

FIMBA USA Spotlight: Indy's Damon Ellison

Written by FIMBA

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His smile lights up every corner of every gymnasium he enters.

His quiet presence is immediately felt by those around him.

His words, spoken in what seems like a whisper, are always filled with encouragement and warm the hearts of those they reach.

He's a fixture at masters basketball tournaments in Jacksonville, Buffalo, Coral Springs, Detroit and Chicago, but ironically hasn't played in a game for several years at any of these events.

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Health issues have not slowed Damon Ellison down to do what he loves – and that means being around basketball.

Despite not being physically able at this time to lace 'em up and run the floor, Ellison showed how happy he was to spend time with as well as joke around with others during the annual Jacksonville Masters Basketball Tournament several weeks ago.

Mike Phelps, a regular on the masters basketball circuit, first played against Damon Ellison back in the 1960's when the two were high school rivals in their native Indianapolis, IN.

Nearly 50 years later, the pair was in Jacksonville and has shared a lifelong friendship. Phelps offers, "I am honored to call Damon my friend. He represents the spirit of masters basketball. Even though his health has sidelined him of late, Damon will always be counted among the close knit fraternity of players who travel to the masters tournaments around the country for the competition and, more importantly, the timeless friendships."



Damon Ellison is credited with bringing his Indy Phantoms teams to South Florida each spring and for recruiting new, younger players to participate in the annual Masters Basketball Association national championships in Coral Springs, FL each May.

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In 2014, the MBA Boards of Directors cited Ellison for exemplifying the qualities of sportsmanship and fair play that are the hallmarks of the MBA National Masters Championships. They named Damon Ellison as recipient of the organization's prestigious Sportsman of the Year award.

A graduate of Martin University in Indianapolis, Damon is retired from the Marion Indiana County Juvenile Detention Center. He worked there for 30 years, serving his last 15 years as superintendent.

A 12 year cancer survivor, Ellison has three children and has been blessed with three grandchildren.

Family members aren't just the only people grateful to have this happy and healthy man around these days.

Just ask anyone in the USA masters basketball community who has ever had the opportunity to meet Damon Ellison. Their smiles will tell you all you need to know.

Whether he's suited up to play or seated on the sidelines cheering for friends and teammates, expect to see Damon Ellison at the [FIMBA world basketball championships](#) in Orlando next summer.

To learn more about the 2015 FIMBA World championships in Orlando, FL, contact FIMBA USA Rep Jim Sweeney at sweeney@fimba.net .