Maybe it was pride and ambition, maybe it was the facilities (or lack thereof) or possibly it was frustration...for some reason Geno Ford, who spent three seasons as head coach at Kent State University, has turned his back on the Golden Flashes with four years remaining on his contract and accepted the head coaching position at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill.

This is, at best, a lateral move. If Ford was frustrated with his Golden Flashes getting aced out of the NCAA Tournament, despite winning the regular season Mid-American Conference title, by losing in the MAC Tournament he is heading to the Missouri Valley Conference he will be facing the same situation at Bradley. The last five NCAA Tournaments have featured just one team from the MVC. This season Indiana State won the conference tournament and claimed the automatic bid while Wichita State, the best team in the conference, had to settle for the NIT.

In fact, the MAC and the MVC are usually cited side-by-side when the argument in favor of Mid-Majors getting more than one bid per conference is made. And if Ford thinks he is going to get any more respect at Bradley than he did at Kent State he is going to end up one disappointed basketball coach.

The Mid-American and the Missouri Valley are so similar in terms of strength of competition and schools that last season the MAC and MVC squared off in non-conference games four times. They split, with each conference winning four and losing four.

What is also confusing, aside from Ford walking away from $1.2 million remaining on his contract, is him leaving a conference he knows like the back of his hand for the great unknown.

Ford played collegiately at Ohio and coached for three seasons in Kent. He grew up in Cambridge, Ohio...right in the middle of MAC Country. And he is leaving a program that is a perennial MAC power for a MVC team that has fallen on difficult times.

Since Dave Grube was unceremoniously fired at Kent following the 1995-96 season Kent has been one of the most successful college basketball programs in the country. First, under Gary Waters, the Flashes went 92-60 overall and 53-35 in the conference and made two trips to the NCAA Tournament in five seasons. Waters then left for Rutgers in the Big East.

Stan Heath inherited a team that was loaded, and in his one season at the helm of the Flashes went 30-6 and led the Golden Flashes to the Elite Eight in the NCAA Tournament. Heath, for this incredible run with players he did not recruit, parlayed this season into the head job at Arkansas in the Southeast Conference.

Next came Jim Christian, who won 137 and lost 59 in six seasons at Kent and took the Flashes to a pair of NCAA Tournaments. He left for Texas Christian in the Mountain West following the 2007-08 season.

Ford continued this tradition of success, winning 64 and losing 35 in three seasons, including a 35-15 record in the MAC, but was unable to get Kent back into the NCAA Tournament.

Before Ford decided to move on he probably should have looked at what happened to his three predecessors after they left scenic Kent, Ohio.

First, Waters struggled at Rutgers, winning 79 games and losing 75 in five seasons...including an awful 28-52 record in the Big East. Waters failed to lead the Scarlet Knights to the NCAA Tournament, and was relieved of his coaching duties , stepping down after the 2005-06 season. Waters landed on his feet at Cleveland State and has built the Vikings into a serious contender in the Horizon League.

Heath went on to Arkansas and, in five seasons, went 82-71 with the Razorbacks. After his dismissal he landed at Southern Florida, where he has posted a 41-54 record in four seasons.

Christian, in three seasons at TCU, is 38-58. This year his Horned Frogs had a dismal 1-15 record in Mountain West Conference action.

Each of these coaches made a step up, not a step to the side like Ford seems to be making.

The second thing I question is why Ford decided to make this move now. He has an incredibly strong core of talent returning for next season, including MAC Player of the Year Justin Greene and MAC Defensive Player of the Year Michael Porrini. Regardless of who coaches the Golden Flashes next season the team should be right in the thick of the conference championship race.

Geno Ford is a very good guy. He is a pleasure to talk to and always has a laugh or joke for anyone in his midst. His players love and give their best for him, and his team this season appeared to be one of the closest and cohesive teams at Kent since the Elite Eight team. Greene, Porrini, Carlton Guyton, Justin Meeks and company have to be crestfallen about their coach's departure.

Whatever his reasons for leaving, I am rooting for Ford to do well. He is going to a program that hasn't reached the NCAA Tournament since 2006 and that hasn't really been relative on a national scale, aside from a couple of the Hersey Hawkins seasons, since the early to mid-1950's. Ford has bitten off a lot in heading to Bradley, and hopefully it is not more than he can chew.

Final thought, if this all boiled down to a few thousand more dollars a season I, along with thousands of Kent State alumni and fans in Ohio, will be quite disappointed because we will have severely over-estimated Ford's character while, at the same time, under-estimated his greed. Walking away from four years at $300,000 per year couldn't have been a simple or easy decision...and if it all came down to dollars and cents it ended up not being a very honorable decision, either.