



Photo courtesy of ESPN

SAGE STEELE

Sportscaster

Sage Steele's Bachelor of Science degree in sports communication, which she earned from IU in 1995, has served her well. Currently the co-anchor of ESPN's noon broadcast of *SportsCenter*, Steele began her sports reporting career on local television stations in South Bend and Indianapolis.

Later, turns at stations in Florida and Maryland steered her into her first job with the national sports network in 2007. In addition to being an anchor of various editions of ESPN's signature program, she has been the host of the Scripps National Spelling Bee and a featured co-host on ABC's *The View*.

Born into a U.S. Army family in Panama, Steele grew up on military bases around the world, ending up in Carmel, Indiana, for her last two years of high school.

She gave IU's undergraduate commencement address in 2015. —T.Z.T.



Photo courtesy of IU Athletics

GEORGE TALIAFERRO

Football Star & Integrationist

The first Black player to be drafted by a National Football League team, George Taliaferro was the star player of IU's only undefeated Big Ten Championship season in 1945.

The halfback, quarterback, and punter faced the bigotry of a segregated IU campus and town where he was unable to live in the dorms, swim in the IU pool, or eat alongside his teammates. With the help of IU President Herman B Wells, Taliaferro helped desegregate the campus and the town.

Taliaferro played for five NFL teams over the next six years, eventually turning back to education and earning his master's degree in social work from Howard University. After establishing himself as an educator, he returned to IU as a professor and special assistant to the president, while his wife, Viola (Vi), attended law school. They raised four children.

Taliaferro founded Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Indiana, and Vi became a Monroe Circuit Court judge. He died in 2018. A bronze statue of Taliaferro now stands in a plaza bearing his name at Memorial Stadium, dedicated in 2019. —T.Z.T.

KHENG HUA TAN

Actor

When Kheng Hua Tan came to IU as a student from Singapore, her studies were focused on corporate marketing. She took her first acting class while in Bloomington, which gave her a taste for the performing arts, then pursued it as a side interest when she returned home.

A decade later, Tan left her day job in marketing to act full time, starring in stage productions as well as a variety of TV sitcoms and dramas in Singapore and Malaysia. The 58-year-old actor recently developed a broader international profile after starring as the mother of the protagonist in the film *Crazy Rich Asians*, and Empress Dowager in the Netflix series *Marco Polo*.

She is currently appearing in *Fung Fu*, a reimagining of the 1970s TV series that premiered on The CW this year. —T.Z.T.



Courtesy photo



Photo courtesy of IU Archives

ISIAH THOMAS

Basketball Great

Identified as a basketball prodigy during his early childhood on Chicago's West Side, Isiah Thomas' career spiked when he joined coach Bob Knight's Hoosiers in 1979 and was the team's captain as they won the 1981 NCAA Championship.

Thomas had enormous success as a professional player, including as point guard for the Detroit Pistons for 13 years, where he set new records for points, assists, steals, and games played for the team, and was named one of the 50 greatest players in NBA history.

After retiring from playing, Thomas took up residence courtside with much less success, including controversial turns coaching the Indiana Pacers, New York Knicks, and Florida International University. He also took up the business end as part owner of the Toronto Raptors and owner of the Continental Basketball Association before it went bankrupt and folded. He has been a broadcast game analyst on NBC and NBA TV. —*T.Z.T.*



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JIMMY WALES

Wikipedia CEO

Though he may not have graduated from IU, Wikipedia co-founder and former financial trader Jimmy Wales is an IU alum. Born in Huntsville, Alabama, Wales graduated at 16 from Randolph School, a university prep school, then attended Auburn University where he received his bachelor's degree in finance in 1986.

After earning a master's degree from the University of Alabama, Wales came to IU to begin a doctoral program in finance at the School of Business, but left without completing his dissertation. Sources say he left due to "boredom."

In January 2001, Wales helped launch Wikipedia, a free open-content encyclopedia. Wales serves as Wikipedia CEO and, in 2006, was named one of *Time* magazine's "100 Most Influential People." —*C.S.*

VENUS WILLIAMS

Tennis Legend

By the time she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from IU-East in 2015, Venus Williams had two decades of a record-smashing, historic career in women's tennis under her belt.

A professional player since the age of 14, she earned her first two Olympic gold medals at age 20 in 2000—one solo and the other playing doubles alongside younger sister, Serena. (The duo won golds again in 2008 and 2012.)

Now 41, she has won multiple Grand Slam titles both alone and with her sister, earning more than \$42 million in career prize money—the second highest amount in history, next to Serena.

Williams was the first player to take advantage of an agreement between the Women's Tennis Benefits Association and IU-East, which allows players to work on their degrees online. —*T.Z.T.*



Photo courtesy of Indiana University-East

WENDELL WILLKIE

Presidential Candidate

Born in Elwood, Indiana, in 1892, Wendell Willkie attended IU and graduated from the School of Law in 1916. He practiced law with his father before entering WWI in 1917. After the war, he practiced corporate law.

Willkie earned his campaign moniker "Dark Horse" when, at the 1940 Republican National Convention, he defeated well-known political figures such as Thomas E. Dewey and Sen. Robert A. Taft on the sixth ballot. He ran against third-term candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt in that year's general election.

Of course, he lost, winning only 10 states and 82 electoral votes. But he received more than 22 million ballots, the largest by a Republican at that time. He subsequently became known for his concept of international cooperation, outlined in his bestselling book, *One World*. Willkie died in 1944. —*C.S.*



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress