

Joey Lane – A Great Story

by Justice Robert E. Gordon

This is the story of a young man who captured the hearts of a team, its coaching staff, and the team's fan base.

Joey was a good high school basketball player at Deerfield High School. At six feet tall, he did not have the resources to be a college star in Division I basketball, but he was talented enough to excel at Division II or III. However, instead of going to a Division II or III school, he chose Ohio State, a Big Ten powerhouse. His mother was from Toledo, Ohio, and she and most of her family went to Ohio State. In an interview Joey gave to WFNY in Columbus, he said, "I was born and raised to be a Buckeye, so that had always been the dream."

Joey began his college basketball career as a walk-on at Ohio State. Later, Joey was given a scholarship prior to his sophomore season by former head coach Thad Matta, and it was continued by coach Chris Holtmann when a coaching change was made, keeping Joey on scholarship for his final three years of eligibility. Normally, a walk-on for any team would not receive a scholarship.

Joey totaled only 89 minutes of playing time during his four-year career at Ohio State, scoring 33 points with 12 rebounds, 8 assists, and 4 steals. When Joey became a senior, he was voted captain of the team. His teammates loved Joey. He was the type of player every coach wants and a successful team needs. The fans and media loved Joey. He was the team's most vocal leader, even though he was one of the last players to be put in a game. He was dedicated to his team and kept a positive attitude and instilled that attitude to his teammates. He was the lone four-year player on the roster. He had a tremendous impact on the team and the fans with his positive attitude and was the team's best cheerleader. He knew his role as the leader of the team and used his personality and know-how to support his teammates and to keep their spirits high. If you watched Joey on the bench, you could observe his positive attitude, cheerleading ability, and his love for the team and the game of basketball. He also had that same impact in recruiting players, in workout sessions, and in the locker room. The Buckeyes fans loved Joey and tried to help him obtain playing time during blowout victories, chanting "put Joey in" over and over again. Some members of the student section, the Buckeye Nuthouse, even went as far as painting "Put Joey In" on their chests.

Ohio State video coordinator Kyle Davis told WFNY, "He worked to change his body physically, fought through injuries, battled the heartbreak of a coaching change, and then turned around and helped unite the locker room to embrace a new staff and instill a new culture. And somehow through it all, he never faltered from bringing a positive attitude every day which translated to him becoming a 'connector' and a leader on and off the floor; you never doubted that he was 100 percent committed to our program and understood what it meant to be a Buckeye. Now that his journey with us is complete I can look back and say that Joey has made a bigger impact on our program than I ever thought possible, and his presence in our program is going to be hard to replace."

In the final game of the Big Ten season in 2019 against Wisconsin, coach Holtmann started Joey at guard in an upset victory over a ranked opponent, which essentially clinched a spot for Ohio State in March Madness. Coach Holtmann decided to start the vocal leader and player that had meant so much to Ohio State for the last four years.

Joey is the son of Decalogue member Scott Lane, and grandson of our beloved past president Fred Lane.

The Honorable Robert E. Gordon is an appellate court justice in the First District, 4th Division of Illinois and a Decalogue board member.