Rutgers-Newark Athletic Hall of Fame

Burt Geltzeiler
Men’s Basketball
(Inducted 1984)

He was too small to make his high school basketball so naturally he wound up as the center on one of the finest squads Rutgers-Newark ever produced. Well, that’s how super stars were born then on a basketball team that was always small in numbers but strong on talent. Look at Burt Geltzeiler’s 6-3 frame today and let somebody tell you that he was probably the best pivot man among the state’s collegians during his day and you can be excused for saying “the older they get, the better people claim they were.”

But the record speaks for itself. He was the first player in Rutgers-Newark basketball history to score 1,000 points finishing his career with 1,222. In his senior year he average 21.2 a game in an era when college scores were a good 20 points lower than they are today. And the teams against which he scored those points played national schedules. Because the R-N squad of his seniors year (12-10) against extremely strong opposition) averaged just 60 points a game, Geltzeiler, who played exclusively in the pivot with his back to the basket, found himself always double-teamed and sometimes surrounded by three opponents – and that opposition included nationally-ranked clubs from Manhattan, St. Joe’s and CCNY.

Upon his graduation in 1950, the Tri-City Hawks (now the NBA’s Atlanta franchise) drafted him. So did the United States Army. In such cases, free agency doesn’t count. He went off to the service.

Today he is the owner of Auto Body & Service Co., of Newark and lives with his wife, Barbara, and their three sons, Bruce, Barry, and Brian in West Orange.