



A big smile on the face of Corinne Denari (Casey), riding the bus with her students during the Miracle Milan years 1953-54.

Corinne Denari Casey

She witnessed and was part of Indiana basketball history.
The Milan Miracle 1954 Indiana State Basketball Champions

As told by her eldest son,
Bob Casey Jr. after a visit
to The Hoosier Gym

Corinne Denari was born in New York City in 1929 and moved to the east side of Indianapolis in 1942. She attended Howe High School and then Indiana University. Prior to graduation from IU in 1952, the Superintendent of the Milan, IN schools visited IU and interviewed her for a job at Milan High School. She accepted a position as the English teacher and school librarian at a salary of \$2300.00 per year.

Corinne did not own a car when she worked at Milan. She had rented a room with a hotplate in a funeral home. Her dad and brother Bob (who later became the basketball coach at Westfield, IN HS and whose son Chris is the play-by-play announcer of the Indiana Pacers on Fox Sports Network) drove her there from Indianapolis to move in. Bob said to her, “You are really not going to stay here are you?” During her time at



**Bobby Plump signing
"I'll Make It" Shirts for The
Hoosier Gym 30th
Anniversary Celebration**



**Roger Schroeder on his visit
to The Hoosier Gym**

Milan HS, she also lived for a time in nearby Moore's Hill, in an apartment above a hardware store. Eventually the new business teacher of the school, Barbara, moved in to room with her. Corinne contracted Hepatitis-C from drinking well water there. Eventually, the school Superintendent convinced a local lady named Mrs. Thompson to take in Corinne as a boarder. Mrs. Thompson was initially reluctant, but she and Corinne soon became good friends.

Corinne took a Greyhound bus on visits to Indianapolis to visit her family. When she did, the Superintendent gave her a list of items to purchase at a school supply store in Indianapolis.

Corinne was a big supporter of the basketball team and came to love "the boys" as she called them even decades later. She was the sponsor of the cheerleaders at Milan, and even went to Cincinnati to purchase Indian-style moccasins for the girls.

Corrine was a beautiful young woman from the "big city," and she caught the eye and the interest of several men in town, including one senior on the team who asked her out. When she demurred, not in the least because of the propriety of a student-teacher relationship, he said, "No one will know." She replied, "I will know."

Corinne went to all the games, often riding a bus full of students. She attended the 1954 "Miracle Milan" championship game at Hinkle Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

Prior to the big win, most of the team members were not planning on attending college. Once they became champions, several were offered college basketball scholarships. The Milan HS principal then asked Corinne to put together a speech class to strengthen the players' verbal communication skills to enhance their performance in college.

Corinne left Milan in 1955 to accept a teaching position at School #34 on Wade Street in the Indianapolis Public School system. It came with a \$1000.00 raise and she could live at home with her parents to save money. She was sad to leave Milan. She loved it here and had many friends who also loved her.



The State Champs 1954 water tower has been restored



Bobby Plump with fellow Hall of Famer Sam Alford & Hall of Fame Director Chris May on a tour of The Hoosier Gym

At School #34 she taught across the hall from a single young teacher named Bob Casey, a native of the Fountain Square area of Indianapolis who had gone to Butler on the GI Bill after service in the Army. After a whirlwind romance, they married in October 1956. Corinne had been transferred to School #69 at 34th and Keystone when she and Bob got engaged per school system policy (Bob remained at #34). She had four children from 1957 – 1962.

In the decades after she left Milan, she was active in the Milan legacy, often attending class reunions (many at the old Railroad Inn and later at The Reservation restaurant) and events related to



The Trophy Presentation

Photo courtesy Milan 54 Museum

the championship season. When she was the Milan librarian, she individually typed each reference card and kept them in a metal card box, which she later donated to the championship



**Roger Schroeder's State
Championship Ring**

museum in Milan. In Indianapolis, she often visited with Bobby Plump, hero of the championship game, at his restaurant, Plump's Last Shot and his office. She was saddened when team member Ronnie Truitt passed away from cancer in Houston. Ironically, another team member, Roger Schroeder, was a teacher and coach at John Marshall HS in Indianapolis, when Corinne's children attended there in the 1970s. Corinne very much respected the Milan coach, Marvin Wood, and often pointed out the differences between his persona and style and those of coach Norman Dale as portrayed in the movie by Gene Hackman. She and Bob attended his funeral in Morristown, IN several years ago.

Corinne passed away unexpectedly at home at the age of 80 in November 2009. She had remained a basketball fan her entire life – the Indiana Pacers and IU were favorites. But she never lost her love for her Milan years and spoke of them often, especially when her children and grandchildren discussed the movie *Hoosiers*. They teased her about Barbara Hershey's character being based on her. She always laughed at that, and quickly pointed out the differences between the real "Miracle Milan" events that she experienced first-hand and the movie events.