

## Cyr and Silvester left quite a void

Keith Groller

March 26, 2009

The Via All-Star Basketball Banquet on Wednesday night at Freedom had its share of inspirational moments.

The keynote presentation by Aimee Mullins was pure goosebump material.

So were the real-life stories shown on the screen depicting the work Via does for people of all ages, shapes and sizes who are dealing with disabilities.

But, hopefully, the 100 or so players in the room also paid attention during the Hall of Fame inductions, because there were some very special people being spotlighted.

Two in particular stood out to me, two people from different generations and backgrounds who contributed to the game in very different ways.

Jody Silvester was the consummate referee, a dedicated pro able to control the situation on the sport's biggest stage and with its marquee personalities demanding perfection.

Traci (Zarbatany) Cyr was a fiery player at Easton High and the University of Scranton and was a demanding coach who extracted excellence from her Notre Dame-Green Pond girls basketball teams.

I wish I could still turn on the TV on any given winter night and see Silvester keeping a Bobby Knight or a Rollie Massimino in line in front of roaring crowds.

And I wish Cyr was still working the refs and pleading with her team to box out, move the ball and work hard on defense; in other words, play the game the right way.

Silvester is 72 and nine years removed from working Final Fours, national championship games and in some of the nation's loudest and largest arenas.

Cyr is 40, but eight years away from the coaching sidelines.

The question I had for both is: How much do you miss the action?

"A lot of people ask me that and the truth is I don't miss the traveling part of it," Silvester said. "I miss being with the guys and the crowds. And, of course, you miss the checks. But it's real good to spend more time with my family because I was away so much of the time in the winter.

"I still do a lot of refereeing, but now I'm at home watching the games on TV and I'll yell 'No, you can't make a call like that.' My wife Helen gets mad at me when I do that. Sometimes I'm at home coaching a game, too. I thought Penn State took the air out of the ball too soon against Florida [in the NIT], but I was so happy they won. They needed that."



Cyr and Silvester left quite a void -- [themorningcall.com](http://themorningcall.com)

Silvester said the first year he was out was the toughest.

"The big thing for me was going out at the right time," he said. "Helen told me not to stay too long. She told me to go out on top, and I did."

His final game was a Florida-North Carolina national semifinal in 2000.

One year later, at age 32, Cyr said good-bye to the sport she loves.

She may not have gone out on top -- a loss in the district semis, but all 11 of her teams made districts and seven went on to states. Her 259-59 record and 81 percent success rate is among the best in area history.

But the number most important to Cyr was four, as in four children.

"Life happens and you just have to roll with it," she said. "I miss the game and still have a passion for it. In fact, I still go and see as many games as I can.

"I still get my fix by coaching my own kids and doing camps. I give private lessons to a lot of kids and it still keeps me involved."

Cyr hasn't ruled out a return one day, but she knows where her priorities lie and that's with her children, which include her autistic son Luke.

"Some days I wake up in the morning and think, 'I want to get back into coaching,' and then there are other days when I wake up and think that the commitment is just too huge," she said. "I'll never say never."

Besides Silvester and Cyr, former Stroudsburg High star Ken Lacey and Eyeglass Fund game founder Truman Frey were inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Parkland's Jaleel Clark and Central Catholic's Becky Guman were named players of the year and Nazareth's Mike Squires and Wilson's Julissa Muschlitz were named scholar-athletes of the year.