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Reggie Miller mural just one of many personal connections

By Andrew Crowley acrowley@reporter-times.com Oct 23, 2018

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Andrew Crowley was a member of Roy Hibbert's fan section, Area 55 for two seasons: 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. In both seasons he received a perfect attendance award. He is shown holding a perfect attendance award after the mid-season awards ceremony decked out in Pacers gear.

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Courtesy photo.

When the Reggie Miller mural was announced last month, complete with the address of the location — 127 E. Michigan St. — I thought nothing of it. It sounded vaguely familiar, but that's it. I just assumed it was the DLZ building, located at the corner of Delaware and Maryland Streets.

It wasn't until earlier this month that I realized my error when I saw photos of the mural in progress on social media. Something about the building was very familiar and when I noticed the Social Security Administration building in the background. That's when I knew for sure: it was the former location of my mother's law firm. They moved out of the building within the last two years and returned to Market Square Center, or as it's popularly known as, the Gold Building.

It was a surreal moment for me, I'd spent a fair share of time in the building, whether it was accompanying my mother in to work on the weekend, stopping by to have lunch with her and working there. I spent the summer of 2009 working there as a paid intern. I scanned medical records, made deliveries to other law firms or dropped off items at the court.

Before I started my job at The Reporter-Times, I worked on doing discovery for several weeks. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that a mural of one of all-time favorite players for my favorite sports team would grace the building I once worked.

It's silly, but it makes me feel more connected to the team as a whole. Humans, as a rule love to find patterns in things, create something out of nothing, put some constraints and boundaries on a chaotic world. It's why we can look at an outlet and see a human face. Psychologists call it the principles of grouping. It's a concept I was introduced to at Claude Cookman's visual communication class as a sophomore at Indiana University.

My time at IU overlapped briefly with current Pacer, Victor Oladipo. He was a freshman when I was a senior. I never encountered him during my time on campus, but my friend Xing did. Like Oladipo, she was a Telecom major and she ran into him in the telecom building. He was nice enough to pose for a photo with her outside of it. That giving side of Oladipo is something that's continued in his NBA career. After the Pacers' first game of the regular season, he could be seen signing autographs and interacting with fans on his way to the locker room.

Former Pacer Lance Stephenson attended the same high school as my maternal grandmother: Abraham Lincoln High School in Brooklyn. When I met him at a signing a number of years ago, I informed him of this fact, which seemed to amuse him. It's still funny to me to imagine my grandmother — an old Italian lady with a striking resemblance physically and vocally to Sophia Petrillo on "The Golden Girls" — sharing an alma mater with an NBA player. And much to my amusement, the Rail Splitters, as the sports teams at Abraham Lincoln are known, have borrowed the Purdue University train logo for their own use.

Those Brooklyn/Pacers connections run deep. My mother, as a student at St. Joseph's College in Brooklyn, once played a pickup game of hoops with Kathy Mullin, sister of Chris Mullin, who played for the Pacers from 1997 to 2000. Like my mother, Kathy was at St. Joseph's College to become a nurse. My cousin Frank attended Xaverian high school with Chris Mullin, after the latter transferred from Power Memorial.

These connections don't really add up to much of anything, but it's nice to feel connected to a team I love in some way beyond pure fandom. But that's just how my mind works. I think that speaks to a deeper desire that most everyone has: that of wanting to belong and to be a part of a group.

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