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Boca Hoops Comes Full Circle As A Second Generation Takes To The Courts

BY REBECCA MCBANE

After finishing up a fellowship in Colorado, Dr. Joseph “Jody” Forstot decided to bring his young family back to South Florida, where he’d earned his medical degree.

“My family got the acid test of the cold in Colorado so we came back to Florida and wound up in Boca Raton in 1980,” he recalls.

He opened his practice, Rheumatology Associates of South Florida, near Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

“We have 100 special needs kids in our High Five Basketball program, which we started 16 years ago and which is probably the best thing we’ve ever done.”

— Dr. Joseph “Jody” Forstot, co-founder, Boca Hoops

“But that’s my second job. My first job is Boca Hoops,” he says, referring to the co-ed kids’ basketball program in Boca Raton.

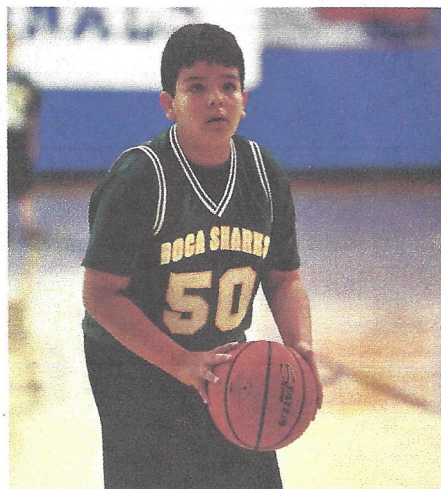
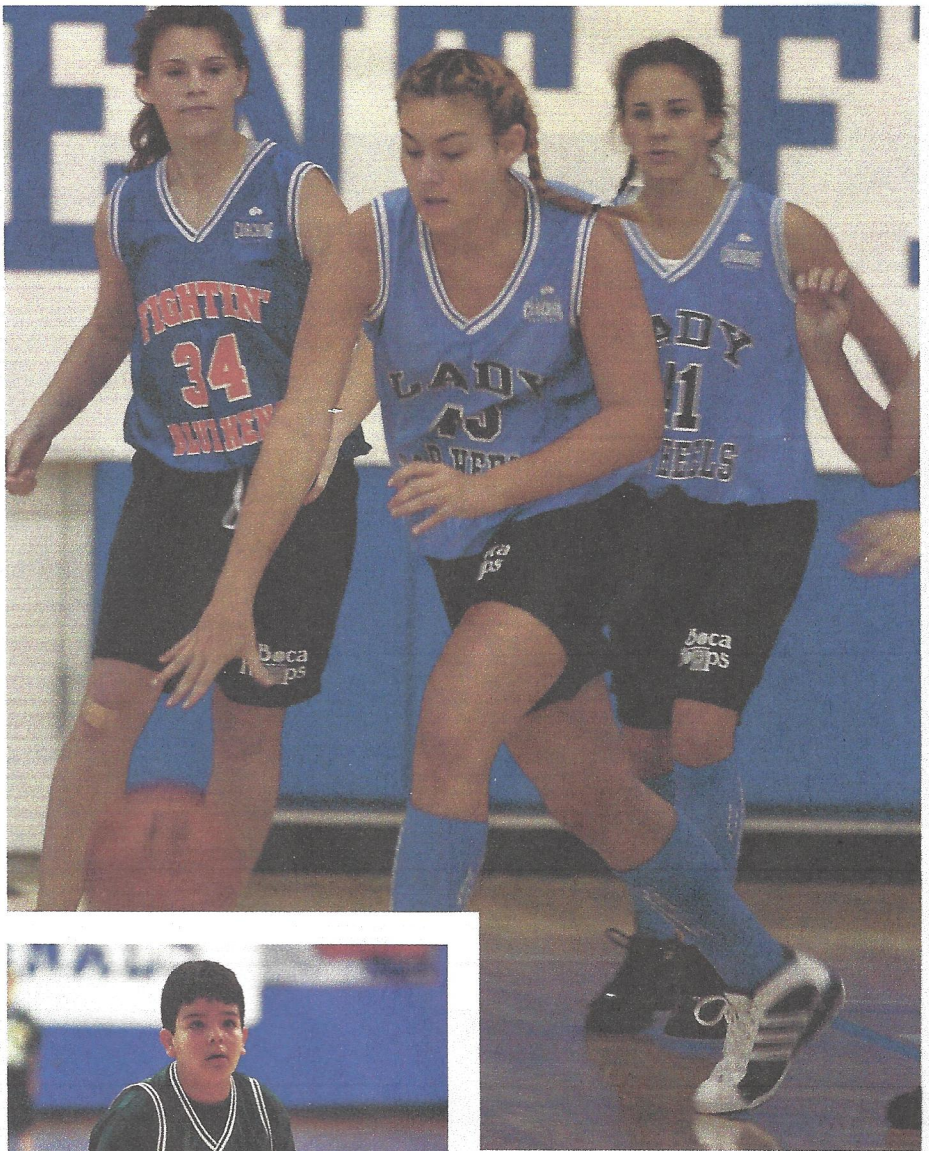
In 1989, Dr. Forstot was inspired to create the program when his youngest son, Joshua, tagged along with him while he went to play basketball.

“There was absolutely no kids’ basketball in South Florida at the time,” he says. “So what’s a father to do?”

Along with Mike Doyle and Bob Mullin, Dr. Forstot started Boca Hoops, which was 340 kids strong its first year.

“I told my wife that I was going to do this just for a few months, three months out of the year,” he says. “Now, it’s 30 years later, my grandkids are playing and I’m doing this 12 months out of the year.”

Since its inception, the league has added winter, spring and summer camps as well as



a travel league – creating year-round opportunities for kids to play ball.

“It’s going full circle with a second generation of Boca Hoopsters,” says Dr. Forstot, who often meets Boca Hoops alumni who remember their playing days fondly. Many of them now volunteer and have their own children playing, including Dr. Forstot’s own grandchildren.

But, of everything Boca Hoops has accomplished and all the kids the program has coached over the years, there’s one particular program that’s closest to Dr. Forstot’s heart.

“We have 100 special needs kids in our High Five Basketball program, which we

started 16 years ago and which is probably the best thing we’ve ever done,” he says.

High Five is for differently abled children and adults, and no one can age out of the program.

“Gary Cohen is the gentleman who organized it,” he says. “It’s just a wonderful experience, seeing that they’re playing basketball like their brothers, their sisters, their friends. They’re part of the basketball community now.”

Boca Hoops also offers scholarships for children who can’t afford registration fees. Dr. Forstot believes that every child, no matter their ability or financial situation, should be able to play.

“Our motto is to teach the game, learn the game, respect the game and respect each other,” he says. “We want the kids to enjoy and learn about the game and, in so doing, become better citizens.”

For more information, call 561-395-7372 or visit bocahoops.com.