

## **THIS IS ONEIDA LAYING DOWN TROPHIES AND CLINGING TO THE CROSS**

On a recent visit to a church in Green County, I shared that one of the things I knew about Green County was that they beat my OBI basketball team 64-59 in the Class A State Tournament at Rupp Arena in 1992. It was a thrill to play in Rupp Arena and we took the entire school to the game, but it was also disappointing to lose in our shot to win a state championship. That memory, although bittersweet, led me to think a bit about my days as an Oneida basketball player. A big part of my own Oneida student experience involved basketball, and my dad was my coach. He was a tremendous coach and now continues to coach folks through the game of life as he serves as a pastor in Florida.

With my father's help I had a solid playing career, and when my playing days were over I had a nice, little collection of trophies and hardware commemorating some accomplishments. About ten years ago, I decided it was time to part ways with those old trophies. They were only taking up space and collecting dust in our garage anyway, so I dragged those boxes to the curb on trash pickup day and they soon disappeared. As a 15-18 year old, those trophies meant more to me than they do now.

One of my favorite old hymns is The Old Rugged Cross. That great, old hymn speaks of laying our trophies down and clinging to the old rugged cross. Ultimately, what I accomplished on the basketball court means little, and what God allows me to accomplish in His kingdom work is eternal. Thankfully, as I grow older, and as those trophies mean less and less, the cross means more and more.

From time to time, one of our students will see my picture and career basketball stats displayed in our chapel and will ask me about my playing days. I must confess that I do mostly enjoy sharing some about a fun time in my life. More importantly, that question always affords me the opportunity to share how those old trophies I acquired and eventually parted ways with don't mean much of anything and that what does matter is what we do with the cross.

Now that Christmas has passed, we should be reminded that the manger birth ultimately led to the cross and the subsequent victory over sin and death. We do our best at Oneida to teach our young people to cling to the cross. All that we do must point our students to the cross and the power contained therein. Your love and support of Oneida helps us to accomplish this and fulfill our calling of "Education for Time and Eternity." May we all cling to the cross in 2017!



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