



FOREWORD BY SUSIE BUFFETT
STEVE MARANTZ
**THE RHYTHM BOYS OF
OMAHA CENTRAL
HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL
AT THE '68 RACIAL DIVIDE**



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The Rhythm Boys of Omaha Central

High School Basketball at the '68
Racial Divide

Steve Marantz

With a foreword by Susie Buffett

March 2011

264 pp. 35 illustrations, 1 map

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Book Synopsis:

The Rhythm Boys of Omaha Central tells a true story about high school basketball, black awakening and rebellion, and innocence lost in a watershed year. The drama of civil rights in 1968 plays out in this riveting social history of sports, politics, race, and popular culture in the American heartland.

Included in this Press Kit:

- [Book Description](#)
- [Praise for the Book](#)
- [Author Biography](#)
- [Additional Information](#)

Book Description

In the spring of 1968, the Omaha Central High School basketball team made history with its first all-black starting lineup. Their nickname, the Rhythm Boys, captured who they were and what they did on the court. Led by star center Dwaine Dillard, the Rhythm Boys were a shoo-in to win the state championship. But something happened on their way to glory.

In early March, segregationist George Wallace, in a third-party presidential bid, made a campaign stop in Omaha. By the time he left town, Dillard was in jail, his coach was caught between angry political factions, and the city teetered on the edge of racial violence. So began the Nebraska state high school basketball tournament the next day, caught in the vise of history. *The Rhythm Boys of Omaha Central* tells a true story about high school basketball, black awakening and rebellion, and innocence lost in a watershed year. The drama of civil rights in 1968 plays out in this riveting social history of sports, politics, race, and popular culture in the American heartland.

Pre-Publication Praise

“Four decades after George Wallace ignited a race riot in Omaha, Steve Marantz goes home to tell the story of a high school basketball team and its tragic star. A heartbreaking look inside the lives of white and black students fighting and falling in love as they grow up amid historic upheaval.” —Ian Thomsen, columnist and feature writer for *Sports Illustrated*

“*The Rhythm Boys of Omaha Central* isn’t just about a basketball team—it’s about life—and how ugly, often tragic, inspiring, and so wonderfully hopeful it can be . . . all at the same time. As a basketball fan, I was riveted by this story—and couldn’t help but think about the other ‘Rhythm Boys/Girls’ there have been throughout our country’s unique history—and about just how far we have come.”—Lisa Salters, ESPN

“*The Rhythm Boys* reminds us again how sports mirror society. It happened in Omaha in 1968, but it could be the story of any team in any city. What do you get when you mix the passion of basketball with the passion of race? You get a great book.”—Tom Shatel, sports columnist for the *Omaha World Herald*

Post-Publication Praise

Please visit this book’s [web page](http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/product/Rhythm-Boys-of-Omaha-Central,674774.aspx) (<http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/product/Rhythm-Boys-of-Omaha-Central,674774.aspx>) for the most current post-publication praise.

Author Biography



Steve Marantz is an Omaha Central graduate and the author of *Sorcery at Caesars: Sugar Ray's Marvelous Fight*. A researcher for ESPN Content Development and E:60, he formerly covered sports, government, and politics for the *Kansas City Star*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Boston Herald*. **Susie Buffett**, a 1971 graduate of Omaha Central, is the eldest of Warren Buffett's three children and runs the not-for-profit Sherwood Foundation.

Photo courtesy of the Hank Shrier

Additional Information

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