

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### New Book Reveals Insider Stories about Pacers, ABA Never Made Public Before

*Bob Costas says "You will love this book"*

INDIANAPOLIS (Dec. 21, 2017) – *We Changed the Game*, a new book that tells an insiders', fly-on-the-wall account from the wild days of the Indiana Pacers' American Basketball Association era, will launch preorder sales tomorrow. The book will reveal behind-the-scenes stories never before shared publicly.

Published by Hilton Publishing and set to retail at \$24.95, *We Changed the Game* spotlights the relationship between individual ABA Pacer players and their coach Slick Leonard, locker-room and on-the-road antics, and the business roller coaster the ABA Pacers rode in struggling to keep the franchise and the league as a whole alive.

"It's like a tale of the Wild West in tennis shoes," said Robin Miller, long-time sports reporter and co-author of the book with legendary ABA Pacers player Robert "Neto" Netolicky and Indianapolis attorney and Pacers founder Richard Tinkham. "This is a collection of stories from those who lived the Pacers' journey from the deepest insider levels."

Netolicky, who shares a number of stories in the book about his former ABA Pacers iconic coach Slick Leonard, explained the book is not just another statistical report or a game-play rehash.

"It's the real story of a team, a coach and a handful of dreamers, who brought a new league and a new team to Indianapolis – and how they not only changed the culture and future of a city, but the game of basketball forever," said Netolicky.

Fellow author Tinkham is one of those "handful of dreamers" still alive to tell the real stories of the team, the league, and the ABA-NBA merger. In the book, Tinkham recounts the never-before-revealed struggles going on behind the scenes within the league and the Pacer franchise, and how the infamous 1969 play-off game against the Kentucky Colonels changed everything.

"If we hadn't won that seventh game and advanced, there was no additional playoff revenue," Tinkham said. "There was no more money and, even worse, there was no plan."

Mayor William Hudnut, who provided a forward for the book prior to his passing in 2016, said that "to have the franchise fold would have sent out the message that Indianapolis could not be considered a major-league city, and that in turn would hinder our ability to garner business and jobs from elsewhere."

National sports-broadcast figure Bob Costas has endorsed the book, citing the historical significance of the Pacers as the "THE league flagship," and "a model franchise" that was "brimming with characters" and "often teetered on the brink."

"If you loved the ABA as I did, or are simply curious about a fascinating slice of sports history, you will love this book," Costas said.

The book release will coincide just a few weeks before the ABA fifty-year reunion celebration next spring. Ten percent of the book proceeds go to fund Dropping Dimes, an Indiana not-for-profit that assists ABA players and their families facing financial or medical difficulties.

“These proceeds are crucial to so many of my former teammates and league players because after the NBA-ABA merger, the ABA itself ceased to exist as a going concern, and former ABA players who were not part of the merger were generally left without a pension,” said Netolicky who serves on the advisory board of Dropping Dimes.

For a sneak-peak at excerpts from the book, or to pre-order a copy beginning Dec. 22, visit [www.wechangedthegame.com](http://www.wechangedthegame.com)

*We Changed the Game* will release in hardback through Hilton Publishing in late February 2018.

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