

FEB 26, 2019

Dear Brian,

Hearing that players and fans of this year's 2019 Iowa Girls State Tournament can buy your book, *Maynard 8 Miles*, and read about the dreams of your mother and others like her to play 6 on 6 in the 1950's makes me smile. As you write in your book, during a time when many voices said it wasn't lady-like to play competitively, the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union led by Wayne Cooley made it possible for the "Iowa girl" to compete in a week long tournament of the final Sweet Sixteen teams. While the game evolved as needed to 5 on 5 when colleges accepted competitive sports for women, reflective Iowans can thank the years of the 50's for the head start in keeping dreams alive for Iowa girls to be powerful basketball athletes. The story of your talented mother captures the spirit of those breakout years.

Thank you again, Brian, for a copy of *Maynard 8 Miles*. I enjoy reliving those exciting times as you hi-light girls basketball in the '50's and celebrate a 1956 state champion All-Star, your famous mother, Carolyn Nicholson. She represented players with dreams of being an "Iowa girl," playing on a high school team, and winning a trip to the Sweet Sixteen State Tournament. She dominated the game as an out-forward with her quick moves, fakes, and drives to the basket, with only two dribbles. Carolyn was awesome; she didn't stop and she didn't miss.

Your personal story touches my heart especially because in 1956 I was on the Garrison team playing Maynard in the finals of the state tournament. As a forward, I paced the half court line hoping Carolyn missed a shot, our strong guards could pass the ball across the court, and we'd have a chance to win over the team that had beaten us twice during the season. In that final game, Carolyn influenced me to change my hope of playing pivot position the following year to instead remain an out-forward. Her explosive drives from all over the court brought a new look to what was possible. She presented a clear picture to me and many future out-forward players of managing and owning the floor with creative moves and a variety of shots. MVP Carolyn Nicholson ruled and Maynard celebrated as 1956 state champions.

By the mid-50's the Sweet Sixteen girls tournament enthralled the entire state. Sports writers covered the Des Moines Register and Tribune front pages with pictures and stories every day of the March event. Families and fans of the players from all over the state filled the hotels. Our little town of Garrison, with a population of 450, hired security from nearby Vinton because most residents were in Des Moines for the finals. Seemingly, all the businesses of Des Moines catered to the Girls Tournament with tributes, banners, and invitations to luncheons and dinners. Just as you described for the Maynard champions of 1956, 2nd place Garrison and the other teams received baskets of flowers and corsages, taped telegrams from fans to their doors, read cards of congratulations and best wishes, granted sports interviews, and warmed up in the new Memorial Coliseum to snappy organ music playing Perry Como, Count Basie, Nelson Riddle and Elvis Presley songs of the day. Fabulous half time programs kept the fans seated. Call it the Super Bowl of Iowa!

Coaches, players, and cheer leaders traveled home in a miles long caravan to huge celebrations, adoring fans and more banquets. As underdogs, just being in the finals was cause to celebrate. Having a new burning desire and more experience, the following year in 1957, Garrison claimed the championship over Maynard by only one point. We were glad, Brian, your mother had graduated! I'm so pleased to have met you, your other family basketball star, Glenda, and to learn about Carolyn's beautiful family life from your book. Every dreamer and athlete will appreciate reading *Maynard 8 Miles*.

Sylvia Froning Mundt