

Rutgers-Newark Athletic Hall of Fame



Jerry Kasper

Men's Basketball

(Inducted 1985)

Back when the late Hank Bodner's Rutgers- Newark basketball teams were running light years ahead of bigger, stronger, more talented opponents by baffling them with a sophisticated zone defense and a textbook offense, the trademark of those teams was on-the-court discipline. They had no bench and sometimes they played nationally ranked teams like CCNY, NYU and St. Joe's.

But until the numbers wore them down in the second half, they scared the hell out of a lot of giants. As for people their own size, Bodner's tactics were a cinch – with the quarterback to make them go.

Enter, Jerry Kasper.

Bodner had the plan but Kasper made it work. He was also a brilliant defensive player. Today, they'd probably call him a point guard and explain how the entire offense spun off his particular skills, but the odds are it wouldn't change him at all. Jerry Kasper never thought too much about what he was doing because it was so instinctive. But he sure as hell knew why he was doing it.

He did it because, by sheer chance, fate had arranged an artistic marriage between a coach who was genius and an on-the-court leader, who had the natural talent to make the system work. For Jerry Kasper, the perfect pass was worth far more than the cheap basket – particularly when the pass drew a smile from the man on the sidelines, whose pants were forever slipping below his waistline and who, if the pass did not thread the needle, would whisper 127 words about the guard's ancestry in a voice that calculated to shatter glass.

A successful realtor, Kasper realized a life-long dream in 1974 when he earned a law degree and went into practice in East Orange. He and his wife, Esther, have a son, Michael.