

A MAGICAL LITERARY DEBUT FOR WNBA VETERAN

HAVING LOVED TO DRAW AS LONG AS SHE CAN REMEMBER, ALEXANDER ILLUSTRATES AND CO-AUTHORS THE MAGIC OF BASKETBALL WITH SISTER

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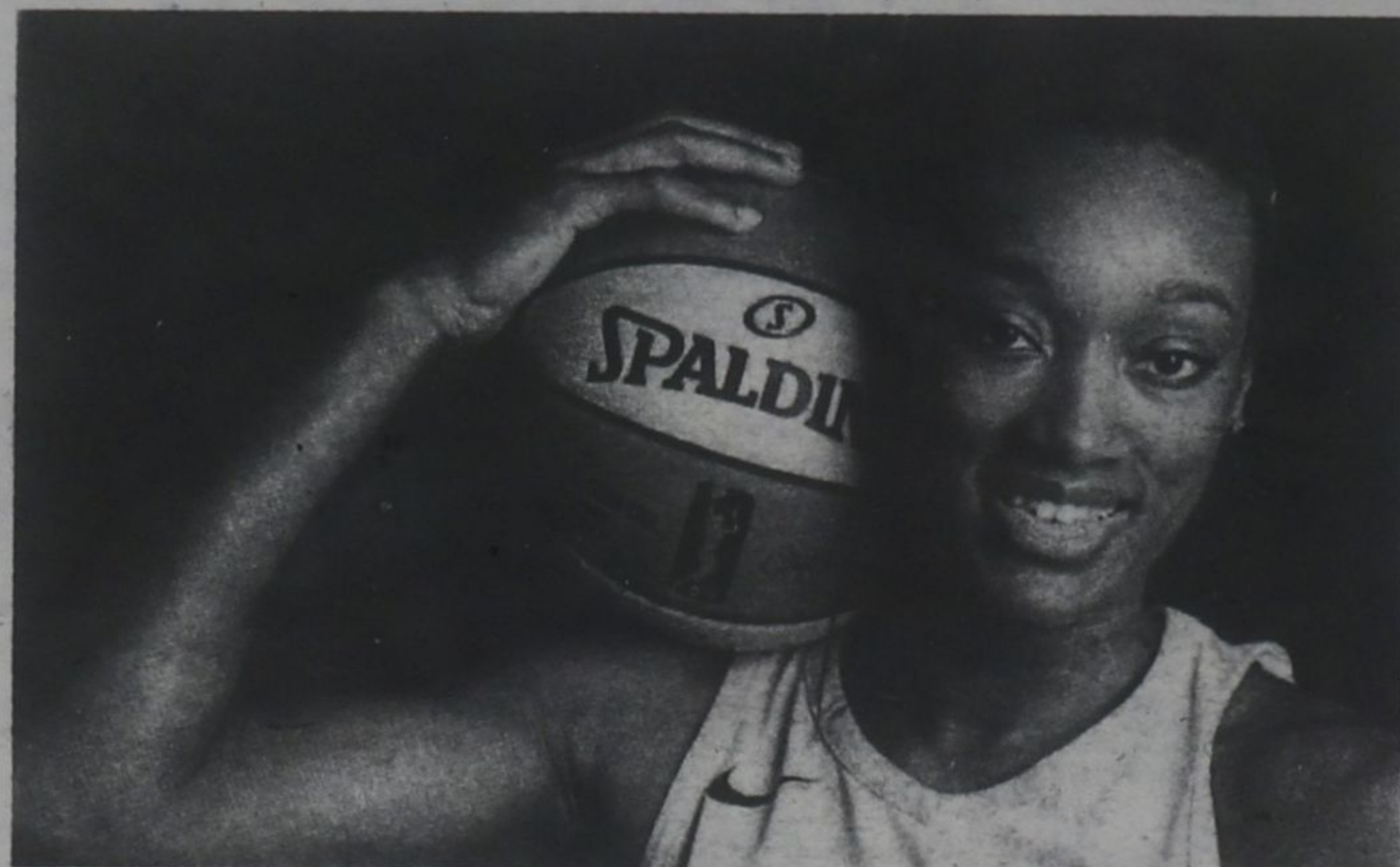
Many of Kayla Alexander's childhood memories include a pencil and paper ... with a little wish fulfilment serving as inspiration for her early illustrations.

"My mom says I've been drawing forever," recalled the six-foot-four WNBA veteran — who recently joined the Chicago Sky. "I always liked fashion and I'd see my sister and friends in these cute clothes, the kind I couldn't wear (because of my long limbs). So I'd draw myself in those type of clothes."

This first love would eventually take a bit of a back seat once a passion and knack for basketball was discovered. But while the 28-year-old Miltonian's drawing talents may have sat dormant at times, a desire to create never diminished.

That artistic flair recently came to the forefront through *The Magic of Basketball*, a 43-page children's novel she illustrated and co-authored with sister Kesia.

Written in rhyme and released just before Labour Day weekend,



Getty Image/Ron Hoskins

WNBA veteran Kayla Alexander has written her first children's book, *The Magic of Basketball*, right.

the book is inspired by Alexander's own hoop dreams/success — with a glowing basketball adding a little mysticism to the tale.

"I'm proud of it ... really happy with how it came out. I think it's got an important message, about how anything is possible and how basketball can teach you so many life lessons and skills," said the national senior women's team member and former ambassador

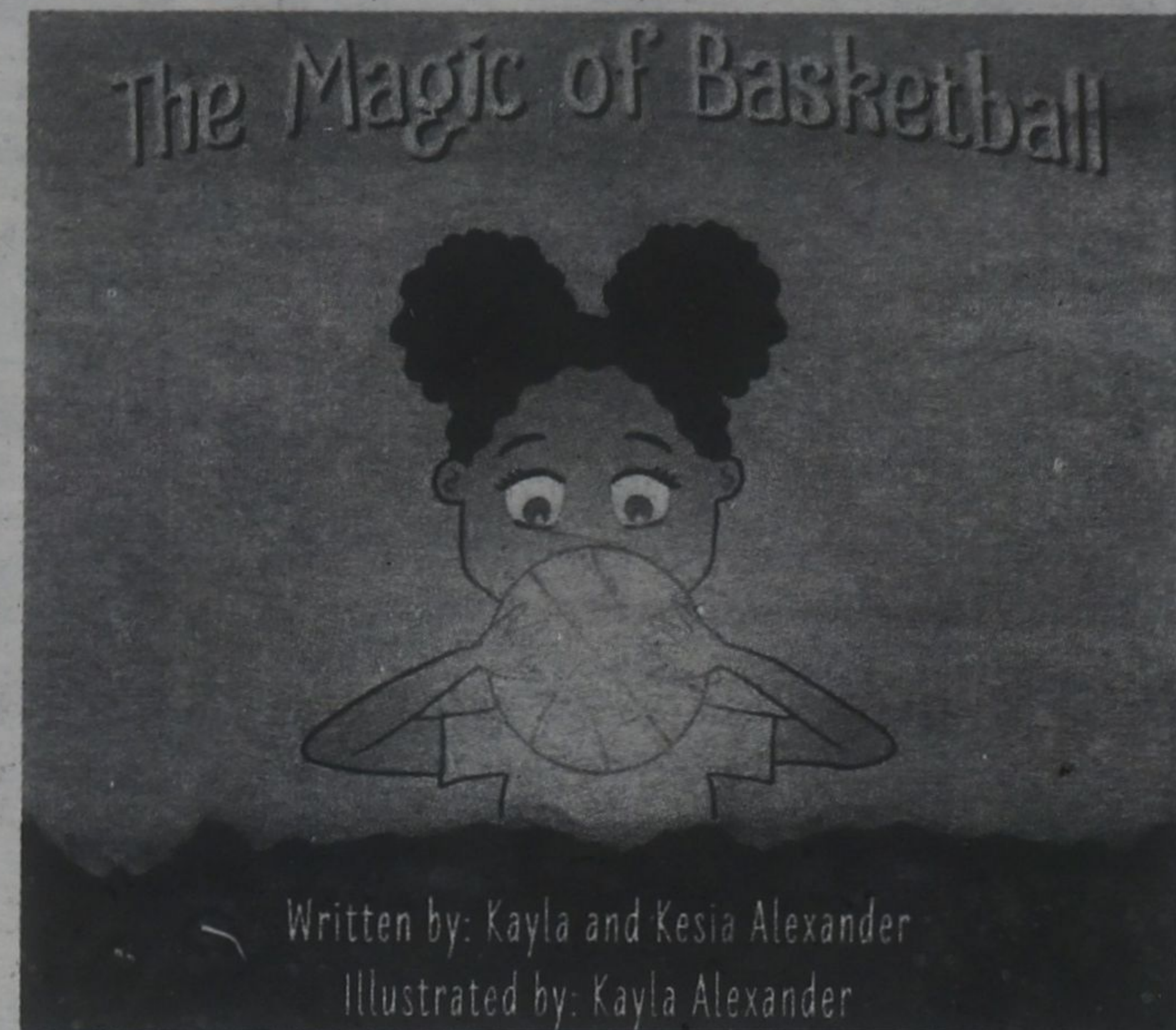
with *The Tall Boutique*, who once considered a career as an art teacher and grew up loving Dr. Seuss and the *Berenstain Bears*.

"I loved working with Kesia. God gave her some gifts that He didn't give me and one of those was the gift of words, an eloquence. She's a bit of a perfectionist and I really appreciated her attention to detail."

With a self-described wanderlust, Alexander — a first-round draft pick of the San Antonio Stars in 2013 — has spent the WNBA's winter off-season playing in Russia, France and Australia.

That last stop was where the desire to turn her drawing gift into a children's book was sparked.

"I did the bulk of the illustra-



Written by: Kayla and Kesia Alexander
Illustrated by: Kayla Alexander

Kayla Alexander photo

tions over there. I was tired of just having ideas and decided I wanted to take the dive and do this (book). I figured worst case scenario, I could say at least I tried."

While Alexander was overseas three years ago, her sister printed one of her illustrations on a mug — thus launching the idea for *Kups* by Kayla. With that, K. Alexander Creations was born, providing a means to reach young fans off the court.

The local basketball standout has traded in her pencil and paper for iPad Pro's Procreate program — on which *The Magic of Basketball* was brought to life.

She said, "What can be created when you combine art and technology is unreal."

Having visited many schools through WNBA community outreach and recently worked with the National Basketball Youth Mentorship Program, Alexander said the initial feedback for *The Magic of Basketball* has been extremely gratifying.

"There's been a lot of photos (via email or social media) of kids reading the book, which has been incredible. I say this (book) is like a baby I birthed because it combines my three loves — art, basketball and kids."

The Magic of Basketball is available for \$12.99 at Amazon in paperback and \$7.52 for download as an ebook on Kindle. Canadians can purchase the paperback for \$12.99 at KaylaAlexander.net.

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— Kayla Alexander, WNBA veteran, author

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