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By Richard Zitrin

After 40 years in the wilderness, the Warriors are NBA champions. And after more than 40 years in Oakland, it looks like they're heading back to San Francisco. I've been a Warriors season ticket-holder since 1980-81, commuting across the bay all those years from my home in "the City." But I hope the Warriors don't come back.

If Warriors owner Joe Lacob gets his way, I could walk to the proposed new Mission Bay arena from my house. The Warriors could be our team again — the team that first attracted me as a teenager when I saw their super-cool uniforms that just said "the City" without having to explain which city. But the Warriors belong in Oakland, and I'm rooting for them to stay.

Oakland is a real basketball town. It's the town where greats from Bill Russell to

Gary Payton, Jason Kidd and All-Star Damian Lillard grew up and played. It's a town that has a vibrant African American community, and NBA basketball is, after all, a predominantly African American sport.

The Warriors are one of the few symbols on the national scene that Oakland can point to with pride. They're not only the new champs, they are easy to love: selfless, tight-knit, and one of the most exhilarating and fun-to-watch teams ever.

I've paid my dues as a ticket-holder, through the Joe Barry Carroll era, the Dave Twardzik era, the P.J. Carlesimo era, and the tenure of maybe the worst owner in sports history, Chris Cohan. I deserve to have the Warriors back in San Francisco. But Oakland deserves them more.

San Francisco has the ballet, the opera, and the symphony, not to mention the three-time World Series champion Giants

and their jewel of a ballpark. It's a desirable tourist town. It has old money, new money, and tech start-ups with money. (Money that has helped erode what was San Francisco's own vibrant African American community.)

What does Oakland have? The A's and the Raiders playing in a creaky old ballpark, both with their eyes on moving out of town. There are some great things in Oakland: Lake Merritt and Lake Temescal, the Oakland Museum of California. But people in Oakland who are heading out for an evening in San Fran still say they are going to "the City."

So I'm casting my vote for Oakland. Our friends across the bay deserve this team, this success, this source of pride.

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Richard Zitrin is a law professor at UC Hastings and a longtime Warriors season ticket-holder.

The Golden State Warriors and the team's co-owners, Peter Guber (left) and Joe Lacob, celebrate their victory Tuesday over the Cleveland Cavaliers, which gave them and Oakland their first NBA championship in 40 years.



Esra Shaw / Getty Images