

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS WHO PLAYED AND STAYED

By Marc D. Allan

They come to Indianapolis from all over - everywhere from Hato Rey, D.R., to Beverly Hills, Calif. - to play for the Indianapolis Indians. They stay for days, weeks or years, all with an eye toward making the major leagues.

Some do, and have moved on to Montreal, Cincinnati, Milwaukee and elsewhere. Many don't, and they go back to where they came from. But over the years, a handful chose to make central Indiana their home.

They do so for a variety of reasons, none of which have to do with liking the weather. Many met their wives here. Some found work in Indianapolis after their playing days ended. A couple just thought it would be a good place to live.

Bill Sampen is one of those. Until 1991, when the Montreal Expos sent the Illinois native down to Indianapolis for a five-week stint, Sampen and his wife, Amy, didn't know where they would ultimately settle.

"Obviously, I was very disappointed when I got sent down," he says, "but the five weeks I spent here were probably the most enjoyable five weeks of my 10 years (in baseball). I'm not exactly sure why the baseball part was fun too, but I think it was just a combination of the factors - we liked the area, we got involved in the church. All the pieces fell together in that five weeks."

The church he's speaking of is Bethesda Baptist Church in Brownsburg - the same church that also helped attract **Kent Bottenfield** (who grew up in Portland, Oregon and later lived in Florida for 13 years), now with the Houston Astros, and **Jeff Fassero**, who's with the Chicago Cubs (and has since moved to Arizona) to live there. The pastor at the time, Don Tyler, would hold services for Indians' players.

When Sampen's career ended, he and Amy decided to live in Brownsburg. Today, he is on the church's pastoral staff, coach of the varsity baseball team at its Christian school and in charge of all the sports programs.

Like Sampen, **Ted Beard** had no ties to the area when he first joined the Indians, in 1947. Eleven years later, when his playing days were over, his father died. Beard decided Indianapolis - rather than his native Maryland - would be the right place to settle.

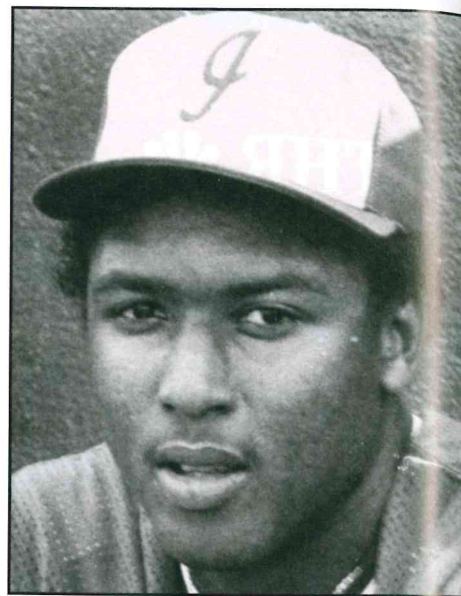
"You could find employment," says Beard, who worked for WHS Electric and then as a foreman in road construction for the state highway department before retiring.

"It was not a big adjustment" living here compared with Maryland, he says. "I adjusted real easy. I like it here."

Les Clinkscales first came here as a member of the Indians, in 1965. Clinkscales, who grew up in South Carolina, "liked the environment" and decided to stay. Then he met his wife, Anna, and "everything turned out to be just wonderful."

Clinkscales worked as a security guard for about 20 years and then worked for Delco electronics before retiring. His son, Sherard, played baseball at Purdue University and is now a scout for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. (And speaking of scouts, ex-Indian **Lenny Johnston** still lives here a couple of months of the year, when he's not working as the Minor League Coordinator for the Baltimore Orioles.)

Meeting their wives here is the most common reason players have stayed. **Skeeter Barnes** met his wife, Karen, when he took the Indians' bus to the airport. Karen was the driver. That was in 1983. They continue to call Indianapolis home and Cincinnati native Barnes is a coach for the



ALONZO POWELL

Indianapolis Indians this season.

Alonzo Powell, who's originally from San Francisco, met his wife, Selena, when he joined the Indians in 1987. She'd gone to Pike High School and Ball State University and wanted to stay near family while he played ball. Powell, who won three consecutive batting titles in Japan and spent last year with the New York Yankees' AAA affiliate, the Columbus Clippers, liked the idea.

"I like the area, I like the space, and the cost of living is a lot different from California," he says. "At the time, when you're up and down in AAA and the big leagues, you're trying to think of everything you can do to save a little bit of money."

The Powells now have three children and, as he says, "I don't plan on moving."

Dallas Williams came to Indianapolis from the other coast - he's a Brooklyn, N.Y., native - but he has a similar story to tell. Williams met his wife, Teal, in 1983, his second year with the Indians. They now have two children.

Teal was born and raised in Indianapolis and is an Indiana University graduate, and Williams says "I was not going to raise my family

in New York City. That was not going to happen."

Indianapolis seemed right.

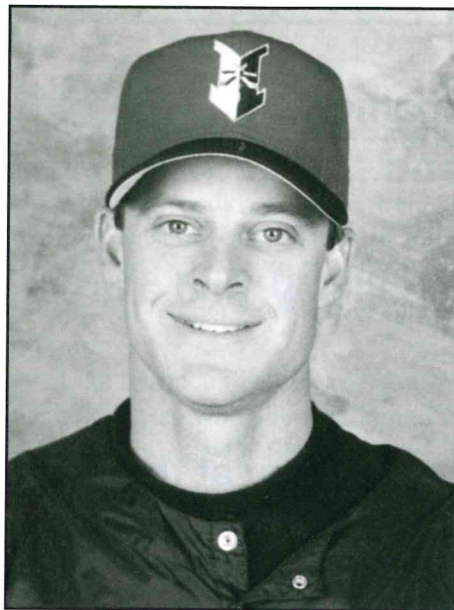
"The only thing I had to get used to was the lack of mass transportation," says Williams, now the first-base coach for the Colorado Rockies. "I was used to jumping on the subway or the bus and going from place to place. Growing up, I didn't have a car. Now I jump in the car and do everything I have to do. That was really the only adjustment."

There was one other adjustment - learning to root for the Pacers instead of the New York Knicks.

Dick Kenworthy spent his childhood in Kansas City, met his (now ex) wife here in 1965 during his first stint with the Indians. He's called Indianapolis home ever since. He retired from baseball in 1972, and now works in sales at Forklift Central.

"Indianapolis has really been good to me," Kenworthy says.

Of all the players interviewed for this story, only current Indian **Brad**



BRAD TYLER

Tyler grew up in Indiana. He's from Aurora, in southern Indiana. He and his wife, Kimberly, who's from Atlanta, Ga., decided this would be the right size city to settle in and raise their family, which thus far includes a daughter. They're building a house to move into this spring.

"We'd done some searching

down there (Atlanta) and done some searching up here and it was way too busy down there for us," he says.

But being from Indiana wasn't the deciding factor.

"Of all the places I have played, there are only a couple of places I would have considered staying," he says. "Just from people talking, whether they're from California or Texas or wherever, they come in and say what a nice city Indianapolis is. It's the surroundings, the culture and the different things it has to offer. And it's not such a busy city to where you've got to worry about everything. It's a real neat place. That's what led us to be here."

Marc D. Allan bats left, throws left and writes about television and radio for the Indianapolis Star.

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