

*Butler's Big Dance**The Team, The Tournament, and Basketball Fever*

By Susan S. Neville

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. Pp. xx, [90]. Illustrations. Paperbound, \$14.95.)

The last two springs have come into Indiana riding a bright blue Butler basketball bus. You probably feel you have read the Butler story told in every hue possible, but you haven't. You have primarily read sports writers, people like me. In this book, Susan S. Neville, a native Hoosier and a professor of creative writing at Butler, elevates the chronicle to new heights.

Neville is the author of four books, none of which likely brightens any sports library. She and others taught classes, as usual, when things were not at all usual on the small Indianapolis university's campus—when college basketball's 2010 Final Four phenomenon was played out about five miles from campus, and hitherto bit player Butler was its surprise star.

At just about the time Ms. Neville's book was coming into bookstores extending once-in-a-lifetime adoration to Butler's 2010 tournament run, the 2011 Bulldogs were reastounding the college basketball world by making a second straight run all the way to the national championship game. Hers surely was, at worst, a merry melancholy when the second lightning strike emanated from her campus before she had properly introduced us to, for example, Pam, the mailroom operator whose motherly charm blossomed in the

maelstrom of 2010. Pam talked of rushing out t-shirts "by the ones and twelves and hundreds . . . to New York, South Carolina, Alaska, Texas, Florida, overseas – the most insane thing I ever saw in my life" (p. 24). This was a lady who knew every player, and who, in her hyperactivity, told Ms. Neville: "We can never have another ride like this year. It's incredible that you only get to bloom for one season" (p. 24). Everyone knew this truth, and everyone was wrong. So the magic that Neville captured became a two-time wonder, no less "mythopoetic" (her perfect descriptive word) than the time before.

The author writes from within a rare college campus where students—and even some players—actually went to class the day of the national championship game; where a professor – during the Syracuse game that started the '10 Bulldogs down their path to the Sweet Sixteen – had a group of students in a seminar room "studying Althusser's essay 'Ideology of the Ideological State Apparatus'" (p. 15). At the class break, the professor realized the game would be in its second half, so the group stopped to watch it to the end, then regathered and pondered, in light of the essay and what they had seen during the break, "how does college basketball help to reproduce culture, how does it serve as an ideological appa-

ratus that helps us reproduce the exploitation and power dynamics of capitalism?" (p. 18)

Neville is a Hoosier. She spent some adult time in New Castle, when Steve Alford mania was in flower. She followed Indiana University's tournament successes, before and during Alford's years there. She absorbed Butler's past as the daughter of a BU alumnus, and writes appreciatively of the "Butler Way," with its Tony Hinkle roots, Barry Collier regeneration, and Brad Stevens full-flowering. She quotes an unidentified alumna: "I cried when they went to the Final Four, after they beat Kansas State ... (and) I cried after the championship game." Butler lost that game to Duke, when Gordon Hayward's potentially game-winning three-point shot bounced off the backboard and rim. "I was so sad, but after walking home from Lucas Oil (Stadium) I got over it. After I saw how close that last shot had been on ESPN, I flipped out again. Day to day, every once in a while, it hits me" (p. 26).

In the eye of so happy and unforeseeable a hurricane, a little overstatement isn't sinful, but: "Before

this tournament, there were two big moments in Indiana basketball. The first was in 1954 when Milan upset Muncie Central. The second was in 1955 when Oscar Robertson led Crispus Attucks to the state title. This tournament is now number three" (p. 36). Whoa! Five national championship banners that wave in Bloomington, and a high school legacy that stretches from Homer Stonebraker through Fuzzy Vandivier, Johnny Wooden, Bill Garrett, Rick Mount, George McGinnis, and Damon Bailey, among others, would suggest that Hoosierland's "big moment" basketball list is a lot longer than that. But if this be blasphemy, professor, make the most of it, while border-to-border Indiana is still echoing with chants of "Go, Blue!"

BOB HAMMEL was an Indiana sports writer for forty-two years, the last thirty in Bloomington. He covered twenty-three NCAA Final Four tournaments, including those won by Indiana University in 1976, '81 and '87. He is the author or co-author of eleven books, eight of them on IU or Indiana high school basketball.



Lessons in Likeness

Portrait Painters in Kentucky and the Ohio River Valley, 1802-1920

By Estill Curtis Pennington

(Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010. Pp. xxiii, 252. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00.)

This book might well have been entitled *Painting Life in the Interior South*, so far (and so successfully) does it

range beyond Kentucky portraiture. Up until now, much more effort has been spent on centers of artistic pro-