How was your first year at Princeton?
It was a fun experience. I had one perspective on basketball from playing my whole life, and coaching provides a different perspective of leadership and teaching that has a huge impact on team performance. Once I learned Princeton’s system and culture, I knew I could add value to how the guys approach the game and think about themselves. I learned different things about myself too.

Will you continue coaching?
Yes, though what works for me is being present in the moment and not worrying about the future. I often tell the story of when I came to Villanova. I knew I would be competing in basketball at the highest level, but my goal was not to play in the NBA. It was to make the most of my time at school and graduate in four years. Coaching is no different. I am immersing myself in the day to day, and if I become good at that, the future will take care of itself.

What does a love of learning mean to you?
I was enthused about learning as a kid and never stopped. I think when you graduate from college the learning continues, which is why I came back to Villanova for my MBA. I knew when I finished playing I would have an interest in business, so it was a chance to learn about myself in a different way. There are many opportunities for a person to grow, whether it be academia, traveling the world or just talking to people. All of it makes you a well-rounded person.

How else did Villanova prepare you to succeed?
Villanova is unique because the culture has always been that you are a student first and an athlete second. I focused on my studies because I was trying to get the most out of the experience. That carries over to Princeton. I draw from experience to lead the guys in managing their time between school and basketball so they can accomplish their goals.

Why did you join the Board of Trustees?
Father Peter and I have been close since I was an undergraduate, and when this opportunity arose, it was a no-brainer because of my love for the school and what it has done for me. It is fun to see how we are positioning ourselves as a university under Father Peter’s leadership. There is a lot of discussion in our country about higher education, and I am interested in the value Villanova offers. It is an exciting time to be an alum. We have a great basketball program, our campus is changing and we are attracting elite kids. I look at some of their applications and am truly amazed.

Villanova Basketball legend Kerry Kittles ’96 VSB, ’09 MBA retired from the NBA 12 years ago, but his pace has never slowed. Now an assistant coach for Princeton University men’s basketball and a member of Villanova’s Board of Trustees, he talks to Villanova Magazine about how he challenges himself to learn and grow.