

From: Janelle Steinberg  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2011 2:46 PM  
To: Drake, Vicki; Stephens, Helena; Davidson, Don  
Cc: Janelle Steinberg  
Subject: My son John Steinberg

My son John was born in Bellevue in 1994. We have been Bellevue residents for the past 26 years, in the Bridle Trails area. When John was a very young boy, he met a Bellevue employee, Rudy Thomas whom you all know. Rudy became and still is a lifelong mentor to John and many of the young people in Bellevue.

This past summer, John decided to write his college essay on Rudy and the impact he has had on John's life. John was the Bellevue student Athlete of the year in 2010, is a 4.0 student and will be playing basketball in college. He is applying to 4 colleges; the top of the list right now is the University of Chicago where he has been given an offer to play on the team and admissions acceptance. Needless to say, John has made a mark for himself and will continue to do so. We as a family feel that Rudy has been the most influential and inspirational person John has known outside of his family in his young life.

I have attached his college essay for you all to read and hopefully enjoy. I always say "it's the little things we do that matter most." I would guess Rudy would say that John's success is John's doing, and that is true. However, his support of John for the last 10 years has changed John's life forever.

Thank you for keeping Rudy in the hearts and minds of the young people in Bellevue. He is truly one of a kind.

Sincerely,

Janelle



John Steinberg

### Rudy Thomas

Sometimes it is the simplest statement that has the greatest impact on our lives. I was merely seven years old when I heard the words that still inspire me today.

Rudy Thomas, a local community center manager, gave me the motivation to achieve all I can on the court and in the classroom. To this day, I can see him sitting on the gym bleachers with a basketball in his right hand and whistle in his left. "Do what you love to practice" was the phrase that began shaping who I have become.

Rudy grew up on the streets of New York in the 1940's. He had the gifts of being strong, tall, and athletic. These eventually landed him a basketball scholarship to Western Washington University. He continued his career with the Harlem Globetrotters for the next seven years. He now resides in Bellevue, Washington running basketball camps for young children, teaching them how to love the game.

When I was in fourth grade, basketball became my number one priority to the extent that I began to neglect my schoolwork. Rudy noticed that I was in the gym all the time and became suspicious. He called me into his office and asked me how my studies were coming along. When he figured out that I was practicing more than studying, he said, "School work always comes first, no exceptions." He put basketball into perspective, telling me how it was only a game but it's your education that will get you far in life. To this day my goal is to excel in the classroom.

Rudy and I remain very close and talk about my life and decisions on a frequent basis. He has taught me many life lessons and has become my friend in the process. I will always remember the kindness he treated me with when I first met him-he is a true role model.

Soon enough Rudy will pass, but there will always be a glimmer of him left in this world; me. His personality and qualities have rubbed off onto me, and because of this he will continue to help and inspire the community and world. When I coach younger kids I teach them not just how to play the game but how to excel outside of the game. I emphasize the power of teamwork, communication, and loyalty; I draw parallels between a motion offense and a group science project. This is the essence of Rudy.

This perspective I have developed will be an asset that will serve me well in college and beyond. I know how to be a positive member of a community and how to encourage others to be the same.

Rudy has not only been a great role model but also a great friend and I am forever indebted to him for the help and advice he has given me. As I head off to college I will remember his lessons and continue to “do what I love practicing”.