

INSIDE: 16 pages of news, sports, features, puzzles, comics and more — Section B

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The News-Gazette



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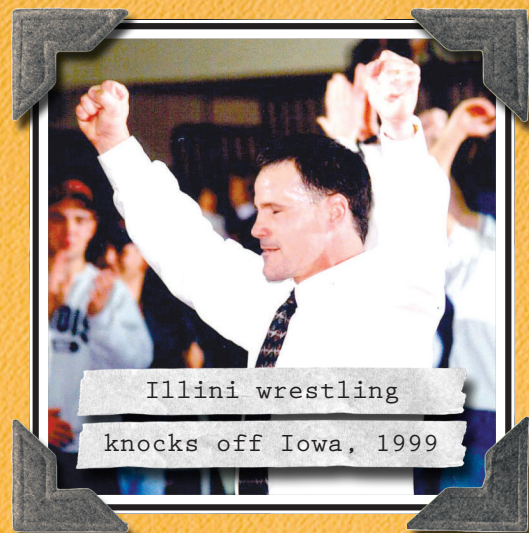
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2025

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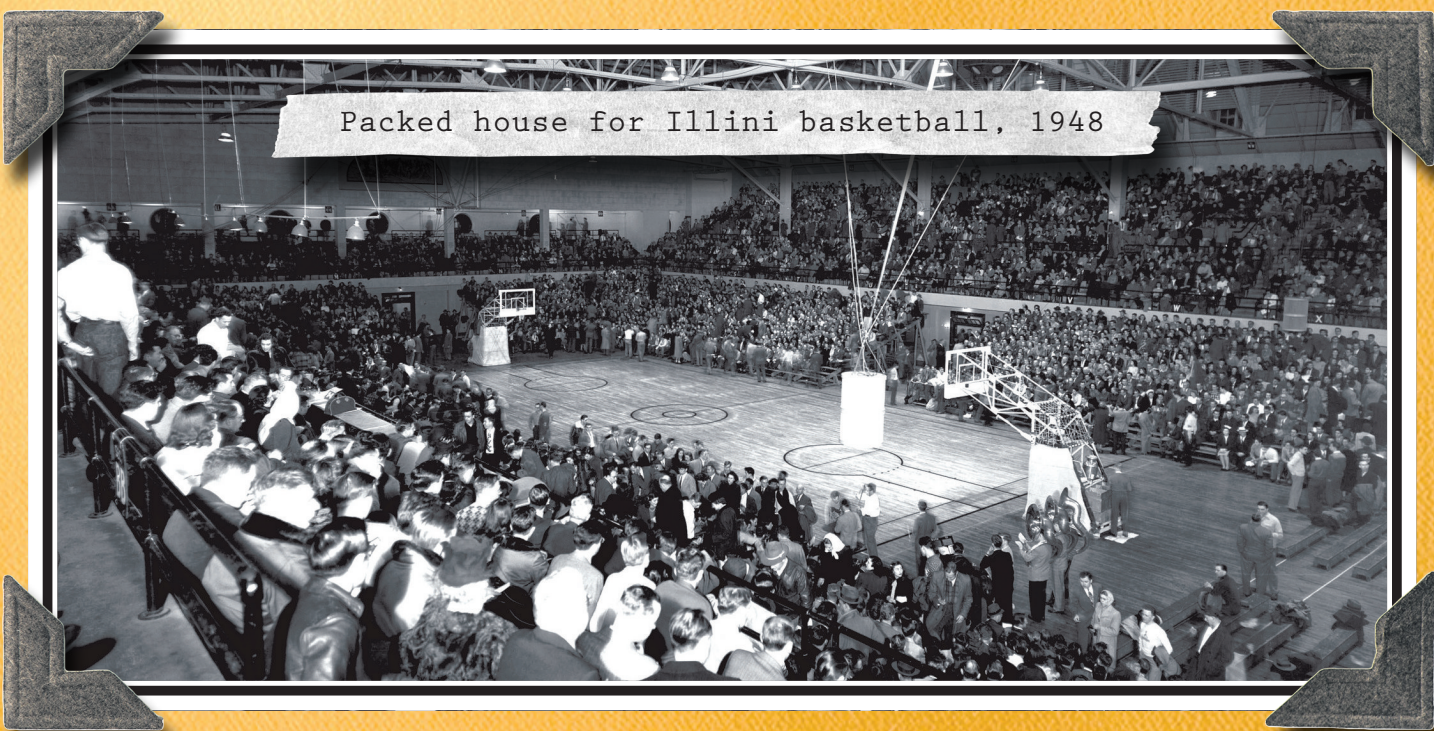


Illini volleyball upsets USC, 2004



Illini wrestling knocks off Iowa, 1999

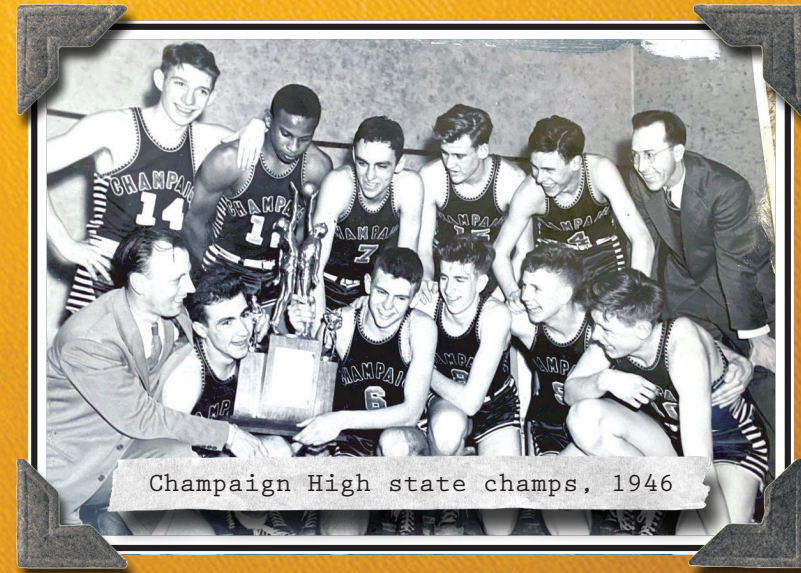
HUFF AT A HUNDRED



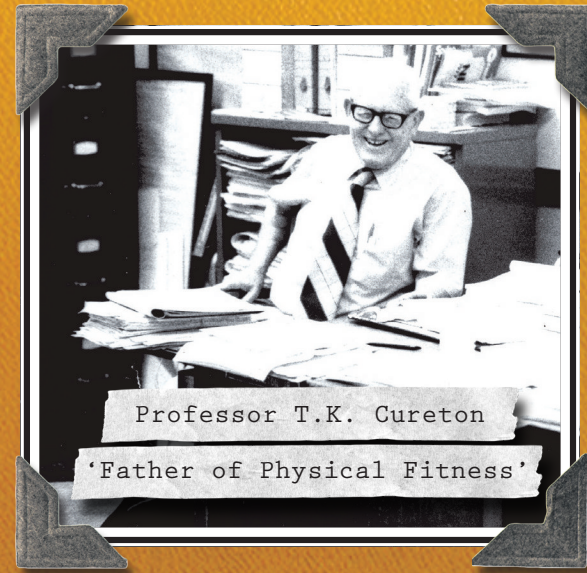
Packed house for Illini basketball, 1948

It's where Harry Chapin rocked and Harry Combes' Illini rolled ... where a pioneering professor from Florida carved out a legacy as the "father of physical fitness" and a competitive coach from California moved a national volleyball powerhouse he'd built from nothing ... where fans stuffed Huff — long before it became a hashtag — to watch Mark Johnson's wrestlers hold Iowa down for a three count, Yoshi Hayasaki's gymnasts leap to No. 1 and Champaign High School's boys and Theresa Grentz's women make hoops history. ¶ Here's to Huff Hall, a building like no other across the University of Illinois flagship campus' 6,370 acres — part athletics, part academics, part old, part new, a living landmark still going strong 99 years, 10 months and 26 days later.

— JEFF D'ALESSIO



Champaign High state champs, 1946



Professor T.K. Cureton 'Father of Physical Fitness'

Niko Dugan illustration/The News-Gazette

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Proud Builders of the Original Huff Hall 100 Years Ago



**ENGLISH BROTHERS
COMPANY**



HUFF AT A HUNDRED

MAY WE HAVE A WORD?

We asked 88 Illini past and present: How would you sum up Huff Hall?

ANTIQUÉ STUFF-HUFF HOME STORIED VENERABLE INTIMATE ENDURING PIONEERING



YOSHI HAYASAKI Coached men's gymnasts to '89 NCAA title	JEAN DRISCOLL U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Hall of Famer	ERNEST BENION Illinois' first Black NCAA wrestling champ	MARIELA FERNANDEZ Associate professor, College of Applied Health Sciences	DAVE DOWNEY Scored UI-record 53 points against Indiana in 1963	RACHEL (FELDMAN) BRIZE Volleyball teams she starred on went 57-6 at Huff	JOSH WHITMAN In 10th year in position George Huff held for 35	MARNI BOPPART Saul Morse & Anne Morgan Professor, College of AHS
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FROM THE EDITOR: JEFF D'ALESSIO

'Some people need new and fancy. Not us'



We say Huff, Illini stars from yesteryear say ...
"Might be corny, but 'home' would be my word," says volleyball's Erin Virtue.
"Home," says gymnastics' Giana (O'Connor) Dins. "It's where I spent four years competing for my alma mater with my teammates, who became lifelong friends. It's where I felt the most confident and passionate. It's where I grew as an athlete and as a person."
"The one word I have is 'home,'" says wrestling's Matt Lackey. "I could walk into the wrestling room 20 years later and feel like I never left — just like Thanksgiving with your family."

Noticing a trend here?
Creaks and cracks aside, for the hundreds of athletes and coaches who've shared a building with the College of Applied Health Sciences — an arrangement unlike any other on the University of Illinois campus — there's no place like 100-years-young Huff Hall.
"When I think about Huff Hall, I think of it as the place that lured me to become an Illini," says 2001 Big Ten Medal of Honor winner Betsy Spicer-Brookbank, who starred on 1998's Sweet 16 volleyball team.



"Out of all the schools I was looking at, this hands down the most magical place to play. When I first witnessed the lights go out and the roar of the crowd with the introductions, I knew this was where I wanted to play. And it became our second home in Champaign.
"Some people need new and fancy. Not us. We loved the traditions this place holds and it was something that we took pride in. Huff Hall will always hold a special place in my heart."
She's among the 131 alums, administrators, faculty, fans and others who answered our call for contributions to this special section marking the iconic structure's weekend birthday celebration.
And an extra special thanks to Applied Health Sciences' Vince Lara-Cinisomo and athletics' Kent Brown for their research, rapid response to our many questions and personal contributions (see A-6, 8 and 10).
Here's to another 100 years. And air conditioning.

Jeff D'Alessio is editor of The News-Gazette. He can be reached at jdalessio@news-gazette.com.



GEORGE HUFF

University of Illinois

100 YEARS, 100 FACTS, FIGURES AND FAMOUS FORMERS

WORDS BY EDITOR JEFF D'ALESSIO ❖ ❖ ❖ jdalessio@news-gazette.com
DESIGN BY MANAGING EDITOR NIKO DUGAN ❖ ❖ ❖ ndugan@news-gazette.com

1-6. The building's namesake had a higher winning percentage as football coach than Mike White, brought home more Big Ten championships in baseball than any coach in any sport not named Mike Small, and is fondly remembered as 'the father of Illini athletics.'



GREAT-GRANDSON JOE MURPHY

But **GEORGE HUFF's** community connections run much deeper than the 46 years he spent as an Illini player, coach and athletic director.
We asked his great-grandson — Champaign attorney **JOE MURPHY** —

for his list of did-you-know fun facts about Huff's local ties:
→ "He was a native of Champaign, born and raised here."
→ "He replaced Cy Young as coach of the Boston Americans (now Red Sox) for the 1907 season before returning to Champaign."

→ "His adult home was on the corner of Church and State streets on West Side Park (where First Presbyterian now has its community hall) — next to the Champaign City Library of the day, the Burnham Athenaeum, now home to Meyer Capel law firm."
→ "His wife's cousin became a prominent dentist in town: Steve Stevens, whose dental assistant was Bonnie Blair's mother."
→ "His son-in-law, Frank Murphy Sr., was an Olympic gold medalist in the 1912 Games. (Yes, this is our grandfather, and the first Olympian honored on the local monument.)"
→ "His wife, who lived till around 1960, was treated as the grande dame of Illinois sports, being chauffeured to her seat in the first row on the 50-yard line next to the university president for every home football game."

MY HUFF: 1999 Dike Eddleman Athlete of the Year CRISTY CHAPMAN-UHRIG (volleyball, 1996-99)

'I remember looking at my dad and seeing tears in his eyes knowing that it was not only my dream but his dream came true too'

I'm a true southern Illinois girl who was raised on Illinois sports. It was a dream come true for me to play at the U of I.
I grew up in a community that has maybe 8,000 people in the whole county, so sports were truly our only social calendar event other than going to church.
I was either wearing orange and blue for my high school, Newton, or repping the orange and blue for the Illini. As a kid, we would go to games in Champaign and it was a very big deal. I remember walking into Huff as an eighth-grader thinking of just how beautiful the gym was and just how fun it was to be a part of that atmosphere as a spectator.
My mom passed away when I was 11, and most of my childhood going to Champaign did not bring good memories because my mom had her treatment at Carle Hospital. I grew up 100 miles south, so there were a lot of hours clocked on Illinois 49.
My dad and I were always close, but

after mom passed, he was just my person. My dad also retired from Caterpillar when I was 6, and that's when we moved back to our family farm in Jasper County. It was pretty special to have my dad a part of my everyday life at such a young age on a farm.
The first day I walked into Huff as an Illini, I remember thinking that there was no way this was real. I remember looking at my dad and seeing tears in his eyes knowing that it was not only my dream but his dream came true too. No one in my dad's family had ever graduated from college and my mom only asked for one thing from my dad before she passed away:
"Promise me that Cristy will graduate from college!"
It seems funny to me now to say that because it just seems like an obvious path to take, but to my family, it was a very big deal. I didn't see my dad very emotional much, but the day I committed to play at Illinois and the day I walked across the stage at Huff as a college graduate were probably



Provided

Cristy Chapman-Uhrig, center, on a return visit to Huff with sister Sandra Chapman DeLair, left, and former teammate Melissa Beitz.

the happiest days of my dad's life.
Unfortunately, my daddy passed away a year after I graduated from college, and still to this day, every time I walk into Huff, he is the first person I think of. My dad never missed a game, and it is a sweet memory to look into the stands across from the bench

and remember him cheering all of us on.
He was one in a million, and I think my teammates could also tell you he was here for all of us.
Thanks, Huff, for all the special memories on and off the court. It will always be so special to me in so many ways.

HUFF AT A HUNDRED

PIVOTAL

TRANQUIL

EFFERVESCENT

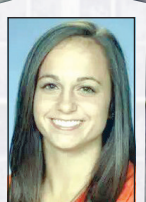
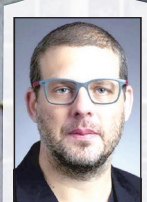
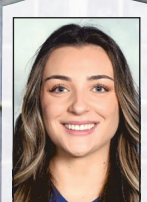
HISTORY

RAUCOUS

EVOLUTION

ALIVE

HOME



**RJ
HYNDS**

President of English Brothers, which built Huff

**ANITA
CLINTON**

No. 9 all-time in women's basketball field-goal percentage

**JUSTIN
SPRING**

UI's two-time Dike Eddleman Athlete of the Year

**TANYA
GALLAGHER**

Dean, College of Applied Health Sciences (1998-2016)

**JOE
WHITE**

16th president of UI system (2005-09)

**ALI
BASTIANELLI**

Volleyball program's all-time leader in blocks

**PEDRO
HALLAL**

Alvin M. and Ruth L. Sandall Professor, College of AHS

**GIANA
(O'CONNOR) DINS**

First-team All-American gymnast in 2015

7. The greatest game Loren Tate ever saw at Huff Gym



It was difficult to imagine a more lively hot spot than Huff Gym — long before it was Huff Hall — where fans

from all corners of the state descended for the annual IHSA basketball tournament.

Consecutive triumphs in the 1940s by Centralia, Paris, Taylorville, Decatur, Champaign, Paris, Pinckneyville and Mt. Vernon led easily impressed youths like me to assume there were no hoops north of Kankakee.

It was a golden era for downstate basketball ... and Huff.

Directly after the Whiz Kids returned from service for the 1946-47 Illini season, Champaign High School coach Harry Combes became the University of Illinois' head coach and brought Maroon stars Ted Beach and Rod Fletcher with him to turn Huff Gym into a plumb-crazy, season-long madhouse.

Imagine an arena that, so we're told, can no longer hold 4,000 for Illini volleyball, seating 6,905 rambunctious fans for all those sensational games in the 1950s.

Run for cover

The greatest, most exciting contest I witnessed in Huff was on Feb. 19, 1951. There are multiple reasons why it was so personally special: Big Ten Silver Basketball winner Don Sunderlage was my fraternity roommate the year before, Beach and Fletcher were household names locally, Combes allowed previously cut walk-ons like me to sit directly behind the bench, and the Illini were battling No. 6 Indiana for the Big Ten championship. Indiana had earlier defeat-



Illinois Athletics photos

Harry Combes' 1950-51 canvas Chuck Taylor-wearing Big Ten champs treated Huff Hall crowds to a highlight reel's worth of memorable moments, including Top 25 home wins over Butler, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio State, Purdue and Wisconsin. The season ended with the second of three trips in four years to the Final Four.

ed the Illini, 64-53, and these arch-rivals tipped off with 9-1 conference records.

The great Bill Garrett, an explosive 6-3 center who was the league's first Black star, joined Collinsville's hot-shooting Sammy Miranda in building a 60-56 IU lead with 8 minutes to go before Garrett fouled out (two minutes later with 16 points), and the Illini forged ahead when Fletcher drained a medium jumper between two layups by hard-driving Clive Follmer.

Sunderlage raced in on a fast-break goal and, with seconds ticking away, Beach cashed a short shot to clinch a crowd-erupting 71-65 result.

The best plan at the end was to go run for cover as fans

clamored all over each other in celebration.

Dynamic duo

Illinois left that extraordinary night with national-championship ambitions.

There were anxious moments after the 6-foot Sunderlage, the popular Dee Brown of his day, scored an Ohio Field House record 34 points in an 89-69 rout of the Buckeyes.

They needed a combined 48 points from seniors Sunderlage and Beach to edge Northwestern, 80-76, before 18,890 in Chicago. On the road again, they shot a weak 26 percent in squeaking by Michigan State, 49-43, as Fletcher reversed a 43-39 deficit with four straight goals on two midcourt steals, a

15-footer and a tip-in.

The 16-team NCAA tournament scheduled Illinois in Madison Square Garden for the first three, and they were all barn-burners.

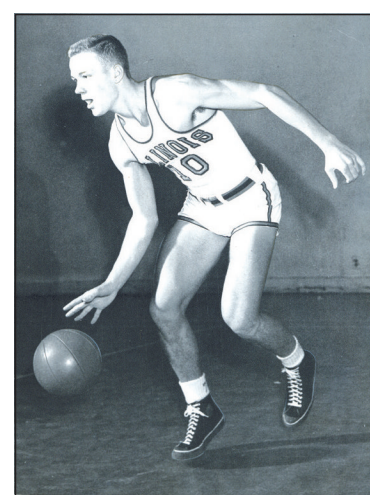
First, Illinois snapped Columbia's 31-game win streak, 79-71, on hot shooting by Sunderlage (25) and Beach (22).

In the 84-70 quarterfinal defeat of North Carolina State, the same seniors combined for 38 and Fletcher had a personal-high nine field goals, including a two-handed, 61-foot heave at halftime.

So close

So it once again came down to Kentucky, a 76-47 conqueror of Illinois in the 1949 Final Four.

Bob Peterson held his own



Don Sunderlage won the Big Ten scoring title as a senior, averaging 17.4 points a game, and was taken with the ninth pick in the 1951 NBA draft by the Philadelphia Warriors.

against 7-foot Wildcat Bill Spivey as the sharp-shooting Illini led 39-32 at half. However, Spivey's "rough-house tactics" wore them down as he drew nine fouls from two UI centers.

Spivey finished with 28 points on 27 shots, and Adolph Rupp's eventual national champs ruled again, 76-74, on a short jumper by Shelby Linville.

A last-second driving shot by Sunderlage spun off the rim.

So, looking back, the final regular-season game at Huff Gym — a rousing 71-65 defeat of Indiana — set the stage for a magical late-season run, only to be halted by Kentucky. The Illini downed Oklahoma A&M, 61-46, in the third-place game.

Only once in the last 75 years — in 2005 — have the Illini come closer to an NCAA basketball title.

Loren Tate writes for The News-Gazette. He can be reached at ltate@news-gazette.com.

ONE-ON-ONE: CHERYL HANLEY-MAXWELL, Dean, UI College of Applied Health Sciences

'Although this building needs some updating, the solidity and architectural style mirror the enduring academic mission contained within its walls'

Next year will mark 10 on the job for Huff Hall's highest-ranking academic office holder — **CHERYL HANLEY-MAXWELL**, who in 2016, after a 26-year run at the University of Wisconsin, returned to the campus where she earned three academic degrees and met her husband. Here's more from the disability specialist and dean of the College of Applied Health Sciences.

My first memory of Huff Hall is ... dancing in a dance marathon in the Huff gym. I remember the music, the excitement and the exhaustion.

For inspiration in this building, you can't beat ... walking the halls. Seeing the students and overhearing classroom lectures is a constant reminder of how we are shaping the future and our responsibility for ensuring we are providing the best education we can provide.

When it comes to the academic history of Huff, I'm most awestruck by ... the fact that "giants" of the AHS disciplines and research areas include those whose work came from offices and labs in Huff Hall.

The best part about working in a 100-year-old building is ... that I have a constant, visual reminder of the university's enduring commitment to the state and nation.

Although this building needs some updating, the solidity and architectural style mirror the enduring academic mission contained within its walls.



Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell

We asked Dean Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell to snap a photo of herself in one of her favorite Huff Hall spots. Here she is in the southwest corner, in front of a historical timeline.

The part that takes some getting used to is ... the staircases that don't connect to classrooms or provide access from the second floor of the original Huff Hall to the second floor of the Khan Annex.

Every semester, I spend extra time in the halls helping students navigate the building — avoid the stairs to the bleachers!

Deans list

What's been known since 2006 as the UI College of Applied Health Sciences was led in the early days by two familiar names in campus history:

- **George Huff, 1907-37:** Director, Physical Education for Men
- **Louise Freer, 1915-49:** Head, Department of Physical Education for Women
- **Seward Staley, 1937-57:** Director, School of Physical Education; 1957-61, Dean, College of Physical Education
- **King McCrystal, 1961-73:** Dean, College of Physical Education
- **Allen Sapora, 1973-74 and 1981-82:** Acting Dean, College of Applied Life Studies
- **Cyrus Mayshark, 1974-75:** Dean, College of Physical Education
- **Phyllis Hill, 1976-77:** Acting Dean, College of Applied Life Studies
- **Larry Braskamp, 1987-89:** Acting Dean, College of Applied Life Studies
- **Kenneth Clarke, 1977-81:** Dean, College of Applied Life Studies
- **Robert Herron, 1983-87:** Dean, College of Applied Life Studies
- **Michael Ellis, 1989-98:** Dean, College of Applied Life Studies
- **Tanya Gallagher, 1998-2016:** Dean, College of Applied Health Sciences
- **Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell, 2016-present:** Dean, College of Applied Health Sciences

Celebrate 100 Years of Huff Hall!



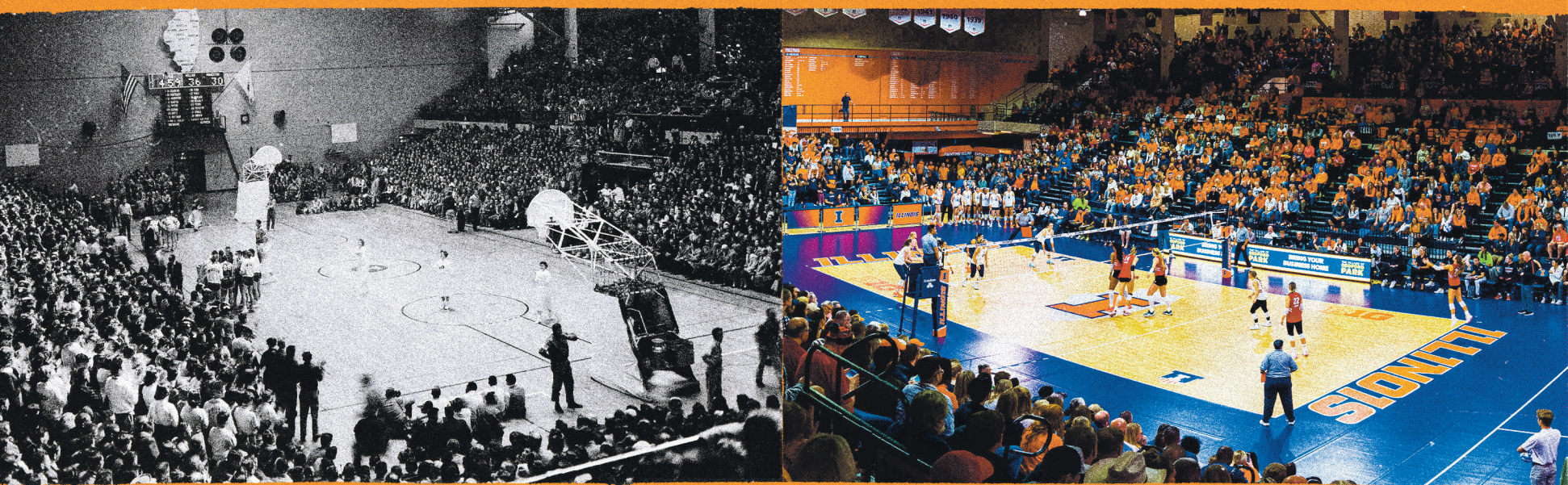
For a century, Huff Hall has stood as a cornerstone of academics at the University of Illinois. Named for George Huff, this building has functioned as the home for the College of Applied Health Sciences and its current academic units in Health and Kinesiology, and Recreation, Sport and Tourism.

This academic year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of this historic venue and we reflect on its storied past and enduring impact on the University of Illinois community.

Thank you for celebrating with us!



THE FIGHTING ILLINI CELEBRATE 100 YEARS AT HISTORIC HUFF HALL



Since the first Illinois Basketball win on December 12, 1925, to the current home of Fighting Illini Volleyball, Wrestling, Men's Gymnastics and Women's Gymnastics, Historic Huff Hall has played an integral spot in Illinois Athletics history.

From National Champions to All-Americans, Huff Hall has been at the center of Fighting Illini Athletics success for 100 years!

Thank you to the thousands of fans who have supported our teams as members of our Illinois FamLLy over the last century!

HUFF AT A HUNDRED

INTENSE

BARN

FIGHTING

HOME

TRANSCENDENT

NOSTALGIC

ELECTRIC

STATELY



SHERRY BEDEAUX HEBERT
First lady of Illini volleyball, 1983-95

TAL BRODY
2020 Illinois Athletics Hall of Fame inductee

CHUNG-YI CHIU
Associate professor, College of Applied Health Sciences

JESSE DELGADO
Won back-to-back NCAA wrestling titles

KRISTIN HENRIKSEN
3-time Big Ten volleyball hitting champ

BILL FORSYTH
25th portrayer of Chief Illiniwek, 1984-85

RAE BALTHAZOR
Second-team All-American gymnast in 2018

BRIAN MONSON
Assistant professor, College of Applied Health Sciences

8. No local business enjoyed the Roaring Twenties quite like English Brothers did.

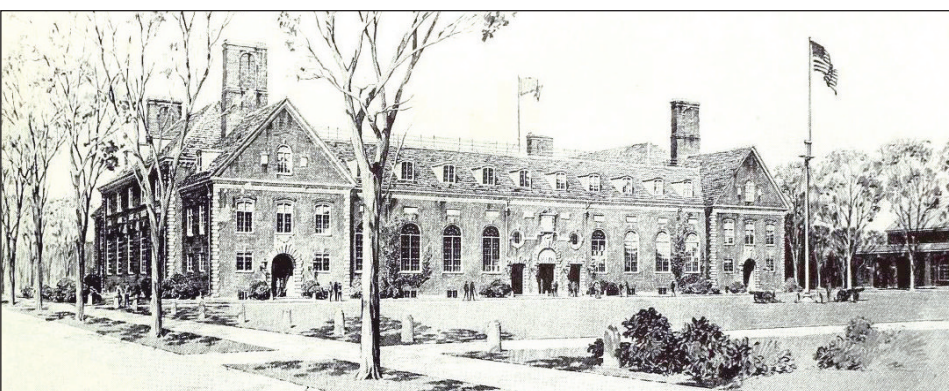
In the span of five years, the Champaign family business' projects included three iconic Illinois structures — Memorial Stadium in 1923, Huff Hall in 1925 and the Main Library in 1927. "The completion of Huff was a pivotal

moment for UIUC and English Brothers," says **RJ Hynds**, the company's proud president. "It helped define both as leaders in our respective fields." Their timing couldn't have been better, either — in 1929, the Great Depression hit.

9. All told, Huff cost \$772,000 to build.

In today's dollars, that amounts to \$14,291,969.83 — or about one-seventh of the amount that Larry Gies pledged to Illini athletics in September.

10-12. Sadly, George Huff never got to see his name emblazoned on the building at 1206 S. Fourth St.



The Illio/University of Illinois Library

An artist's rendering of what was then called the 'New Gym' as seen in the 1927 Illio Yearbook.

It wasn't until Feb. 28, 1937, 151 days after his death, that UI trustees decided to honor his legacy by renaming what was originally called the New Gymnasium.

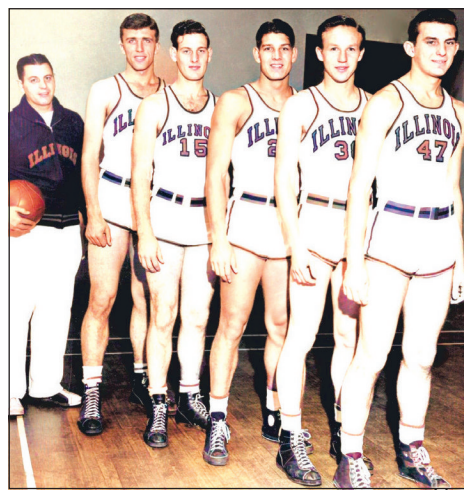
Forty-seven years later came another modification, when Huff Gym became Huff Hall, to better capture all that was happening inside, in the College of Applied Life Studies.

Like the departments it housed — Leisure Studies

(now Recreation, Sport and Tourism) and Health & Safety Education (now Health & Kinesiology) — the College of ALS got a name change of its own, becoming the College of Applied Health Sciences in 2006.

13-17. Huff's where Jack Smiley, Ken Menke, Andy Phillip, Art Mathisen and Gene Vance became the Whiz Kids, as dominant a starting five as Big Ten basketball has ever seen.

In the 1941-42 and 1942-43 seasons, Doug Mills' Illini went 25-2 in conference play, claiming back-to-back Big Ten championships. Only a world war could stop them. Smiley, Menke and Mathisen were all drafted into service following the regular season and college basketball's top team opted out of taking part in postseason play. "There was no question in our mind that we would have won it all," Vance said. Their last Huff hurrah came years later, on Sept. 4, 1990, when the quintet reunited for the volleyball team's christening of its new home gym.



From left, coach Doug Mills and the Whiz Kids — Art Mathisen, Jack Smiley, Gene Vance, Ken Menke and Andy Phillip.

18. The first lady once paid a visit.

And not just any first lady but Eleanor Roosevelt, who stopped at Huff in February 1942 — two months after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor — to implore state and local officials to speed up whatever work they were doing to aid the U.S. effort. "War goods must be produced in a hurry," she's said to have told the audience. "We were not mentally prepared for war ... now it is up to each and every one of us at home to build up a greater strength in people."



WILL

19. So did Bob Hope.

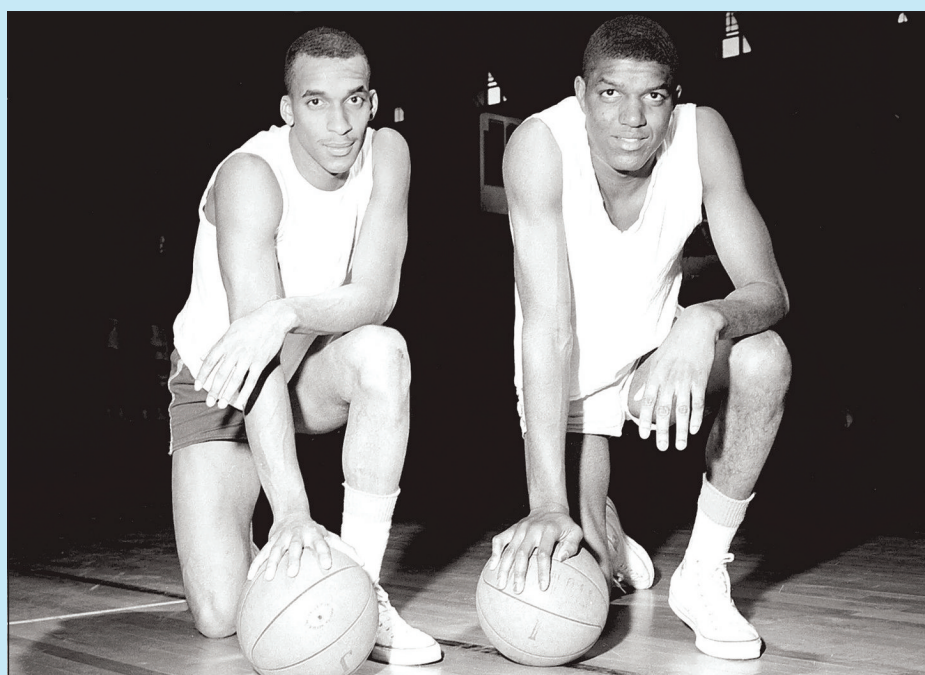
Funny story there: The comedian was due to perform after an Illini-Iowa showdown at Huff on Jan. 20, 1951, but the Hawkeyes ran into bad weather on the way here, forcing a delay of game until 11 p.m.

Hope came out at halftime after having a meal at Katsinas, telling the crowd: "First time I ever saw a midnight basketball game."

The Champaign-Urbana Courier had to go to press long before the buzzer sounded on an Illini win, telling readers in the next morning's paper: "Bob Hope gave a show early this morning, we hope."

He did indeed, delighting the crowd of 4,000 in a set that began at 12:35 a.m.

20-21. Huff's where MANNIE JACKSON broke the color barrier in men's basketball at the University of Illinois. Fifty-four years later, he returned to make a mark of another kind in his favorite campus building.



Illinois Athletics

The history makers: Mannie Jackson, left, and Gov Vaughn.

"I'd love to do a movie from there one day," the chairman and co-owner of the Harlem Globetrotters told us this week. "Turn it into a museum of great American basketball history."

Scene 1: The 6-3 guard, who was born in a boxcar and grew up in poverty, joins Edwardsville High School teammates Don Ohl and Gov Vaughn at the University of Illinois. In December 1957, Jackson and Vaughn, "the world's greatest teammate," debut as Illini basketball's first Black lettermen and go on to great success, both making All-Big Ten teams.

Says Jackson: "We played every game for Huff and the fans, and to this day I've never regretted a minute — even considering the occasional regional bigotry. I loved Huff and I love the thought of those days."

Scene 2: After achieving fame and fortune — first African American owner of a major sports corporation, chairman of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame, Lincoln laureate — Jackson returns to his alma mater for the 2007 launch of the Mannie L. Jackson Illinois Academic Enrichment & Leadership Program, or I-LEAP, at the College of Applied Health Sciences.

His family pledges the first \$2 million to create a program with the mission of providing support to first-generation undergrads, athletes and others, giving "students today the help that I received from certain people" in the 1950s.

"If you can find someone that you're committed to helping to make successful," Jackson says, "you'll do pretty good in life."



University of Illinois

ABOVE: Dean Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell with Jackson, honored by the College of Applied Health Sciences in 2017 with a Distinguished Alumni Award.

BELOW: Since 2023, Brad Underwood's Illini have practiced on Mannie Jackson & Jerry Colangelo Court at the Ubben Basketball Complex.

Robin Scholz/
The News-Gazette

22. It wasn't just on the Huff hardwood where Jackson developed into the kind of freakish athlete the team he'd go on to buy had to have.

"As the former owner of the Harlem Globetrotters, people still ask how I jumped so high at the start of games," he says.

His answer? "Those ingenious racquetball courts in the basement of Huff."



TRIVIA TIME



Think you know your Huff stuff? See how you fare answering questions sprinkled throughout this section from five expert guests



Asks **VINCE LARA-CINISOMO**, assistant director of communications at the UI College of Applied Health Sciences: Which researcher at Huff Hall is known as the "father of physical fitness" for establishing a pioneering Physical Fitness Research Laboratory there in 1944?

- A. William H. Creswell Jr.
- B. Thomas K. Cureton Jr.
- C. Howard S. Hoyman
- D. Aurelio E. "Joe" Florio

Answer: B. Thomas K. Cureton Jr., who in 1965 was honored by President Lyndon Johnson and the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce as one of the top three physical-fitness leaders in the United States.

**Congratulations
to the Division of
Intercollegiate
Athletics and
College of Applied
Health Sciences
on Huff Hall's
100th anniversary!**

— Jerry & Joan Colangelo —



HUFF AT A HUNDRED

MEMORIES

TRANSFORMATIVE

MAGICAL

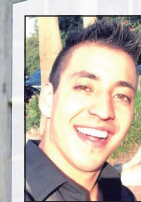
LEGACY

ELECTRIC

INSPIRING

EPIC

ENERGY



JERRY COLANGELO

In Naismith Basketball, Illini halls of fame

BRITTANY LOPEZ

Academic skills specialist, College of AHS

KAYANI TURNER

Won volleyball's Spirit Award in 2009

ROD CARDINAL

2002 Honorary Varsity I Award recipient

ASHLEY BERGGREN

1997 Big Ten Basketball Player of the Year

WENDY ROGERS

Shahid & Ann Carlson Khan Professor of AHS

TYLER MIZOGUCHI

2011 NCAA champion gymnast in parallel bars

NAYA CRITTENDEN

All-tournament at volleyball's 2016 Illini Classic

23. Between Dec. 12, 1925 (a 23-22 win over Butler), and Feb. 23, 1963 (a win over Wisconsin), more than 2.28 million fans filed into Huff to watch men's basketball.

34-41. For gymnastics alone, the Big Ten has laid out the mats at Huff for eight conference championship events — four apiece for the men and women.

That made winning individual conference championships extra special for Lynn Devers (1991), Kelsey Joannides (1995) and Sarah Schmidt (1999) on the women's side and Ricardo Cheriell (1992), Jeremiah Landry (1995), Ben Newman (2004), Justin Spring (2004), now-head coach Daniel Ribeiro (2011) and Chad Wiest (2011) for the men.

24-27. No building on campus has hosted a more eclectic mix of events over the years.

42-44. The Illini family that sprung for naming rights to the outdoor tennis courts, and pledged \$15 million for Vet Med's coming-in-2026 cancer care clinic, also donated \$10 million to put the finishing touches on the original vision for Huff — a central column flanked by northern and southern wings.

28. It was also a regular stop on the touring circuit for a who's who of jazz acts.



Shahid and Ann Carlson Khan at the 2011 opening of the Khan Annex.

In 2011, 87 years after the building opened, the Khan Annex — named after lead donors Shahid and Ann Carlson Khan — added 24,000 square feet for state-of-the-art lab, instructional and collaborative space in the College of Applied Health Sciences.

It's now home to the dean's suite, the James K. and Karen S. McKechnie Laboratory, the Linda Ayers Whitney Reception Area and the Michael Vitoux and Vitoux Family Reception Area.

On the college's faculty: Wendy Rogers and Kim Graber, who both hold the title of Shahid and Ann Carlson Khan Professor.

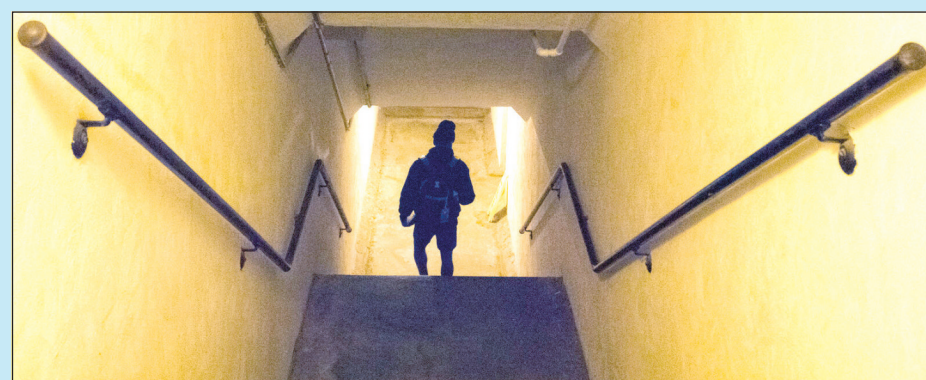
45. The Khan Annex brought with it much more than extra space.

For future Springfield attorney **Saul Morse**, it provided access he never had as an undergrad.

"As a student in the 1960s, Huff was one of the few buildings on campus which a person using a wheelchair could not enter unassisted. For that reason, the first time I entered it was when the Khan annex was added and I could enter like everyone else," says the 2023 recipient of the College of Applied Health Sciences' Harold Scharper Achievement Award. "That is a great architectural feat, in my opinion, of melding the old with the new in a respectful way."



MORSE



Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

The tunnel under Gregory Street that connects Huff Hall to the Armory.

46-48. In the 1990s and 2000s, it's where you were liable to bump into a future Olympian in the building's bowels.

Technically, track and field was never a Huff Hall tenant. But for at least three months of the year, the underground tunnel that connects Huff and the Armory is frequented by sprinters, hurdlers, long jumpers and shot putters seeking relief from the winter weather.

"I'm so appreciative for that tunnel because I was not quite used to that Illinois cold," 1996 Dike Eddleman Award winner **Tonya Williams** says from her south Florida home.

Not every elite Illini athlete has such warm and fuzzy memories.

Says **Bobby True**, who ran for Liberia at the 2000 Summer Games: "That tunnel more days out of the week than not was traveled twice. The first time: going to practice with the

anxiousness of what Coach would have slated for the next demanding workout that would make us better than we were the day before. The second time was after practice, when this walk would sometimes be a crawl to the stairs after praying to the trash cans — all to be followed by a blurry walk back through the tunnel to the lockers licking our wounds, day in and day out."

Perdita Felicien, who represented her native Canada in two Olympics, remembers the days when a grueling workout awaited on the other side of the tunnel.

"It felt like we were lambs walking to the slaughter," she says. "We knew once we emerged from that dim walkway, a workout from hell was waiting for us."

"It also felt like you were living in medieval times, walking to or from a dungeon in the dark bottom of a castle."

"Hope Huff never loses its charm."



WILLIAMS



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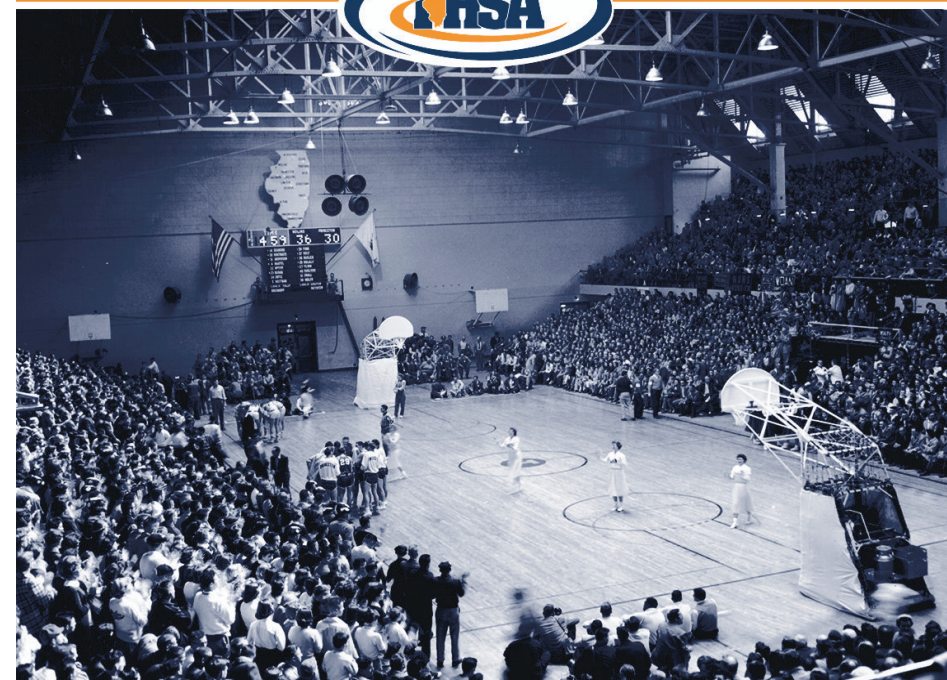


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CONGRATS ON 100 YEARS!

HUFF AT A HUNDRED

EVERMORE

AUTHENTIC

ENERGY

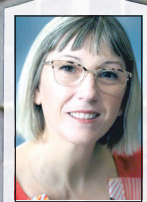
REGISTRATION

HOT!

COMMUNITY

HOMEY

POSSIBILITY



CARLA SANTOS

Head, Department of Recreation, Sport & Tourism

ADAM BLEAKNEY

UI's wheelchair racing coach since 2005

FATIMA HUSAIN

Associate Dean, College of Applied Health Sciences

BOB EASTER

19th president of UI system (2012-15)

MAUREEN GILBERT

Campus Life Coordinator, Disability Resources

PAUL RUGGERI

Four-time NCAA champion gymnast

AMBER (SEE) SWANSEN

Three-time All-Big Ten gymnastics pick

MICHAEL LEACH

2023 Young Alumni Award, College of AHS

49. Before Jack LaLanne, there was T.K. Cureton.

Vince Lara-Cinisomo, assistant director of communications at the UI College of Applied Health Sciences, writes about a pioneering professor who found a home at Huff Hall.

"It's never too late to begin getting into shape, but it does take daily, sometimes painful, perseverance. After all, you can't expect in a week's time to make over a body that took years to wreck."

— Thomas K. Cureton Jr.

In the College of Applied Health Sciences, there is a legacy of one man's unwavering dedication to physical fitness. That man is Thomas K. Cureton, Jr., better known as T.K. Cureton, but probably best known as the "father of physical fitness."

Long before exercise guru Jack LaLanne began hosting his syndicated TV fitness program in the 1950s, Cureton established the Physical Fitness Research Laboratory in 1944 at Illinois. Cureton's research and commitment to physical education and fitness laid the foundation for the fitness movement that is so widely recognized today. From the athletic fields to university classrooms, the impact of his work extends far beyond the realm of physical education.

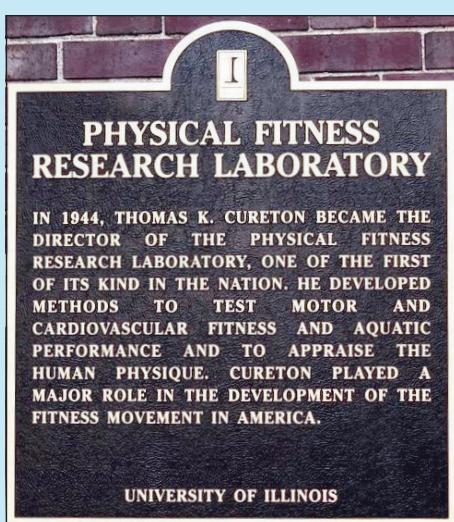
Born in Florida, Cureton had a diverse academic and professional journey before arriving at the University of Illinois. Growing up in the South, he initially attended Georgia Tech before transferring to Yale to finish his undergraduate degree. From there, he found himself coaching swimming and directing research at Springfield College in Massachusetts. But it was his arrival in 1941 at the University of Illinois, after being recruited by Dean Seward Staley, that would shape the future of fitness research and practice.

At the time, physical education as an academic discipline was still in its infancy, and there were few established research foundations. Cureton's appointment marked the beginning of the transition from physical education to a more comprehensive study of physical fitness. He worked to establish research programs, recognizing the importance of physical fitness for overall health long before it became a popular societal trend.

This vision, paired with his extensive background in athletics, allowed him to bridge the gap between the two worlds — combining sports with research-driven methodologies to better understand how fitness impacts human health.

But what exactly sparked Cureton's passion for fitness and wellness? His son Kirk recalled how his father's interest in athletics and fitness developed early.

"He was a good athlete at Georgia Tech



and Yale, participating in varsity athletics, especially swimming," Kirk Cureton said. "The influence of people like Yale's swimming coach, Bob Kiphuth, and other experts in biology and hygiene inspired him."

Through his exposure to these environments, T.K. Cureton was drawn to physical education and ultimately pursued further education in the field, earning bachelor's and master's degrees in physical education, and a Ph.D. in educational research, cementing his position as one of the foremost authorities in the field.

Workout warrior

In the early 1930s, as the concept of physical fitness was still gaining traction, Cureton was one of the first researchers to publish significant works on the subject. One such milestone came in 1935 when the Research Quarterly journal published a supplement titled "Physical Fitness," which included a series of articles on the components of physical fitness, including those authored by Cureton himself.

"He's often credited as one of the primary contributors to defining the concept of physical fitness," Kirk Cureton said. "That idea was radical at the time."

Before figures such as LaLanne, who later became synonymous with the fitness craze of the 1950s and beyond, Cureton was already working tirelessly to raise awareness of fitness as an integral aspect of health. His contributions were not only academic but practical, as he worked on initiatives that showed how physical activity could improve long-term health outcomes, including cardiac rehabilitation — a field that was revolutionary at the time.

Cureton didn't just focus on academia. He brought his expertise to the public through clinics and talks, often conducting sessions for professionals such as dentists. As Kirk Cureton recalled, "On weekends,

he'd often be away doing clinics, and then come home and talk about it."

His commitment to fitness permeated his life to the point where even vacations became opportunities for exercise. "We'd go on family trips, and my dad would just decide to run behind the car while my mom drove," Kirk said with a laugh. "Of course, as kids, we were embarrassed, but that's just how he lived it."

His father's dedication left a lasting impression. "He would talk about it all the time," Kirk said. "He would give us lectures and discussions about fitness, especially when he came home from conferences or testing. We got an earful."

It was in Huff Hall, the hub for the UI's physical education and health sciences departments, where much of T.K. Cureton's academic life took place. Though Huff Hall was nominally home to athletic facilities, it also housed classrooms, labs and faculty offices, reflecting the integral role that academia played in physical education.

Lasting legacy

Even after his retirement, T.K. Cureton's legacy lived on, particularly through his influence on graduate students.

As Kirk said, "His teaching was crucial to graduate students, especially during the summers when he'd teach two classes every year. That was a lot of work, especially considering he was running a large research program at the time."

This hands-on mentorship continued for many years, ensuring that T.K. Cureton's impact extended far beyond his time at the university.

Though Kirk was undoubtedly influenced by his father's work, he did not initially plan to follow in his footsteps. He went on a different path, studying pre-med and spending time in medical school before returning to Illinois to pursue a master's in the field his father helped pioneer. His eventual return to Illinois marked the beginning of his own academic career, one that would honor the legacy his father established.

Today, the impact of T.K. Cureton's work is still felt, particularly within the College of Applied Health Sciences. His contributions to the understanding of physical fitness, health and wellness laid the foundation for future generations of researchers, educators and practitioners. His work, often ahead of its time, helped to redefine what fitness meant to society and has left an indelible mark on the world of physical education.

As the University of Illinois celebrates the centennial of Huff Hall, the memory of T.K. Cureton's vision continues to shape the future of health and fitness research.

51. Back in the day, fans with front-row seats could reach out and touch someone — like, say, a player on the other team.

Legend has it that a visiting Indiana Hoosier once had a lighted cigarette dropped down his shorts while standing on the sideline and that fans would rip the hairs of opponents' legs.

Star guard **Dave Downey** likes to tell the story of a close encounter he had with a future friend: "Phyllis Robeson was recently married when I was playing and she sat on the front row. She said that one time, I ended up sitting on her lap. When I was trying to take the ball out of bounds, another player kind of gave me a shove, and that's where I ended up."

And the close quarters weren't limited to basketball games.

When Huff was packed to the rafters for wrestling meets, "the fans in the front row were practically on the mat with you," says **Pete Friedl**, third all-time in wins at Illinois.

"Intimate" is the word former UI Chancellor **Richard Hermann** would use to describe it.

"I went to a wrestling match there the first year I arrived," he says. "I wrestled in high school and as I watched, I could feel my body move in subconscious imitation and admiration for those on the mat."

52. Nowhere to be found on any list of the most impressive performances at Huff (but perhaps it should be): Illini who successfully completed the 52-hour test of endurance known as the dance-a-thon.



Provided

Russ Tripp and his late wife made it through two in the mid-'70s.

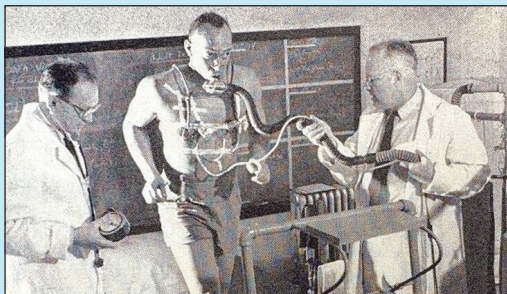
"The first year seemed easier," says the UI grad, who has vivid memories of the "really good evening entertainment: Harry Chapin, Little Feat with Lowell George and Starcastle."

Some contestants in the Friday-to-Sunday dance marathons were known to boogie with textbooks in hand, studying for their Monday exams.

The dance-a-thons, which debuted locally in 1973 and ended in 1989, were organized by Zeta Beta Tau fraternity chapters across the country, all for a good cause — raising money for muscular-dystrophy research.

50. Just how influential was T.K. Cureton?

That's none other than **Jesse Owens** in his Huff Hall lab — some 20 years after the Ohio State track and field great won four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Summer Games in Hitler's Germany.



Provided



University of Illinois Archives

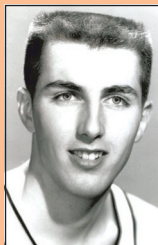
MY HUFF: Big Ten champion BILL SMALL (basketball, 1960-63)



Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

Between them, Danville's Bill and Mike Small have won 14 Big Ten titles — Dad's coming in 1962-63, the final year Illinois men's basketball called Huff Gym home. He got a taste of what was to come as an all-stater at Aurora West, which finished fourth in 1958 and second in 1959 when the IHSA finals were held at Huff.

'I experienced many great arenas — Madison Square Garden, Chicago Stadium and others — but that final game at Huff Gym stands out because everyone knew it was the last'



My experiences and life memories are with Huff Gym and basketball at the high school level and the University of Illinois.

The state high school tourney was first played at Huff Gym in 1926. I was fortunate to have played in two state finals, a total of six games, in 1958 and 1959.

Back then, there was no state football playoffs. There were also no girls' sports programs. So the premier high school sport event was the boys' basketball tournament with one class and over 800 schools playing for the opportunity to advance to the finals in Champaign and at Huff Gym.

Standing room only at Huff — and probably twice that many on closed-off Fourth

Street and down in Campustown — made for quite the experience for not only the players but also their students and fans.

Then, playing my entire college career at Illinois and in Huff Gym to sold-out crowds every game and with huge student support — and playing the final game in Huff Gym on Feb. 23, 1963, a Saturday, before moving to the Assembly Hall — gave me forever memories, along with a Big Ten championship.

I experienced many great arenas — Madison Square Garden, Chicago Stadium and others — but that final game at Huff Gym stands out because everyone knew it was the last.

The noise in the gym with every pass, every shot, every rebound was the loudest I ever experienced, and it lasted the full 40 minutes. We defeated Wisconsin that day on our way to the Big Ten title.

HUFF AT A HUNDRED

MEANINGFUL

HOME

PIONEER

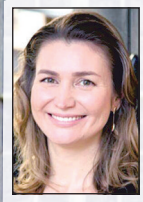
TRADITION

UPLIFTING

BUDDING

GROWTH

SPECIAL



VICKI BROWN
2004 Sandy Scholtens Award winner

TONY DALLAGO
UI wrestling's all-time leader in career pins

ANDI SCHWINGEL
Professor, kinesiology and community health

DR. BILL MOHLENBROCK
'50s basketball forward turned orthopedic surgeon

LIZ McMAHON
First Illini in any sport to win Senior CLASS Award

JENN JACOBS
2021 Young Alumni Award, College of AHS

SANDRALUZ LARA-CINISOMO
Associate professor, College of Applied Health Sciences

RAINA TERRY
Set volleyball program records for points, aces, kills

53-54. Harry Chapin was a Huff fan.



Provided

Then-Daily Illini photographer Jeff Marsh snapped this shot of Harry Chapin's 1977 stop at Huff.

In fact, during one of his multiple performances here in the '70s, the folk-rocking philanthropist best known for "Cat's in the Hat" and "Taxi" said C-U was one of his favorite places to play, **Todd Salen** remembers.

The Class of '79 grad would know. He first met Chapin during the 1976 dance-a-thon at Huff and grew to be such a fan that he spent \$75 at a campus auction for one of six spots on the private jet that transported Chapin from Champaign to Oklahoma City and back.

Chapin's reason 1977 alumna **Suzanne (Pawlan) Levy** went to multiple dance-a-thons: "I felt like I got to know him, he was so warm and talked to everyone. I enjoyed watching the dancing, but I was there for Harry. I request his songs now whenever I can."

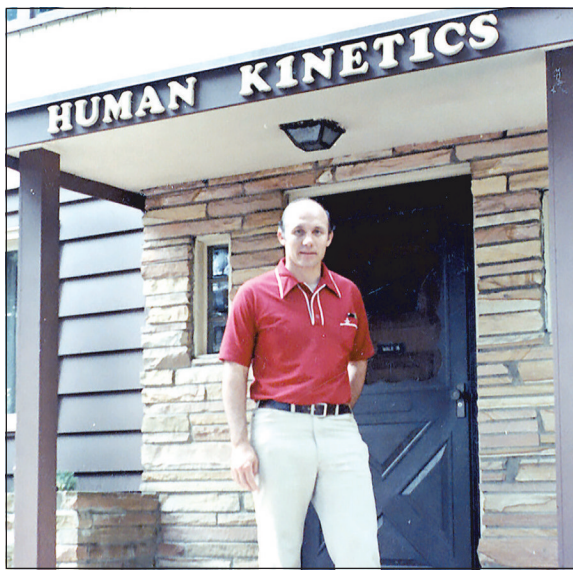
55. The building gets campus architects' seal of approval.

Says no less an authority than **Francisco Rodriguez-Suarez**, director of the UI School of Architecture: "Huff Hall is one of my favorite buildings on campus. It was part of a 100-year-old campus master plan by architect Charles Platt, one of a dozen designed for Illinois in a neo-Georgian or Georgian revival style, including the Main Library and the Architecture Building. I thoroughly enjoy going to volleyball games at Huff. The atmosphere is fantastic and the space has a unique historical aura."

Other fans on the architecture faculty: **Didem Ekici** ("I like the quiet, dignified aesthetic of Huff Hall") and **Yun Kyu Yi** ("It contributes to the cohesive classical identity of the historic campus").

Co-founder **Rainer Martens** stands outside of one of Human Kinetics' early locations on Kirby Avenue in Champaign, circa 1981. The sports and fitness publishing giant moved to its current Market Street location in 1984.

Provided



Illinois Athletics

Ladies and gentlemen, your 1996-97 Big Ten women's basketball champs.

56. A 1998 move back to spacious State Farm Center brought bigger crowds and Big Ten Network cameras, but as Theresa Greutz's 1996-97 Illini will proudly point out, the women's basketball program's lone conference championship was celebrated inside a stuffed Huff.

A home schedule that started with a rout of Sam Houston State ended, as **Ashley Berggren** remembers it, with "the fans helping us win our first Big Ten championship, beating Wisconsin."

Huff is where Greutz's second of 12 Illini squads grew tight as a team, says Berggren, who added another first that season, becoming the program's lone Big Ten Player of the Year.

"Huff Hall is where we spent the majority of our days either practicing and playing games or hanging out in the team room, curling our hair before games or studying for the awful Psych 100 tests," she says.

The Illini went 12-0 in their second-to-

last season at Huff, the only blemish on their home record coming against Purdue in a game that was moved to the building formerly known as the Assembly Hall.

"Sometimes, I wish I could go back and take it all in again," says **Nicole (Vasey) Dasbach**, the captain of that history-making team. "Huff Hall had a special kind of magic, the kind where the fans felt so close, you could almost reach out and touch them. Their energy lifted us, pushed us and made that place nearly impossible for anyone to beat us. The noise, the pride, the passion, it was so amazing."

"And as we grew as a team, Huff grew with us. My freshman year start-

ed with maybe few hundred fans in the stands, but by my junior year, it was standing-room only. The band, the cheerleaders, the flags, the orange and blue throughout, it was everything we dreamed of being part of.

"Looking back, those moments weren't just about the games. They were about belonging, Illini pride and the feeling of being part of something bigger than yourself. Huff Hall wasn't just a place we played; it became a part of who I am. I can still close my eyes and hear the echoes of those cheers that bring me so much happiness. Those memories will stay with me forever, and I will always cherish them."

57. Huff also doubled as a graduation venue — and not just for colleges on campus.

During the Greutz era, says 1,215-point scorer **Krista Reinking**, "once we finished preseason conditioning workouts, we had a graduation ceremony. Here is when we'd get a certificate of completion, along with our official practice gear, shoes, etc., for the upcoming season."

"We all thought she was crazy, of course, when she did this but then it became a rite of passage. We proceeded into Huff, where there were chairs on the court and a podium at the front. Coach Greutz and the staff made some remarks, and then we were all called up by name to get our 'diploma.'"

"It marked the start of a new chapter, each year. We'd reflect on what we accomplished but more importantly, how we prepared ourselves for the season ahead."



Rob Le Cates/The News-Gazette

Theresa Greutz was back at Huff Hall just last month, talking coaching and leadership with students two days before she was inducted into the Illinois Athletics Hall of Fame.

58. Huff's where the co-founder of Champaign sports and fitness publishing giant Human Kinetics and the namesake of the Champaign Park District's Martens Center learned much of what he knows.

Remembers **Rainer Martens**, a former UI professor of kinesiology: "I came to the University of Illinois in the fall of 1966 to begin my doctoral program in sport psychology. My first stop when arriving in Champaign was to pull up in front of Huff Gym with my 4-by-6 U-Haul, and I went bounding up four flights of stairs to see the world's first and only sport psychology laboratory, as advertised in the university literature."

"What I found was an empty room with some old equipment stacked in a corner. You see, I

was 30 years too late.

"The father of American sport psychology was Coleman Griffith, a member of the U of I faculty in the 1920s and '30s. He wrote the first two books on sport psychology, and when he wasn't pitching batting practice for the Chicago Cubs in order to conduct personality research, he was in his sport-psychology laboratory on the fourth floor of Huff Gym conducting various studies."

"He later became the provost of the university and discontinued his study of sport psychology. He

was a pioneer without any disciples until Dan Landers, Glyn Roberts and I came to the university to study sport psychology. It's fair to say we launched the modern era of sport psychology."

"As a graduate student, I taught swimming and diving in Huff pool as well as handball in the undersized courts in the basement of Huff. I also had an office in Huff after the university hired me to join the faculty in 1968."

"I have a very warm spot in my heart for Huff Hall."

TRIVIA TIME



Asks **KENT BROWN**, who served as Illinois sports information director from 2000-23, played and officiated intramural basketball games at Huff Gym while in college in the mid-1980s and currently teaches ADV 314 (Sports Public Relations) in a Huff Hall classroom: What was the original name given to the new home of Illinois athletics when they moved into what is now George Huff Hall in the fall of 1925?

- A. Men's Gymnasium
- B. New Gymnasium
- C. Big Gymnasium
- D. Fourth Street Gymnasium

Answer: B. New Gymnasium. George Huff moved the athletics and physical education departments from what was Men's Gymnasium, later called Men's Old Gymnasium and now Kenney Gymnasium, in the fall of 1925. It remained New Gymnasium until shortly after Huff's death in 1936, when the name was changed to George Huff Gymnasium.

HUFF AT A HUNDRED

GRITTY

HISTORIC

GENERATIVE

ELECTRIC

FAMILY

CHARACTER

INCUBATOR

HOME



JILL (ESTEY) MARK
Set women's basketball record with 550 assists

MORT WEIR
UI's fifth chancellor (1988-93)

ROBYN GOBIN
Assistant professor, College of Applied Health Sciences

SARA SORRELL KEALY
Led '96, '97 volleyball teams in blocks

ALEX DIAB
Two-time national champion gymnast on still rings

MARTY EWING
AHS alumna, Michigan State professor emeritus

BRUNO NUNES
Associate professor, College of Applied Health Sciences

HEATHER (WILSON) HORN
Rantoul native, two-time Academic All-Big Ten

59-66. What the structure built during Prohibition may lack in modern amenities, it more than makes up for in great material to laugh about years later.



→ **CINDY STEIN**, captain of Jane Schroeder's 1982-83 women's basketball team: "I remember ancient lockers and locker rooms with community showers that could spray four people at once."

→ **CRISTY CHAPMAN-UHRIG**, who followed her volleyball coach, Don Hardin, to Illinois from Louisville: "The locker-room showers were an open room but weirdly, we all had assigned showers without being assigned. It was just a given."



"To get to the locker room, you had to walk down into the basement stairs by the equipment room. Let's just say if those were wet or slick from ice, you would bust your butt. Steep and deep."



→ **MANDY CUNNINGHAM WILSEY**, who starred on women's basketball teams that played three years' worth of home games at the Assembly Hall and a final one (1993-94) at Huff: "When the women's team moved to Huff Hall for games, we actually got our own locker room. I laugh now because at that time they seemed great. Now I see what the team has at Ubben and it pales in comparison. But for us at

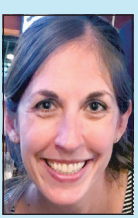


News-Gazette file photo

The Huff layout offers bonus exercise for volleyball players, seen here trudging up the steps before the start of the third set during a 2011 match against Wisconsin.

that time, those locker rooms in Huff seemed top shelf."

→ **LISA ARGA-BRIGHT JUDD**, 2003 volleyball All-American: "For those that have visited Huff, you learn very quickly that it is a historic building without air conditioning. The hotbox fun of preseason had us switching out sweaty jerseys. And for some — ahem, Erin Virtue — sweaty shoes."



"And let me be clear: the switches

happened multiple times during practices."



→ **RACHEL (FELDMAN) BRIZE**, whose volleyball career coincided with the arrival of a welcome upgrade: "Finally getting those big ceiling fans was a plus because we had to manually open windows before every practice."

CHAPMAN-UHRIG: "There were also racquetball courts in the building that we would use to train during the spring. No windows, small room, white walls ... think white room psych ward."

STEIN: "I remember the sound in the gym echoed, making hearing and understanding the coaches very difficult at times. And the gym having so many doors and entrances that if you had to use the restroom during practice, you usually got locked out and had to run around trying to find the one unlocked one."

→ **ROBERT NEWHOUSE**, formerly of the local band Coalkitchen, which played dance marathons at Huff: "We and most traveling bands we knew always groaned when we had to play a high school gym because the acoustics were always so horrible. Just awful. Unless you were standing right in front of the band, you heard a scrambled, echo-ey mess."

"The massive Huff Gym was a high school gym on steroids. We would always say a song kept playing five minutes after we quit."

67. Yoshi Hayasaki's career Huff highlight didn't come on a gymnastics mat.

"It has to be the day when the (1989 national) championship banner was hung from the ceiling," says the 33-year coach of a men's program that produced 86 All-Americans, 44 Big Ten champs and 10 national champs on his watch.

68. Mike Hebert loved the place.

And not just because his final six Illini volleyball teams went 71-20 at Huff after moving over from Freer.

Says the late Hall of Fame coach's wife, **Sherry Bedeaux Hebert**, who's back in town for this weekend's festivities: "I looked through Mike's book, 'The Fire Still Burns,' and found this statement from the prologue (about) No. 6 Illinois playing No. 2 Stanford for a spot in the Final Four in 1992: 'Huff Hall was jammed with almost 4,500 fans, making enough noise for 45,000. There was a point in the first set when the crowd noise was as intense as in any gym I've ever been in. More than one person who was there that night has told me the same.'"

"Mike goes on later in the prologue to say, 'When I hear our crowd, when that supportive noise breaks through my focus on the match, I'm proud to be involved with this program and those fans."



Illinois Athletics
MIKE HEBERT

"To realize that all those people have taken time out of their lives to come and cheer for my team — what a thrill."



Cheers to 100 Years of Huff Hall!

A proud milestone for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, College of Applied Health Sciences, and the Illini community.



Celebrating 100 Years of Huff Hall!

Congratulations to the University of Illinois Division of Intercollegiate Athletics and the College of Applied Health Sciences on the 100th Anniversary of Huff Hall.

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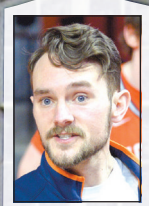


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JACOB TYREE
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RACHEL (VanMETER) McCLELLAN
Ranks No. 2 in volleyball career kills



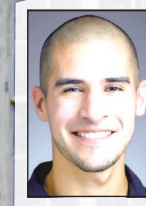
JULIE STAFFORD SON
Associate professor, College of Applied Health Sciences



RICK MANNER
Serves on Illini Networkers board



BECKY BEACH
Top scorer on '76, '77 basketball teams



JONATHAN CERNA
Assistant professor, College of Applied Health Sciences

69-72. Just how loud can it get inside a stuffed Huff for a volleyball match?



Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

Taylor de Boer and Co. know how to make an entrance at Huff Hall.

Says **Don Shaw**, who won four national titles coaching Stanford and faced Mike Hebert's Illini twice here: "It's as loud as any venue that I ever played or coached in: Klum Gym at Hawaii, Nebraska Coliseum, Brazil, Italy ..." "Good thing we also had hand signals," says early-'90s star **Kristin Henriksen**. "In our match vs. Penn State in 1992, I remember that the crowd was so loud that I could not hear our setter yelling directly into my ear our next offensive play

while we had the serve." "Even the floor would vibrate from the sound," says **Hillary Haen Tennant** (2007-10). "It was one of the coolest feelings in the world." "I've had many a match where the ears are ringing and I've lost my voice for a few days after a rowdy home match," says current Illini coach **Chris Tamas**. "I



TAMAS

can't say that about other arenas." Nor can predecessor **Kevin Hambly**, who "never experienced an atmosphere quite like our 2010 match against Penn State. You could feel the electricity in the air as soon as you walked in. The energy was incredible, and fortunately, the match lived up to that excitement."



HAMBLY

73-82. It's where high school champions were once crowned.



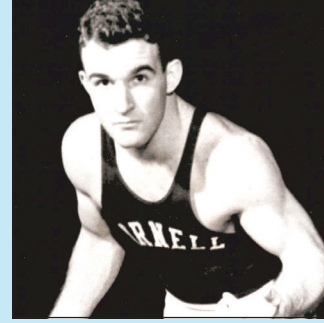
News-Gazette file photo

From the archives: Earl Harrison, left, and Ted Beach, from Champaign High's 1946 state championship basketball team, hold the trophy they won at Huff Gym, in front of the trophy case at Central High School.

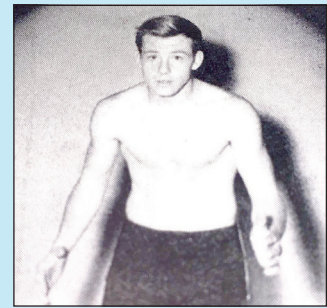
How's this for an eight-year run: Before moving across town to steer the Illini to three Final Four appearances in four years, Monticello's Harry Combes coached Champaign High to back-to-back-to-back state championship games, winning it all in 1946. Powered by a starting five of Ted Beach, Jim Cottrell, Rod Fletcher, Earl Harrison and Fred Major, the Maroons beat Centralia 54-48 at a stuffed Huff, capping off a 38-1 season and becoming the first and only Champaign boys' basketball team to win the one-class event. "I always kind of took pride in that. We were the best because we beat everybody," Beach told The News-Gazette before his passing in 2024. Sixty-three years later in a different city (Peoria) and format (four classes), Centennial's Chargers delivered Champaign's second IHSA basketball title, beating Oswego 61-59.

Also earning a spot in Huff high school lore: nine local wrestlers, who claimed individual titles over the eight years in the 1940s, '50s and '60s that the gym hosted the state finals:

- **Jeff Austin**, Urbana, 103 pounds (1951)
- **Norton Compton**, Champaign, 138 pounds (1948)
- **Don Dickason**, Champaign, 165 pounds (1949)
- **John Dickason**, Champaign, heavy-weight (1949)



D. DICKASON



- **Carl Meeks**, Champaign, 120 pounds (1953)
- **Paul Riggins**, Champaign, 145 pounds (1948)

- **Bob Spicer**, Danville, 145 pounds (1957)
- **Ray Sturdyvin**, Champaign, 125 pounds (1949)
- **Rex Whitlatch**, Urbana, 103 pounds (1953)



TRIVIA TIME



Asks UI Professor in Health and Kinesiology **STEVE PETRUZZELLO**, who currently serves as associate dean in the College of Applied Health Sciences and has been at the university long enough to remember when tennis courts occupied the space immediately east of Huff Hall: Coleman R. Griffith was a professor of psychology when George Huff asked the academic luminary who'd later become known as "America's first sports psychologist" to head the Athletic Research Laboratory in Huff Hall. Griffith used interviews to gain valuable insights from athletes, which he then subjected to experimental testing. Which legendary Illinois athlete did he interview to help explain the automatic skill response?

- A. Dike Eddleman
- B. George Halas
- C. Harold "Red" Grange
- D. Harold Osborn

Answer: C. Red Grange, who was quite the physical specimen. In a 1974 interview with American Heritage, college football's first unanimous All-American said he ran the 100-yard dash in 9.8 seconds, which at the time was one-fifth of a second off the world record.



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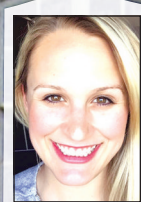
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HILLARY HAEN TENNANT
Third-team volleyball
All-American in 2010

KIM GRABER
Shahid and Ann Carlson Khan
Professor of AHS

COLLEEN (WARD) BARONE
First-team volleyball
All-American in 2011

DUSTIN TARTER
Assistant dean,
College of Applied
Health Sciences

KATHY KALER
Retired UI
athletic academic
counselor

PETER HANCOCK
2024 AHS
Distinguished Alumni
Award winner

BETH FRASCA
Instructor, kinesiology
and community
health

DAVID BUCHNER
Professor emeritus,
College of Applied
Health Sciences

83-86. Applied Health Sciences can match famous firsts with about any college on campus.

On the short list:
→ First school for athletic coaches: set up by Huff himself in 1919.
→ First master's degree in P.E.: established by **Seward Staley** in 1937.
→ First driver's-ed course in the Midwest: launched by **Aurelio "Joe" Florio** in 1947.
→ First sex-education program for grades 1-12: developed by **Howard Hoyman** during his 13 years heading up the Department of Health and Safety Education.

Other major players in their fields over the years included **Allen Sapora** (created a bachelor of science in recreation), **William Creswell** (a force in the evolution of comprehensive health education in schools) and **Alfred "Fritz" Hubbard** (a pioneer in motor learning and control).

87. There's no building that sounds quite like it on campus.



PAYNE

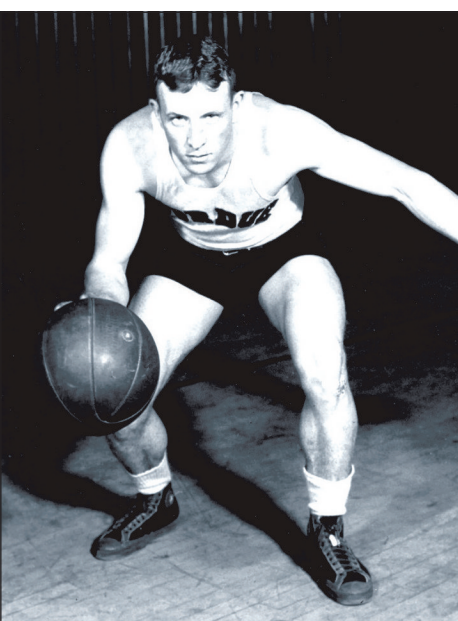
Take it from the occupant of Room 219 — **Laura Payne**, director of Extension's Office of Recreation & Park Resources — who during any given week can hear "the booms and shakes from the wrestling team practicing on the third floor, the cheering of fans

when they pour in to watch volleyball while I am still at the office sometimes, and the hustle and bustle of students coming and going."

88. It's on Bill Self's short list of the C-U spots he misses most.

Tumble Inn's still at the top ("I loved tumbling in and very rarely stumbled out") but Huff — "where we did our late-night scrimmage" — is up there, too. Says the former Illini men's basketball coach, now at Kansas: "I thought that facility had a great feel to it."

89. John Wooden took a rare 'L' here.



Purdue Athletics

Legendary UCLA coach John Wooden during his playing days at Purdue.

This was decades before his Wizard of Westwood heyday at UCLA, but the Illini's 28-21 upset of Purdue on Jan. 9, 1932, was significant in its own right. It was the only loss all season for the Boilmakers and Wooden the player, college basketball's first three-time All-American.

ONE-ON-ONE: DON HARDIN, Illinois volleyball's second-winningest coach

Among the party planners for this weekend's centennial celebration: Champaign's **DON HARDIN**, who spent 13 years coaching volleyball at Huff and another 15 teaching there as an adjunct instructor in the College of Applied Health Sciences' Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism. ¶ Also a proud alum (Class of '82) and five-year assistant to Mike Hebert, Hardin won two Big Ten Coach of the Year awards, steered Illinois to seven NCAA tournament appearances and coached a trio of All-Americans. ¶ Here's more from the coach with a career record of 424-238 between Louisville and Illinois.

When Huff was packed, the home crowd could be worth as many as ... a few points a game, but we had to learn to keep our composure. With the team, I likened to a drummer at a great rock concert. When the crowd started clapping faster and faster, they had to hold their own rhythm.

The loudest I ever heard it here was ... when No. 1 USC came to town (in 2004). They had not lost a match in two-and-a-half years. We were also ranked but just breaking into the top 10.

We upset them in a great five-set match. The gym was packed and I remember so many student-athletes from all other sports sitting together — joined hand in hand, or arms locked together, with tense looks on their faces and screaming with the crowd.

On match point, they led the incredible rush on to the court.

The most dominant individual performance I've ever witnessed by an Illini at Huff was ... watching Jordyn Poulter beat Wisconsin to advance to the (2018) Final Four. Wisconsin also had an incredible setter, but Jordyn seemed to intimidate her that year.

The most satisfying of many wins at Huff was ... the first of several times when we faced Louisville, where I coached prior to Illinois. This was to see who would advance to the Sweet 16. We actually had more players from Kentucky on our starting lineup than they had from the U.S.A.

The most memorable speech I gave at Huff was ... a locker room speech between games 2 and 3 against USC. We were split 1-1 with USC and they had bested us by quite a bit in game 2.

I tried to convince them that if we could win one of the next two games, this incredible crowd would not let us lose game 5.

Somehow, they believed me.
The thing that makes Huff the structure so unique, in a good way, is ... it's a tremendous venue for watching volleyball.



Heather Coit/The News-Gazette

Four days after formally announcing his retirement at season's end, Illini volleyball fans spelled out what they thought of Don Hardin at Huff. Hardin's final season at Illinois ended with a third trip to the Sweet 16.

ball. The intimacy and proximity to the court adds to the drama of the competition. You can easily see all expressions and feel the tension on the court.

As for the not so good ... a little-noticed fact is that the facility was built as a gym with east-west windows all along both sides of the upper deck. This is a major flaw for an athletic facility because one is blinded in the morning and the afternoon. All of the pictures that I have ever seen have the blinds pulled down, covering the windows.

For many years, the humidity and heat

caused a dangerous situation with the type of floor surface coating that was used. To make matters worse, our setter, Erin Virtue — now the head coach at Michigan — would sweat more than any player I have ever seen.

She would often dive to the floor for balls and we would have to wait so long to wipe up what we called "Lake Virtue."

To bring Huff in line with some of the more modern top facilities in college volleyball, I would add ... air conditioning, updated locker rooms and suites on the end lines.

90. After 1987, volleyball at Huff was never the same.

That's when undergrad **Thomas Durbin** was appointed the sport's chair on the Illini Pride student athletic board. His assignment: Build the volleyball equivalent of basketball's Orange Krush.

"I talked with campus-area businesses to find sponsors for T-shirts for the new group," says Durbin, now a senior mechanical engineer for UI Facilities & Services. "Discussions among IPSAB members and Illini volleyball staff led to choosing Spikers for the name and creating a basic design for the first-year shirts. The sponsors were Alexanders Sporting Goods and Kam's."

What started as a support squad of 25 in the southeast



Thomas Durbin

Early versions of game day attire for Spike Squad members.

corner of the balcony grew to 40 by season's end. It reached triple digits in the ensuing years, more than Durbin ever dreamed, following a change of name (Spike Squad) and venue (Huff).

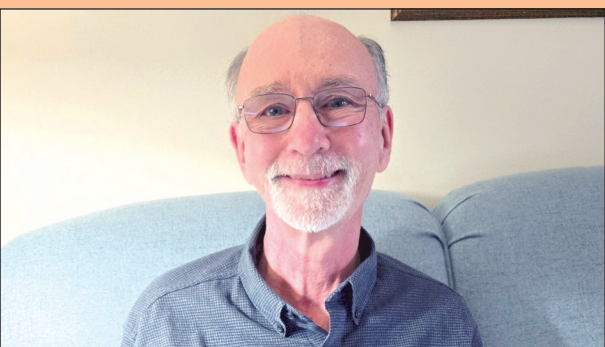
"I think the team, the Spikers/Spike Squad and the crowd transferred all that energy from Kenney Gym to Huff Hall and multiplied it through the years," Durbin says.

91. Like any good student fan group, the Spike Squad became known for its catchy chants, including one in 2001 that got lost in translation.

Remembers **Lisa Argabright Judd**, the team leader in kills that season: "I was a front-row-only player and when I subbed out, Shelly O'Bryan looked at me and said, 'Lisa, I think the Spike Squad is chanting 'hammer jack' after you get a kill.' I smiled at Shell and told her, 'I think they're calling me the 'jackhammer.' "I worked hard to give the Spike Squad many more opportunities to chant it."



TRIVIA TIME



Asks **JEFF HUTH**, The News-Gazette's volleyball beat writer for 18 seasons (1996-2013), during which Illinois competed in 10 NCAA tournaments and finished as the 2011 national runner-up in San Antonio: The Room 112 auditorium in Huff Hall serves as a technology-enhanced classroom typically used for lectures and presentations. It also has been utilized for Illini volleyball post-match interviews. What did it replace?

- A. The George Huff Memorabilia Room
- B. The Handball court
- C. Storage space for old, unsold Illio yearbooks
- D. The swimming pool

Answer: D. The 25-yard, 8-foot-deep swimming pool, which had a vast and varied number of uses and users, including our favorite — the UI Underwater Hockey Club.

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BRANDI BARNES
Research scientist, College of Applied Health Sciences



JOHANNAH BANGERT
Led college volleyball in blocks for two seasons



SEAN MULLEN
Associate professor, College of Applied Health Sciences



ASHLEY (EDINGER) KOHLER
Finished volleyball career with UI digs record



MICHAL NOWICKI
2022 AHS Harold Scharper Achievement Award winner



PAM HADLEY
AHS Charles and Kay Stenberg Professor



LIZZIE BAZZETTA
2008 Big Ten Distinguished Scholar



JEFF WOODS
Associate dean, College of Applied Health Sciences

92. To anyone in the field of sports psychology, one Illinois name stands above the rest.



COLEMAN GRIFFITH

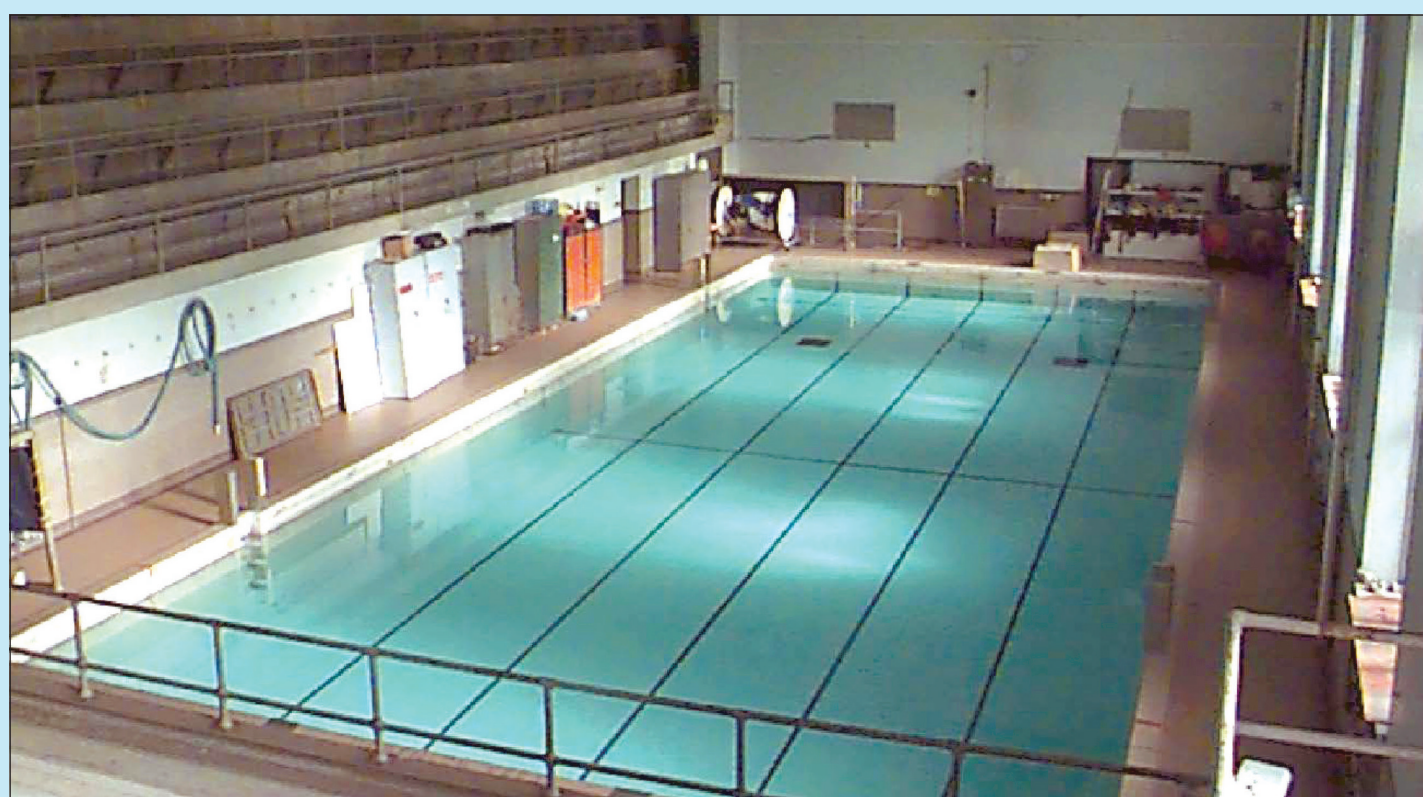
"The first word that comes to mind when I think of Huff Hall is 'Griffith,' as in Coleman Griffith," says Miami (Ohio) Professor **Robin Vealey**, who earned her Ph.D. from the UI's College of Applied Health Sciences. "He established the first sport psychology laboratory at Huff Hall in 1925. He is widely acclaimed as the 'father of sport psychology.' Each year at the Association for Applied Sport Psychology conference, a distinguished leader in the field is invited to present the Coleman Griffith Lecture."

93. Be it from Freer or Huff, it seems like every volleyball-loving kid who cheered on the Illini has a story like Jamie O'Connor's.

"A treasured memory: I was a little girl attending a volleyball match. Nancy Brookhart, who was a new freshman and future volleyball legend, seemed really unsure of what to do during the starting lineup announcement. Rather than confidently tossing the free T-shirt into the crowd, per tradition, she very shyly just handed it to me since I was sitting on the bottom row. I still have the shirt," says the Champaign native, now a teaching associate professor in the College of Applied Health Sciences.



O'CONNOR



Provided

The old Huff pool housed the Illini men's swimming team until 1993, when the sport was cut from the varsity lineup.

94. A future astronaut swam here.

Long before he was **Joe Tanner**, four-time NASA space shuttle veteran, he was Joe Tanner, three-time letter-winning Illini swim captain from Danville. "My first awareness of Huff Hall was while watching the Illinois state high school basketball tournament on TV," Tanner says. "It was a big deal for a young boy, who loved basketball, to picture himself on that court. Little did I know that in a few years I would be going into that building almost every day for three years, not as a high school basketball player, but as a collegiate swimmer. "The U of I swim team practiced and held meets in Huff pool on the south end of the building. It wasn't a great pool. The chlorine



JOE TANNER

NASA

was too high, the ventilation poor, the water rough, and the pool built for water polo, the same 8-foot depth throughout. There was no standing on the bottom to rest.

"But the showers in the very small locker room were great. Hard to believe that after two or more hours in a pool of water, anyone would want to stand in a hot shower for 30 minutes. We called it the 'hot shower warm down.' "Despite all its shortcomings, we all have some great memories from our time in that pool. Don't tell Coach, but some of us adventurous types frequently jumped off the top spectator level railing into the pool. It was a pretty good leap to miss landing on the deck. That would have hurt. "We moved into the new IMPE building my senior year, but still went back to Huff pool often for — what else — water polo games."

95. There was no more swimming in Huff after 2002.

As part of a renovation project that year, the 25-yard, 75-year-old pool was removed, meaning no more Mom's Weekend synchronized swimming performances, water aerobics classes, Illini Water Polo Club matches ... or change-of-pace practices for the volleyball team. "That was hard," says **Sue Nucci-Ward**, who starred on Mike Hebert's teams from 1991-94. "The pool workout would always turn into water polo, which was horrible. I couldn't swim so I volunteered to be the goalie every time."



NUCCI-WARD

96. No community has hosted more IHSA championships than C-U.

At Huff alone, there were 37 boys' basketball finals, eight wrestling championships and, far as the IHSA can tell, two year-end swimming meets — in 1941 and '42. Says IHSA Associate Executive Director **Matt Troha**: "Our records verify that it was held at the University of Illinois. Our historian believes it was in a four-lane pool within Huff, but our records don't verify that."



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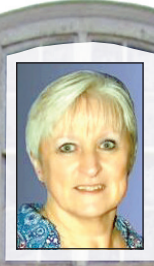
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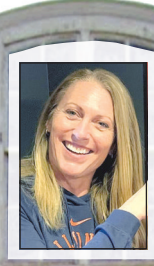
RICHARD HERMAN
UI's eighth chancellor (2005-09)



DARLENE BAKER
Past president, Illini Networkers



NICOLE (VASEY) DASBACH
1996 Lillian Speck Courtsiders Award winner



MANDY CUNNINGHAM WILSEY
No. 8 on women's basketball scoring list



ERIN VIRTUE
Honorable mention volleyball All-American in 2003



KARL NEWELL
2011 Applied Health Sciences Distinguished Alumni Award winner



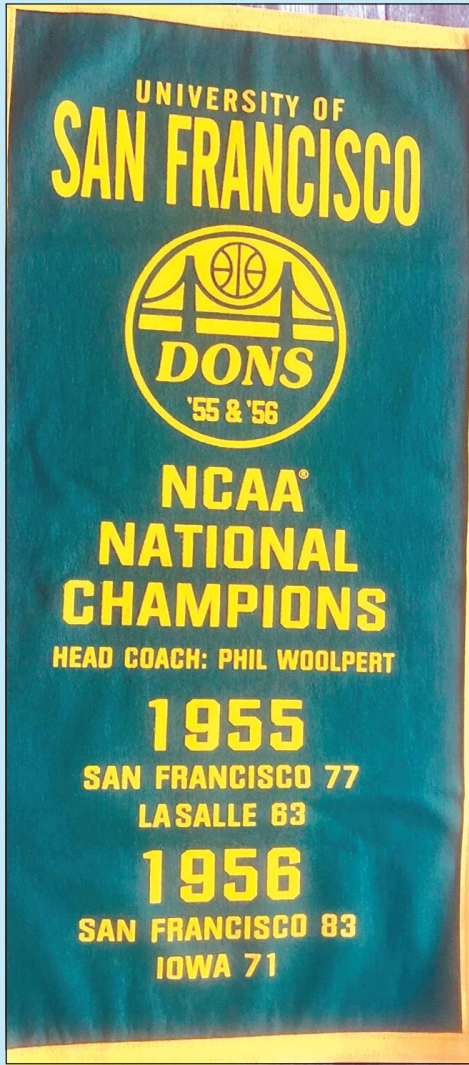
SUE NUCCI-WARD
Her 52-kill senior season ranks fourth all-time



WINDY ZHAO
Assistant professor, School of Architecture

97-99. It's where long opponent winning streaks went to die. Just ask ...

1956 SAN FRANCISCO MEN'S BASKETBALL
Of all the shining moments at Huff — 56-37 over George Mikan and No. 1 DePaul in 1945, the Whiz Kids nearly doubling up Wisconsin in 1943, any win over Indiana — what went down on Dec. 17, 1956, has to be somewhere on the Huff history highlight reel.
The two-time reigning national champion San Francisco Dons no longer had Bill Russell but arrived in Champaign ranked No. 2 in the land and winners of 60 straight games. They left town a 62-33 loser to a Harry Combes-coached team that would finish in the middle of the Big Ten pack, with a 7-7 conference mark.



1999 IOWA WRESTLING

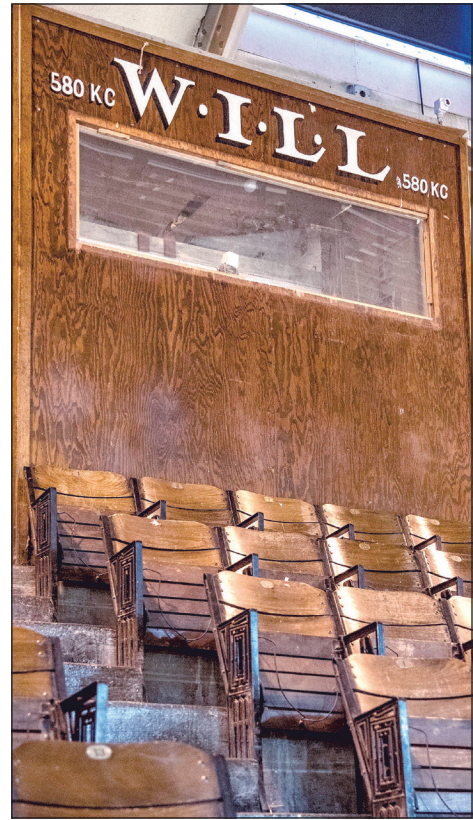
"When I think of Huff, I always smile and think of turning a bad program into a national power with all the hard training on the third floor," says 1995 National Coach of the Year **Mark Johnson**, who set program records for wins, NCAA champions and All-Americans during a 17-year run. And then his mind goes straight to Valentine's Day 1999, when Illinois took down six-time defending national champ Iowa, on a Sunday at Huff. In the next day's News-Gazette, Loren Tate compared the 20-16 upset — Illinois' first dual-meet win over Iowa in 38 years — to the Flyin' Illini punching their ticket to the Final Four 10 years earlier.



2004 USC VOLLEYBALL

The two-time reigning national champion Trojans came to Huff winners of 52 consecutive matches. "But little did USC know that we had a 12th man in our home crowd. Huff Hall was electric that night," now-Michigan head coach **Erin Virtue** remembers about the 3-2 upset. Says teammate **Rachel (Van Meter) McClellan**, 21 years later: "I remember burying the ball like I had never buried the ball before for match point and I turn around and my libero, Beth Vrdsky, is on her knees, pumping her fists. The whole team rushed the floor and fell into a pile. The crowd went wild. One of my favorite moments of my career — by far."

100. You can catch a piece of Huff history at the Champaign County History Museum.

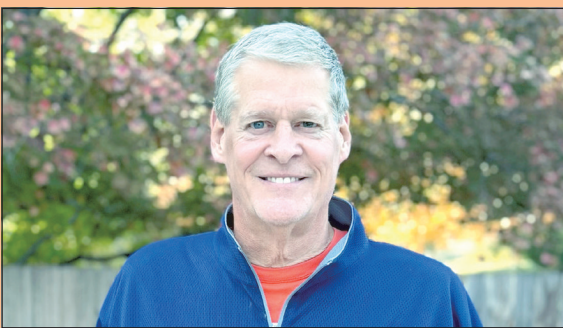


News-Gazette file photo

The old WILL booth at Huff Hall.

Now on display as part of its "Pioneers of Radio" exhibit, reports museum President T.J. Blakeman: the iconic WILL radio booth that sat at the top tow of Huff's west balcony until 2016, when the gym's 2,814 cheap seats were removed.

TRIVIA TIME



Asks architect, educator, urban designer and UI Associate Professor **KEVIN HINDERS**, co-author of 2024's "Memorial Stadium: The First 100 Years" and author of 2025's "The Design of the Built Environment: The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Campus and Its Context": Huff Hall's largest events, shortly after it was constructed, were what?

- A. State high school basketball tournaments
- B. Interscholastic Circus
- C. Men's basketball games
- D. Women's volleyball matches

Answer: A. The high school basketball tournament which typically drew over 20,000 spectators. It was for this reason that a fieldhouse was planned to compliment Huff Hall. This structure was never built; however, it eventually led to the creation of the Assembly Hall.

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