

# Randy Allen

## Mountain Lion standout left his mark at IUP

By JIM LANE  
Altoona Mirror

Altoona Area High School has produced some outstanding basketball players over the years.

Doug West and Mike Iuzzolino, the Moore brothers (Billy and Johnny), Danny Fortson and Steve Taneyhill, Louie Schmitt and Jim Curry, to mention a few.

Randy Allen belongs in that company, too.

"Randy was one of the best point guards I ever coached," former Altoona coach John Swogger said. "He was very smooth on the court, a hard worker, and very disciplined."

Allen was a standout at AAHS in the late 1960s and later at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He was the final cut of the Phoenix Suns in 1974, then played two years with Athletes in Action.

Now the co-owner of a bottled water company in Carson, Calif., Allen will return to be inducted into the Blair County Sports Hall of Fame.

"I feel so honored," he said. "It means so much to have the people of Altoona remember me in this way, I'm touched by it all."

A 1970 graduate of Altoona Area High School, Allen earned first-team all-state honors for the 1969-70 season. Some of his teammates included Billy Moore, Stan Lego, Mike Nicodemus, Steve Cogan, Eric Parker, and Terry Acker.

"I have very fond memories of Altoona," Allen said. "From Garfield (elementary school) to Keith Junior High to Altoona High, there were so many wonderful things."

"I remember our team as being very tight, very cohesive. We had good chemistry. And, Coach Swogger, I had the utmost respect for his coaching and for the man he is."

Allen also has one not-so-fond memory of Altoona basketball. A last-second loss to Beaver Falls in the PIAA state quarterfinals at the Cambria County War Memorial Arena.

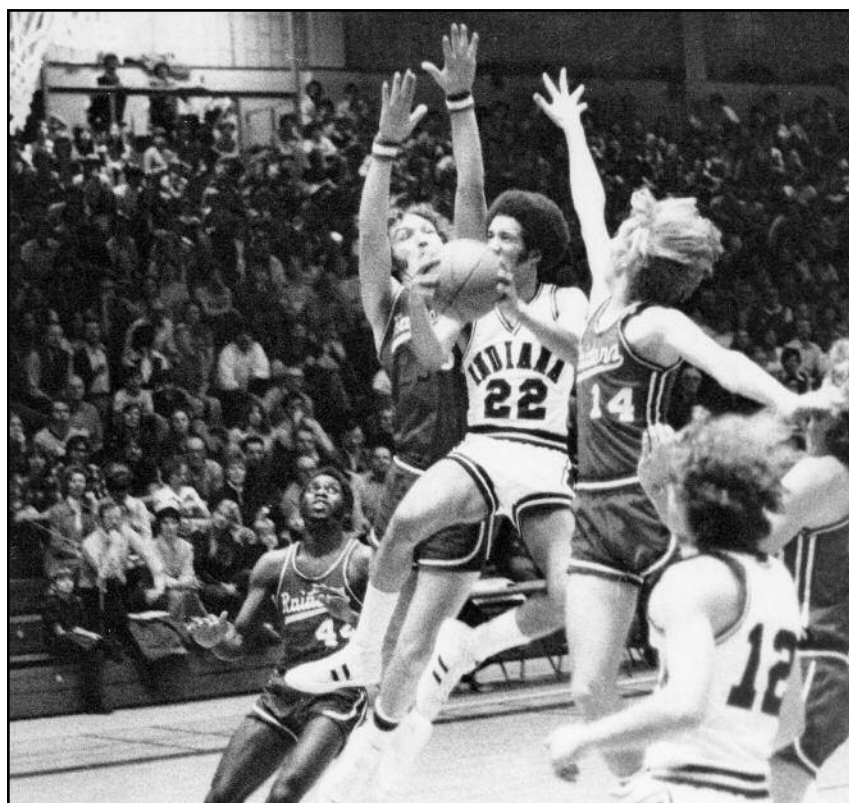
"We had a nine-point lead with about two minutes to play, and lost it," Allen recalled. "That was one of the biggest disappointments I ever had."

Following graduation from high school, Allen went on to a stellar career at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He led the Big Indians to the NAIA National Tournament in Kansas City as a senior, and earned second team NAIA All-America honors.

IUP won its first two games before losing in the quarterfinals.

Allen scored 643 points as a senior in the 1973-74 season and that still stands as IUP's single-season scoring record. He netted 1,366 points in three seasons, and that's sixth all-time, and surprising since freshmen were not eligible for the varsity then.

"I could have gone Division I," Allen said, "but I thought it was in my best interests to go to a smaller



**Randy's record-breaking career at IUP made him a fourth-round draft pick by the NBA's Phoenix Suns in 1974.**

school, and it worked out for me. I have fond memories of the whole IUP scene."

Allen was recruited by Herman Sledzik, who soon after became IUP's athletic director.

"Carl Davis took over as coach and he was a great guy," Allen noted.

While IUP was in Kansas City for the NAIA event, Allen was approached by Jerry Krause, who later became general manager of the Michael Jordan-Chicago Bulls dynasty.

"Krause was a scout for the Phoenix Suns, and he told me they were going to draft me," Allen said.

The Suns drafted Allen in the fourth round and he survived until the final cut.

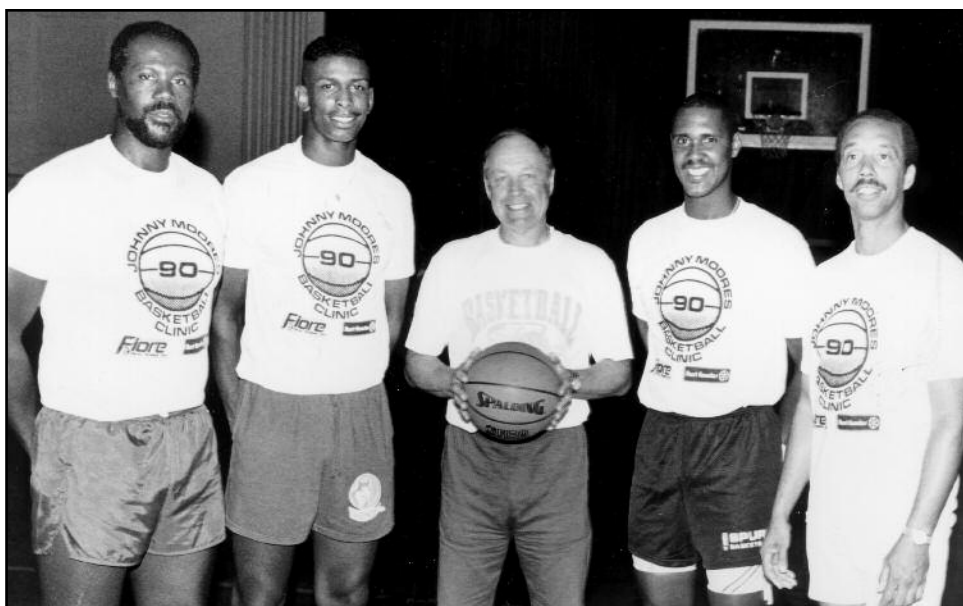
"They called me in two days before the first game, and it was very disappointing," he said. "I believe Coach (John) McCloud wanted me, but it was an executive decision. There was another guy they had to pay another year, and they kept him instead of me."

The reason Allen believes that he's right about those happenings was because the Suns invited him back the next season.

"Of all the people out there to draft, they invited me back," he said. "But two weeks after that call, they said never mind. They had made a trade for Paul Westphal, so I understood that. I didn't have an agent and nobody really helped me in that regard, "it was tough to take, but I moved on," he said.

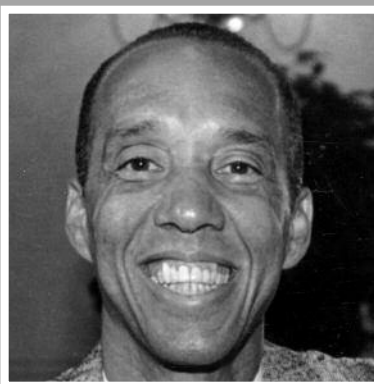
Moved on to California where he's been for 28 years. He met his wife, Sheila, there and they have three children – Cynthia, 21; Aaron 17, and Tony, 16. Aaron played for the Price High School basketball team that won the California, state championship this past season.

"After the two years with Athletes In Action, I decided I



Randy (far right) joined former coach John Swogger for a clinic at the Jewish Memorial Center several years ago. Among the special guests included, from left: Billy Moore, Doug West, and Johnny Moore.

## Randy Allen



**Sport:** Basketball

**High school:** Altoona Area, 1970.

**College:** Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Hall of Fame achievement:** Fourth-round draft pick by the NBA's Phoenix Suns; inducted into IUP Hall of Fame.

**Current occupation:** Sales.

**Current residence:** Rancho Dominguez, Calif.

needed to start prioritizing and get something more stable," he said. "I enjoyed growing up and I wanted to have my own family."

"I have no regrets about sticking around for another shot at basketball," he said. "God has blessed me with a great family."

Allen, stays close to basketball by officiating. He's worked high school games for the past seven years and hopes to get into the college ranks in a year or so.

"I love it," he said. "It puts me back where I was... that whole basketball scene."

His parents have both passed on, but Allen gets back to Pennsylvania for family reunions occasionally.

He was inducted into the IUP Hall of Fame a couple years ago and is looking forward to the Blair County enshrinement.

"That was great," he said of his IUP selection, "but this is Altoona and where it all happened for me. I'm almost speechless about it."