



A NEW MILLENNIUM

1990 - 2003

During the last decade of the 20th Century the city of Indianapolis brought to completion more than two decades of planning with the construction of the tallest building Downtown and the opening of the Circle Centre Mall that became its centerpiece.

From its offices at 307 N. Pennsylvania Street, The Indianapolis Star had chronicled and photographed the rapid changes taking place all around it. By the century's end, The Star too would be swept up in change.

The 1990s began with completion of the Bank One Tower, which at 51 stories became the city's tallest building. But the city's most ambitious project, the downtown mall, seemed headed for trouble.

In March 1989, Mayor William Hudnut had jumped aboard a wrecking crane and sent its ball smashing into a building at 25 W. Washington Street to symbolically begin construction of the mall. But taking down the old buildings was the easy part. Putting up new ones was another matter, particularly at the scale that had been envisioned. The economy had slowed down and progress on the mall slowed with it.

For a few years, Downtown workers were accustomed to the sight of gaping holes in the ground and facades held up with steel beams.

The city's two home-grown department stores, L.S. Ayres and Wm. H. Blocks, had once been envisioned as the anchors of any downtown mall that might be built. But by the 1990s, both were gone.

Hudnut left office after a remarkable four terms as mayor and was succeeded in 1992 by fellow Republican Stephen Goldsmith, who was less enthusiastic about the mall project and even halted construction for a time. But he later dropped his opposition and the mall was finally completed, opening with great fanfare in 1995.

The following year, the Indianapolis Indians began playing at their new Downtown ballpark, Victory Field, and in 1997 ground was broken Downtown for the Indiana Pacers' new home, Conseco Fieldhouse. In the late 1990s, the Pacers, led by clutch shooter Reggie Miller, were contending in the post-season almost every year and in 2000 would

Opposite page: In 1907 a building was erected at the corner of Pennsylvania and New York streets (inset) and became the home of The Indianapolis Star. Over the years, The Star Building expanded and now encompasses the entire city block. The Newsroom and business operations remain downtown; however, the printing press is now located in the Pulliam Production Center on the city's northside. In July 2002, The Star made a substantial investment in its future with the unveiling of its \$72 million state-of-the-art production facility. The seven-story press is housed here.

make it all the way to the NBA Finals, losing the championship game to the overpowering LA Lakers.

Changes were also in the works at the city's most famous sports venue, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. For as long as anyone could remember, IMS had hosted only one auto race a year, the Indianapolis 500. In the 1990s, under the leadership of Tony Hulman George, IMS developed two additional annual racing events. The Brickyard 400 was launched in 1994 and additional track was constructed to accommodate an annual Formula One race, which was held for the first time in 2000.

George also formed the Indy Racing League, prompting a split with team owners associated with Championship Auto Racing Teams, particularly those owned by Roger Penske. For the latter half of the 1990s, some of the best drivers and teams in open-wheel racing boycotted the Indianapolis 500 and "the Greatest Spectacle in Racing" looked in danger of losing its stature in the world of auto racing. But after a few years the rift was healed and Penske drivers returned to Indianapolis.

As it covered these and other events of the 1990s — winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1991 — The Indianapolis Star was going through a transformation of its own. From the 1940s until his death in 1975, Eugene C. Pulliam had owned and personally operated The Star and the city's afternoon paper, The Indianapolis News. His son, Eugene S. Pulliam, succeeded him as publisher, but ownership passed to a trust governed by a board that included family members and company executives.

The days when a single individual owned and operated a big city newspaper were largely over and, like other industries, most media companies were evolving into large public corporations answerable to shareholders. In 1989, The Star's parent company, Central Newspapers Inc., issued public stock for the first time and, in 1995, the newsrooms of the once-competing Star and News were blended into one staff. The national trend was also toward morning newspapers and, in 1999, The News ceased publishing.

Also in 1999, Eugene S. Pulliam died, and for the first time in half a century no Pulliam sat in the publisher's office. Although The Star and CNI were financially healthy, surviving family members and trustees knew it would be difficult to remain independent in the new era of media conglomerates. In June 2000, it was announced that the company would be acquired by the Gannett Company, the nation's largest newspaper group.

In 2003, the city of Indianapolis again looks toward a new century with optimism in its ability to face whatever the future might bring. The Star will be here to cover it.