

THE KNIGHT COMMISSION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS PRESENTS
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12) Opening remarks by Ruth Riley, former basketball athlete, University of Notre Dame, and current player for the WNBA's Detroit Shock

RUTH RILEY: Thank you. Well, my recruiting process was a little bit different since I'm older than these two guys on my right and left here.

But I graduated in '97 from high school and that was a little bit before the cell phone era had just begun so my recruiting process was a little, a little more tame but definitely one of the most stressful times I experienced as a student-athlete.

I grew up in the country so as we speak about having the impact of a lot of the multi-media events, a lot of the traveling teams in basketball and the shoe companies and stuff like that, I have a different perspective because, without a lot of these that we're going to speak about, I probably wouldn't have had a scholarship because I grew up in the country. I went to a small school, like people in my graduating class, so a lot of the college coaches wouldn't have found me in Macy, Indiana if I hadn't played on a traveling team or an AAU program that gave me exposure.

So in that respect I guess I have a different opinion than probably a lot of people here. But I played on an AAU team which is where I got a lot of exposure. I started being recruited my sophomore year in high school and I'm a very shy person, so the recruiting process was pretty painful for me at the beginning.

It's kind of like I guess a dating game in way because all these coaches are throwing their best foot forward at you and you're trying to put your best foot forward at them because you want, you don't know exactly where you want to go and which college you desire to attend so therefore you want them to think highly of you as well and so you're a bit overwhelmed if you don't have somebody.

Like Myron said, his family were highly and my mother was highly involved in my process as well.

And if everyone was as grounded as Myron I don't think we would have too much problem with the recruiting process. But I was blessed to have my mom there to help me evaluate the schools. I knew that academics was my top priority. I needed somewhere that had both the academic and athletic package and so I actually did not attend any other official visit besides Notre Dame. I think once you find the perfect fit and you evaluate your situation, you realize which college is the best fit for you and once I was on the campus at Notre Dame I knew that it had the academics that I wanted. It had the faith-based college that I wanted and it also provided me with the athletic I guess platform that I was desiring.

And so in that respect I committed early because, like he said, the recruiting process is very tough and my mom would get frustrated at all the phone calls, you know, that would be coming in to our house all the time and she'd definitely make me stay at home just to answer the phone sometimes because she got tired of it.

But it's also hard for a high school student to tell a college no. You have these universities throwing a package at you and it's very difficult when you don't know exactly a lot about the university. So you want to make the right decision so telling

the university no when they're throwing a sales pitch at you was probably the toughest thing that I had to face because some coaches don't accept no very well.

And I thought that was the hardest part for me was narrowing down the list of schools that I wanted to attend and telling the universities that I didn't want to go there after allowing them to be on your top fifteen, top ten, I think narrowing those schools after that was very difficult for me. And so I think that these guys could give you a little more insight obviously on the recruiting process in the modern day.

But I think overall it was stressful but once you sit down and evaluate, you know, I was fortunate enough to make the right decision.

DR. TURNER: Thank you. Thank you very much. It's hard to believe five years knocks you out of the modern era.

MS. RILEY: I know.