

A Derrick Rose by Any Other Name

By Reg P. Wydeven
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Every March, I live for the NCAA basketball tournament. I sneak peeks at scores during work, watch games on 4 different stations all night and stay up to the wee hours of the morning viewing highlights. Nothing is more exciting than a Cinderella team taking out a Goliath on a buzzer-beater.

The tournament also provides a stage for collegiate players to carve their names into NCAA lore, such as Duke's Christian Laettner or Valparaiso's Bryce Drew. Just as we learn these players' names, however, some of them may have different monikers when we see them again in the NBA.

In 1969, my beloved Milwaukee Bucks drafted UCLA center Ferdinand Lewis "Lew" Alcindor, Jr., arguably the greatest college basketball player of all time. Alcindor won the first of his six MVP awards in 1971, the year he led the Bucks to the NBA championship. In that year he also legally adopted the Muslim name of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, which in Arabic means "generous servant of God."

Similarly, Louisiana State University star Chris Jackson became Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf. Arizona forward Brian Williams honored his Native American and African heritages by donning the name Bison Dele. And my personal favorite, Lloyd Bernard Free became World B. Free after he legally took on his childhood nickname for being an "All-World" player.

For religious reasons, because of adoption or divorce, or just to be cool (see Chad Ochocinco), sometimes people want to change their name. To legally do so in Wisconsin, it's really not a big deal.

To change your name in Wisconsin, you first must be a resident of the state. To start the process, a petition must be filed in the county you reside in. For children under the age of 14, the petition must be submitted by the child's living parents.

Once the petition is filed, you must schedule a hearing with the court to officially change your name. A notice of this hearing must be published in your local newspaper once a week for three weeks prior to the hearing date. At the hearing, you will be placed under oath and asked about the information reflected on the petition, such as your current name, your cool new name and the reason for the change. The court will likely grant the petition "if no sufficient cause is shown to the contrary."

If the petition is granted, the judge will sign an Order for Name Change. If you were born in Wisconsin, a certified copy of this order must be filed with the state registrar to reflect the name change on your birth and/or marriage certificate. For people not born in Wisconsin, the order should be filed with the registrar of their home state. Another certified copy of the order should be filed with the Register of Deeds Office for your county.

Wisconsin also recognizes the common law right to change your name through consistent and continuous use as long as the change is not done for a fraudulent purpose. This common law right also applies to name change upon marriage.

Not everyone can legally change their name, however. People required to register as sex offenders are prohibited from changing their names. Also, people engaged in professions in Wisconsin that require a license cannot change their names to unfairly compete with another practitioner, mislead the public or otherwise cause a detriment to the profession or the public.

So now you see just how easy it is to change your name. Just ask George Garratt, who changed his to Captain Fantastic Faster Than Superman Spiderman Batman Wolverine Hulk And The Flash Combined. Seriously.

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