

SPORTS

Duckworth: Describe Him In One Word

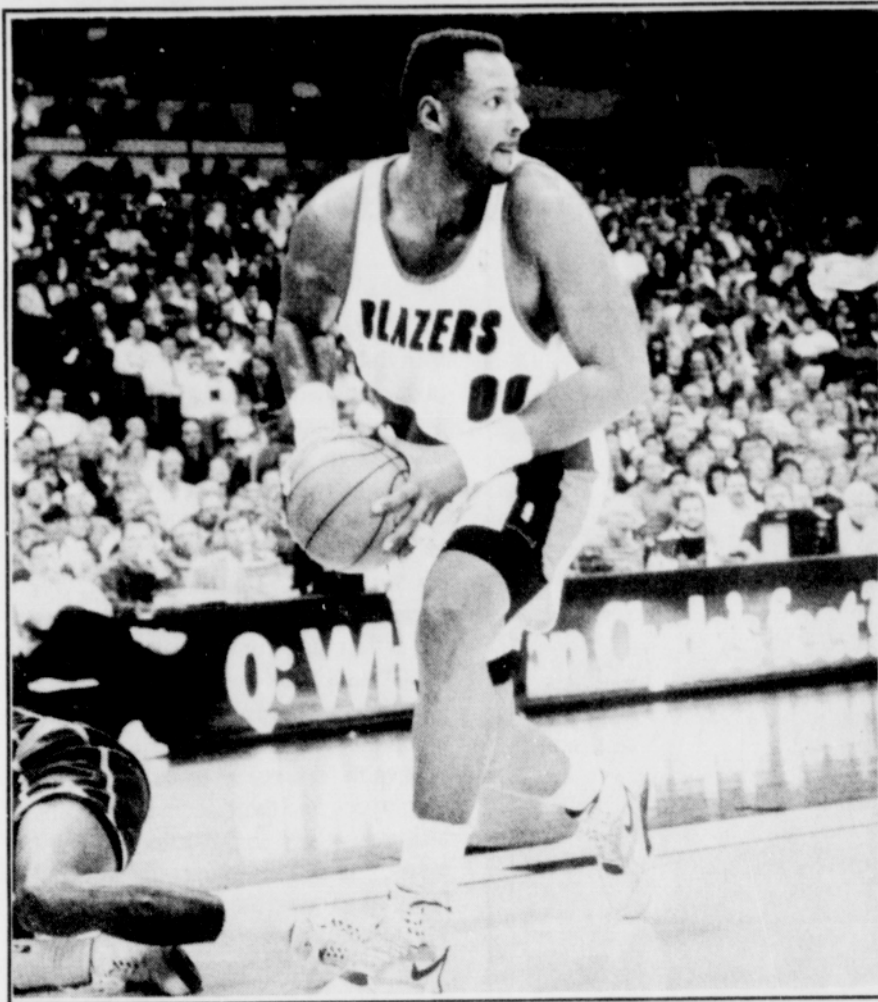
BY BILL BARBER

A college psychology professor once asked each of the students in his class to describe their entire personality in one word. At first, his request seemed more trivial than serious. Actually, it turned out to be a lot more difficult for most students than they originally thought. The first impulse is to say something trite or flippant. Take a minute to think of how you would describe yourself in one word.

When Kevin Duckworth was asked to describe himself, he chose the word "Misunderstood." It seemed like an intriguing choice of words. To try to get an understanding of Duckworth, you have to go back to the early years. Back to the South Side of Chicago. Duckworth will tell you, Dolton Illinois is the kind of place where "Nobody gives you anything... You have to work it out on your own."

Being 6'4" in the eighth grade, and the tallest of four kids means you usually don't have to deal with hand-me-downs. "I grew four inches over the summer and entered (Thorndridge) high school at 6'8". Duck said. After being cut as a freshman, Kevin played on the varsity basketball team as a sophomore. After a toe operation in his junior year, he averaged 20 points a game as a senior at Thornridge. The high school teams always had winning seasons, but a winning team had to be built at Eastern Illinois University. Rick Samuels, who is still the head basketball coach for the EIU Panthers, recruited Duckworth for over a year. "In my junior year I received letters from every major college I had ever heard of," explained Duckworth. He wanted to make clear to kids going through the recruiting process that "it is a different story from getting letters and coaches actually coming to watch you practice. I always let the colleges go through my high school coach, because I always felt he had the better judgement. When somebody like Georgetown would write me a letter my high school coach would break it down to me that it doesn't always mean that they are interested in me as a person; they may be just trying to fill a position." Eastern Illinois came to watch Duckworth practice and play the game. "They were interested in seeing that I got an education and also offered tutoring if it was needed to get the best education I could while I was trying to fulfill my basketball goals. That personal interest Coach Samuels took in Duck paid off. Kevin, who was recruited by every major college in the country, visited only one school. When you ask if he ever regretted not going to a bigger school, you have to realize, Kevin is one of those lucky people who can say "I don't regret anything in my life. I went to a smaller school because it was close to home. I didn't really like being around a lot of people."

Kevin Duckworth would be described by some as a private man off the court. He is single, but he doesn't



Kevin Duckworth

photo by Veronica Green

live alone. Even when he comes home late from "work," Mercedes, Benz and Porsche (a German Shepherd and two Rottweilers) are there to welcome him home. Not everybody knows Duck is a skilled woodcrafter. Among other things, he has designed his own furniture. The lifelong fisherman offered three pieces of good-natured advice on salmon fishing: "The first thing you have to understand is that you might have to leave without a fish, second is to use the proper reel, and third is to take along somebody who knows what they're doing." Duckworth will freely admit he didn't know anything about Portland when he was traded from San Antonio in exchange for Walter Berry on December 18, 1986. Until that time he was content to fish for catfish and bass. When he found out about the Columbia River Sturgeon, he finally had the opportunity to fish for something a little more his size. In fact, he has caught sturgeon twice his size. That must make for a tall (but true) fish story back in Illinois.

Back in Illinois, Duckworth is also known for giving something back to the game, by hosting his "Big Man's Basketball Camp" at EIU, where he was All-Conference MVP. In fact, when he went back for the homecoming football game this last fall the school honored him at halftime by retiring his number. "I'm young right now," Duckworth observed, "but I am looking forward to the retirement of it. People always think this is so much glamore and it's so terrific. It is the most stressful thing I have ever seen in my life. When I retire I'd like to finish up my last 20 hours in Industrial Technology

and get a degree."

After basketball season in his senior year, Duck made the decision to drop his classes and go to several camps in pursuit of an NBA career. "I wasn't going to be drafted" he said, "I had to go out and prove myself. I was invited to Portsmouth, Va. I did well there and they invited me to Hawaii. When I did well there too, they invited me to the Chicago Pre-draft. So then I was drafted."

In the 1987-88 season when Duckworth was picked as the NBA's Most Improved Player his shooting percentage was .496. Back then, coach Mike Schuler fed the ball inside a lot more. In the last few games, Duck has been hitting .500! (3 for 6 against Washington & 6 for 12 against Chicago) The total points might not be there, but with the team shooting percentage way under 50%, Duck is starting to look pretty good. Most of the fans who watch the game closely have seen the Duck stop two defenders as a Blazer thunders through the paint to deliver a killer dunk. Micheal Jordan has embarrassed every Center in the league coming right down the middle for his patented dunk shot. He only did it to Duckworth once last Friday! That shows respect.

Duckworth makes it clear he has a modest understanding of what it means to be a public figure in the NBA "If I had a hero, I'd rather talk to them one on one than ask for an autograph. It's more significant than an autograph if you can learn about them as a person." That's not hard to understand. Kevin Duckworth, like so many of the Blazers, is a good basketball player and a good man. Duck, you're going to have to find a new word.

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

Nostalgia: Don't Leave Home Without It, I

I can best describe "nostalgia" as a wistful urge to return to the *good old days*. Some would say it is a blatant effort to recall all the pleasant memories and tune out all the bad ones. In any case, it is the holiday season and like many of us, I reminisce. Also, this may satisfy some readers who write, "you cover a lot of subjects -- What is your background?"

While I'm indulging in this exercise in fond recall, it would be well to organize my thoughts into three separate presentations (articles) that represent that number of distinct phases of the formative years (to age 21). Though done in broad brush-strokes, I think the accounts may be useful for they reflect the different social and economic divisions in the *black experience* -- as compartmentalized in the old days as now; the difference being that then there was an overriding hope, belief and drive at every level to attain *equality* in the American system (to be achieved, primarily, by educational and an appeal to the goodwill and fairness of the general population). What can I say?

Taking this first phase of our account to age 12, it is seen that the social and economic structure of what we term a typical "Middle Class Black Family" has not changed at all since the date of my birth in 1922. How "middle class" was it? My birth certificate reads "Race of father, WHITE - Race of mother WHITE"! In later years, my inquiry of the St. Louis "Barnes Children's Hospital" -- the place to be born in St. Louis -- elicited the reply, "We had very few Negroes admitted at the time, mostly from the professional class. What probably happened is that office staff completed the paper work within a justifiable assumption."

Now, for the "pleasant memories" which lasted until age 12 when the whole structure fell apart. My grandfather, a railway mail clerk, headed the household, domiciled in the *right* neighborhood on the west side of the city, an island surrounded by whites (Irish, Jews, Italians and Germans) -- and a few black professionals. My mother and aunt were teachers, but my mother had to switch to a job at the Federal Reserve Bank when she married -- the St. Louis School System, like others in the middle south, had the rule that married women could not teach at elementary schools (?). The family was rounded out by two old maid cousins of my grandfather who monitored yours truly, did the cooking and laundry and kept track of the household accounts.

I suppose one could say that in a sense they were servants, but *grandpa* took care of them very well with cash monthly stipends, clothing allowances and yearly paid vacation trips to Seattle where they had relatives. As you might gather from my writings, there is no way you can overestimate the value of having an older generation in the same household with children. It is a social matrix that provides moral direction, social graces, discipline and a sense of *self*, and of belonging to a group in which one has a place (and they READ and TALK to you from day one). This is why when I evaluate or propose education programs, I insist that they are simply not going to work at the level we wish until a similar structure is built in if there is no functioning family.

My father had been given his *walking papers* when I was age 2, so my grandfather took over this role; from fishing trips and conversation-filled walks in the park to going along with him to his Rod and Gun Club where I was occasionally allowed to dispatch those *pie plate* targets used in skeet and trap shooting. He belonged to a number of such organizations of black professionals such that one got an idea of "acceptable" careers and "advancing the race." Most of these people were lawyers, doctors, teachers, and upper echelon postal employees -- and graduates of traditional Black Colleges. The pullman porters and recaps had their own organizations as did the waiters and bartenders. But all were extremely community conscious, promoting charities and forming investment groups that financed businesses and built housing.

In the ethnically divided neighborhood only the children "mixed" (despite segregated schools) and among the adults there were no social exchanges or visits. We kids played together and sang together and fought together. The big event every evening just before dark was to run to meet the *lamp lighter* who made his rounds to light the gas street lamps. He must have seemed like the *Pied Piper of Hamelin* with the scores of kids following him from block to block. Then it was back to the house to do homework or just read. There was no television, of course, but there was radio with "The Shadow-Buck Rogers-Jack Armstrong-The Whistler."

All kids had their magazine subscriptions in this neighborhood, from "Boy's Life" to "Popular Mechanics," and for 3 cents a day you could RENT A BOOK at the corner drugstore. When I got to kindergarten I could read the comic strips to the other kids--now that's a Head Start! It all came to a crashing halt at age 12 and that is where we will pick up "Nostalgia" next week (the memories just as fond--Kids are resilient).

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Reinvestments in the Community

Portland Development Commission Offers Home Repair Loans In Northeast Portland To Low-Income Households

Homeowners and renters in eight Northeast Portland neighborhoods are being targeted in November with offers of low- and no-interest loans to make needed repairs before winter winds and rain set in. The loans are being offered by the Portland Development Commission (PDC), the City's urban renewal, housing and economic development agency.

Beginning Friday, November 8, in the Humboldt, Boise and Eliot neighborhoods information about the home loan program was left at each house. Additional deliveries will follow on Tuesday, November 12 in Sabin, King and Vemon neighborhoods; Monday, November

18 in Piedmont and Woodlawn neighborhoods; and Monday, November 25 in the Concordia neighborhood.

Low-income homeowners who qualify for the Home Repair Loan program receive assistance to fix plumbing, wiring, heating, roof and/or security problems in their home. Loan rates vary from 0%, 3% and 6%. For more information about qualifying for a home repair loan, contact PDC's Neighborhood Housing Preservation office at 823-3400.

Owners of rental properties may qualify for the Investor Rehabilitation Loan (IRL) Program that provides below market-interest rate loans for single and multi-family units for low-income

tenants. The program is offered in many Portland neighborhoods and provides plumbing, wiring, heating, roof and weatherization repairs. For more information about qualifying for a rental property loan, contact PDC at 823-3269.

The Home Repair Loan program is funded through a federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) administered by the Bureau of Community Development. It is available only in neighborhoods designated in need according to federal standards. The IRL program is funded by a combination of CDBG funds and private funds from area banks. Both repair loan programs are available on a first-come, first-served basis year round.

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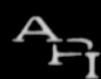
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