They were glory years when you stop to think about the odds against it ever happening. Here was Rutgers-Newark, playing in a converted YWCA gym, dressing in a locker room that locked as though it was a front for a Saigon black market and guess who was scheduled to come to dinner?

Not NCE (NJIT to you), not Montclair State, not Kean College. Down the road was Ohio State and USC and UCLA. Forget Penn Sate and Rutgers of New Brunswick, the giant-killers of Washington Street had already put them away.

This was the volleyball team that gave a new meaning to the word incongruous. It was 1979 and here was Rutgers-Newark with a Division program – not only with it but marching toward the NCAA Final Four. They were Cinderellas with a golden spike and for four years Alherd P. Kazura was very much a part of what was happening. Twice – at UCLA and at Ball State (Ind.) he played on teams that had reached those finals. Volleyball, as every surfer knew, could not be played on a national level by people without suntans. Never – but absolutely never – had anyone taken a school from the Northeast seriously in the sport and now here came this school with the hyphenated name that nobody out there had ever heard of.

For three glorious years, Kazura was their co-captain. He was an all-East selection and a competitor in the 1978 National Sports Festival at Colorado Springs.

Now, in an age when the word scholar-athlete has become a sham in so many Division I programs, Alherd Kazura recalls its true meaning. The record shows he was the first athlete in the school’s history to represent Rutgers-Newark while attending graduate school. Today he is an operations analyst for the Cunard Lines in New York.