

Koerner, once a ball boy on the Scarlet Knights men's basketball team that went to the Final Four in 1976, today invests money for two of the members of that team.



# The Buck Stops Here

Andy Koerner's advice is on the money *By Bill Glovin*

Last summer Andy Koerner RC'87 invited five pro football players over for a barbecue. On the guest list were Gary Brackett CC'03, Shaun O'Hara LC'05, and Nate Jones RC'04—all former Scarlet Knights and all National Football League players. “All told they devoured 31 burgers, five chicken breasts, countless fries, taquitos, and wings,” says Koerner. “They said they were stuffed, but then my wife appeared with two trays of brownies and cookies. You’d think they hadn’t eaten in two weeks.”

Koerner, 43, president of Koerner Walker Wealth Management in Princeton, doesn’t just help Rutgers sports figures chow down vast quantities of food. He also feeds them advice on investing their money. His other Rutgers clients include Eddie Jordan LC'77, basketball coach of the Washington Wizards, Tammy Sutton-Brown RC'01 of the WNBA's Charlotte Sting,

and C. Vivian Stringer, head coach of the Scarlet Knights women's basketball team.

“I have a tremendous amount of respect for people that excel in their chosen field and have a strong focus on constantly improving,” says Koerner. “Pro athletes have these traits, but in many cases have not been exposed to sophisticated investment and tax strategies that can make an enormous difference in their financial life. I’ve made the commitment to bridge that gap in their knowledge base.”

When Koerner isn't flying around the country to meet with his Rutgers clients, he's speaking to athletes on money matters at prestigious events. In the last several months, he has made stops at the NBA All-Star Game, the Final Four, and at a conference sponsored by Major League Baseball. Pro athletes, Koerner says, have special considerations when it comes to financial

planning. "An athlete needs to consider what might happen if that fastball is a little too inside or that 300-pound lineman rolls into a knee," says Koerner. "Athletes can be released and coaches fired, which makes strategizing for the long term essential."

For young clients who are suddenly making huge salaries, especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, Koerner's job is to help them keep their newfound wealth in perspective. "If you earn \$2 million a year, you should be able to live on \$300,000 to \$400,000," he says. "The remainder

boys for the team. "After that experience, there was never any question about where I was going to college," says Koerner.

With a Rutgers degree in history, Koerner found a job on Wall Street and eventually became a top producer for Smith Barney and one of its motivational speakers. He and colleague Deborah Walker teamed up in 2000 at Smith Barney; they left in the summer of 2005 to start their own firm, bringing more than 100 clients with them. By using seven portfolios ranging from conservative to aggressive, Koerner claims he and Walker averaged returns of 11 to 24

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should be used to fund investments that will pay out attractive income streams when they are no longer playing.”

Koerner also makes a point of forging close relationships with clients and broaches a subject that some clients hope to avoid: what they'll do when their playing days are over. "I recently flew to Dallas to see Nate Jones and Washington to have dinner with Eddie Jordan; I try to get to games and meet with clients as often as I can so I know what's going on in their lives," he says. Socializing this way helps him decide whether he should focus clients on saving for their children's college education, setting up a charitable foundation, or buying a vacation home.

Two of Koerner's closest friends who have become clients are Jordan and Mike Dabney RC'76, starters on the Scarlet Knights men's basketball team that—under head coach Tom Young—went to the Final Four in 1976. Koerner met the pair and began a lifelong love affair with Rutgers at age nine, when he and his Hillsborough buddy, Tom Young, Jr., served for three seasons as ball

percent over the past year, considerably higher than the average.

In choosing his own career, Koerner wanted a profession that "had unlimited potential for earnings, where I could make the kind of money that might help me change the world a little." He's taken his first steps toward that goal by offering an internship program for Rutgers athletes interested in financial services. He has also endowed, with wife, Josie, two Scarlet Knight basketball scholarships: one for sophomore Essence Carson and the other for junior Marquis Webb.

His next project is to open two tuition-free financial services academies for economically disadvantaged students with at least a high school diploma. One will be in New Jersey and the other in the Dominican Republic—Josie's homeland. "Young people will have a place to learn the basics and ask questions about their own finances, and plan for their own businesses," says Koerner. "They will hopefully take what they learn and help their communities."

*Bill Glovin is senior editor of RUTGERS MAGAZINE.*



## Moments in the Sun

ONE FAMILY'S TRIP TO THE INSIGHT BOWL

The Koerner family was among the 10,000 or so Rutgers faithful who descended upon Arizona for the Insight Bowl last December. "The feeling there was unbelievable," says Josie Koerner, president of the Rutgers Football Fan-ees, the nation's first women's football booster club. "People who were working in stores in the area were asking us who Rutgers was playing. They didn't realize that Arizona State was the other team."

The pep rally on the grounds of the Scottsdale Civic Center the day before the game resembled "a mini-Woodstock," says Josie, who was there with her husband, Andy, and their children, Matthew, 13, and Alexis, 11. "The players came with their own cameras and camcorders and were shooting the fans and the great atmosphere. I've never seen more energy and enthusiasm; there was a sea of red everywhere."

Rutgers fans smelled an upset when the Scarlet Knights, 10-point underdogs, took a 24-10 lead in the second quarter at Chase Field in Phoenix (see page 2). "When I went over to Brian Leonard's mom, Laurie, at halftime, she had tears of happiness in her eyes," says Josie. (Leonard is Rutgers' All-American fullback.) "I think everybody realized that win or lose, Rutgers football had reached a new level."

In the second half, the Knights were still ahead 33-31 on two long field goals by Jeremy Ito. But Arizona State quickly closed the gap and ended up winning 45-40. Rutgers quarterback Ryan Hart, a senior who had briefly lost his job earlier in the year, had one of the best games of his career, completing 24 of 38 passes for 374 yards.

Andy Koerner says he'll never forget the look in the eyes of the team's seniors at the pep rally. "After all the work they had put in and all the struggles they had endured, you could see how much the experience of going to a bowl game meant to them," he says. "A lot of folks made the cross-country trek, and I bet you couldn't find a single person who was sorry they came. Rutgers football made us very proud."