

The Completely Unauthorized Rick Majerus Milwaukee Driving Tour

\*DRAFT\* Updated 17 March 2004

Keith Brewster

kbrews@cox.net

**<http://www.ActiveJoints.com/majerus/MajMKEtour.pdf>**

Beginning downtown at the Bradley Center Arena at 4<sup>th</sup> and State. This is where the Marquette Golden Eagles and the Milwaukee Bucks play, but in the days of Al McGuire, with Rick Majerus as an assistant, and later the head coach, the Marquette Warriors played across the street at 4<sup>th</sup> and Kilbourne, in the Milwaukee Arena, or the MECCA (acronym for Milwaukee Convention Center and Arena). Rick also was an assistant with the Bucks, who played and practiced in the MECCA arena. The arena is now named the US Cellular Arena, and part of a complex known as the Milwaukee Center District.

Go south to Wisconsin Ave and turn right, west. After crossing over the I-43 freeway you are on the campus of Marquette University, where Majerus went to college, tried-out for the basketball team as a walk-on, and eventually became the head coach. Gesu Church is a landmark on the south side of Wisconsin Ave at about 11<sup>th</sup> Street, the campus is definitely an urban setting, though the University has been buying up property in the campus area, closing off a few streets, etc, in an attempt to improve the campus environs, provide better security, etc. The campus extends to about 20<sup>th</sup> Street. The school is building a new athletic training center named the Al McGuire Center (near 11<sup>th</sup> and Wells) but at the time Majerus was there workouts were in a modest gym, I believe it is one on 16<sup>th</sup> Street a couple blocks south of Wisconsin Ave at Clybourne.

Continuing west on Wisconsin Ave, between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Street is Marquette University High School (MUHS), now independent from the University, but still run by the Jesuit priests, as it was when founded in 1857. Rick graduated from there in 1968, and coached the freshman team there in the early 70s. MUHS is also the alma mater of Jeff Jonas (MUHS '73, Utah '77). The High School has also been expanding its campus and now has an athletic field just to the west of the school on a site that used to be a car dealership.

From Wisconsin Ave. turning north at the light on 35<sup>th</sup> Street, and about 4 blocks north of Wisconsin Ave. is State Street. Miller Brewery is visible about 3 blocks to the west on State Street and down the valley. Continue north on 35<sup>th</sup> two blocks to Highland Boulevard, turn left (west) onto Highland. On your right, at 37<sup>th</sup> and Highland is the original Harley-Davidson motorcycle factory, and on your left are some office buildings for Miller Brewery. Continue on Highland as turns north to enter Washington Park and turns west again inside the park becoming Washington Blvd. A nice park, but probably not real safe at night. Continuing west on Washington Blvd, when you get to 53<sup>rd</sup> St (about 6 blocks from the bridge over US-41), Rick's childhood home was in this area, I'm guessing about 3-4 blocks north of you, they all have similar architecture, so you can get a good idea, anyway. The homes on Washington Blvd are fairly large single-family homes but to the north are the more typical blue-collar flats. In Rick's book he talks about moving from an "upper" flat on 57<sup>th</sup> Street to a lower on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street. Since he

mentioned in his biography that he went to grade school at Saint Catherine's, he probably lived north of Lloyd St (which is two long blocks north of Washington Blvd.).

Between 54<sup>th</sup> St and Hawley Rd (55<sup>th</sup>) is St. Sebastian's Catholic Church. The school is north of the church building on 54<sup>th</sup> St. (but you can't turn right there, it's a one-way street going south). Rick's very first coaching job was coaching the eighth grade team at the Church's school. Jeff Jonas graduated from St. Sebastian's School in 1969, and played for Rick that year. Just south of Washington Blvd on Hawley Road, on the west side of the street is Neeskara School, this playground was one of many school and urban playgrounds that Rick reportedly played pickup games on. Most of the playgrounds he mentions in his biography were back to the east, more in the "inner city" (I'm guessing it is from those playgrounds and from his time coaching in the NBA that he learned his more colorful language).

If you continue south on Hawley Road about a mile and half you can get back to Wisconsin Avenue. Just west of Hawley in this area is a neighborhood with some of Rick's favorite Italian restaurants. One he has mentioned publicly is Barbieres Italian Inn at 5844 W. Bluemound (two blocks south of Wisconsin Ave. at 59<sup>th</sup> St.). My family is partial to another nearby, Balistreri's Restaurant, which is about 3 blocks north of Wisconsin Ave on 68<sup>th</sup> St. (812 N. 68<sup>th</sup>). Real good pizza at both places.

Enjoy your stay in Wisconsin, and GO UTES!!