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Intelligencer

*Still
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P. Dr*

Bruce Christopher was born with a pool cue in his hand and has spent a lifetime beating the world's best players, getting himself into the record books and promoting pool as a good family sport.

Now that he has returned to his Belleville roots — his mother still lives here — Christopher is conducting pool clinics and exhibitions and “quietly training” for what he says will be his final televised money shootout next year against another top competitor.

“When that is done, I will pass the mantle down to the younger generation so that they can do what I have done, but even greater. They need to promote pool as a good sport,” he said.

“This is the greatest toy invented and everybody likes to play a good game of pool.”

Christopher has played and toured with the best — including legends Minnesota Fats and Willie Mosconi — during his glory years from 1974 to 1996. He also created and played in many televised shootouts during that period.

He launched his professional career after getting his name into the Guinness Sports Record Book, a record that still stands today.

It was Sept. 12, 1974 when Christopher walked into Charles Monaco Broadway Billiards on 53rd and Broadway in New York and set a world record by sinking 5,688 consecutive balls in a 24-hour period. One fan observing the feat yelled out ‘super stroke’ and Christopher adopted it as his nickname.

In his 50s now, “Superstroke” Christopher still has kind words for his home town.

“I have been all over the world and played the best players in the game but if you want a good game of pool, play any of the good players in Belleville. To me, they are better than the pros because they are position and finesse players. They really know where the cue ball is going.”

Also known internationally for his trick shots, Christopher said his success is due to being an excellent position player.

“I know where my cue ball is going at all times,” he said.

The Belleville native was four years old when he used his mother's kitchen table on Donald Street as a pool table. He placed some marbles or bonkers on the table and took his father's golf clubs, cut off the ends and used them as pool cues.

“I think God touched my little life to promote this sport. That was my calling in life.”

His father, Bill Christopher, a railroader for 33 years who died 1986, was a good pool player as well. So was his only brother, Wayne.

His mother, Flossie, who remarried another railroader, George McGhee in the 1990s, supported him throughout his career.

“My mom said to me that I'm like a winning racehorse because I have good breeding in me. My parents were hard-working people with character and principles,” he said.

Christopher started “breathing, eating and sleeping pool” in such places as Lafferty's Pool Hall on Bridge Street East.

When he turned 10, he decided to be the best pool player in the world and change the image of the sport. He spent the next decade honing his skills on the much-larger