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Guess Who's Coming to Book Club? Lafayette group invites Pulitzer Prize winner to make a house call

By Cathy Tyson



Front row, from left: "Chapter Chicks" members Melissa Johnston, Amy Martin, and Kandice Caicedo with author George Dohrmann. Back row: Sarah David, Stephanie O'Toole, Allison Thomason, and Angie Gates. Photo Cathy Tyson

was sure he was on to something when ambitious hustler coach/profiteer Joe Keller scored an unprecedented shoe deal from Adidas that the 13- and 14-year-old boys clearly weren't prepared to handle.

The author ultimately followed four extremely talented young men, including Demetrius Walker, for eight years along with Coach Joe as he searched for the next basketball superstar, hoping to get a cut of a lucrative professional contract.

Over time, Dohrmann became a father figure to these boys who didn't have much parental guidance; they all went on to receive college scholarships for their basketball prowess. To this day he still has a close relationship with two of the four. He even named his youngest son after Justin Hawkins, now a senior at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who obtained a bachelor's degree in just three years and who's now working on a master's in public administration.

The book club ladies and assorted men had a variety of questions for Dohrmann and enjoyed hearing about parts of the books that were cut and juicy behind-the-scenes details, including a prison sentence for the dad of one player and unplanned pregnancies for the girlfriends of another. The final version came in at a whopping 190,000 words, so entire chapters had to be omitted.

"There's no other sport where you can look at a 12-year-old and be kind of right," about future professional prospects, said the author. Reflecting on the system that exploits these kids and the NCAA, he explained there has been no change, and no incentive to change because there's no shortage of talent in the pipeline.

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