport '87-'88 season. Birthwright teaches at John Walton Spencer School #16, and coaches the girls varsity basketball team at Greece Odyssey Academy. Photo by Karen Fien**