



April 2, 2008

Where are they now

By Dave Ghose

Fame—or its cousin, infamy—is a three-act play. The hero or villain toils in obscurity, then bursts onto the scene, breaking records on the football field, entertaining us on television, leading important decisions, starring courtroom dramas. Then comes the exit—a graduation, a retirement, a lost election, a cultural shift. The performance might run for one season or several, but everyone in Columbus not named Jack Hanna or Archie Griffin seems destined to leave the stage eventually.

Finally, nostalgia sets in. It used to take several years, but like so many other things in our fast-moving society, the process is speeding up. A conversation begins with “Do you remember” or “What happened to....” After all, once they leave the spotlight, ex-celebrities continue to work, dream, cook up crazy schemes. A desperate plea might right from the huddled masses. “Where have you gone, Damon Zex?”

That’s where we step in. We tracked down some formerly famous folks—including eight people who had appeared on the cover of *Columbus Monthly*—to find out how their third acts were going. Enjoy the show.

After David Palmer moved to Columbus in the late 1990s, the former Toledo grocer turned himself into Ohio’s self-appointed judicial watchdog. He filed criminal charges against dozens of judges, bad-mouthed his arch nemesis, Ohio Chief Justice Tom Moyer, on his website and attracted lots of media attention., including from the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. His fame perhaps peaked when the state accused the self-educated legal expert of impersonating a lawyer—a claim he beat in a circus-like Ohio Supreme Court disciplinary board hearing in December 2001.

About two and a half years ago, Palmer’s base of operations shifted west so he could be closer to two of his daughters. He now lives in Folsom, about 20 Miles Northeast of Sacramento. “I always have to explain to people in Ohio that the part of Folsom I’m in is not the place where you get three squares every day,” he says with a laugh, referring to the city’s notorious prison. But don’t think California has mellowed Palmer. He remains a committed crusader, continues to gather reams of documents from the Ohio Supreme Court via public records requests and released in January a self-published expose titled *Judicial Misfits* (available on Amazon.com), which he dedicated facetiously to Moyer.
