

Women's Hoops

Tyler Lands Top Recruits

By JAMES WRIGHT

Howard University women's basketball coach Sandra Tyler has a way of getting what she wants.

Her career at the elite black institution has been marked by successes: winning an unprecedented six titles in the history of the MEAC, being the first MEAC school in the women's NCAA tournament, serving as the first associate athletic director at the school as a female.

However, her biggest achievement was the signing of Denique Graves of Philadelphia and Visa Ferrell of Sacramento, Ca. to her program. Both youngsters received national attention in regards to what school they will play their college basketball careers.

Graves is a 6'5" forward/guard/center from University High in the City of Brotherly Love. She was a pre-season Honorable Mention by Street and Smith's prestigious basketball yearbook. She helped her team capture the City Championship this spring, garnering MVP honors. Other honors include the Philadelphia Inquirer Female Player of the year and a spot on the Parade All-American list.

"Denique is great," says Tyler. "She can leap, rebound and will dunk the ball when she comes to Howard. Team leader-

want to get a first-class education and play competitive basketball, they should come to Howard. Babysitting is not my thing, but I will know that they will be in a supportive environment."

Tyler did most of the background recruiting herself. She scouted games, consulted references, checked on grades, and logged many hours on the phone talking to the youngster, their parents, coaches, teachers and friends.

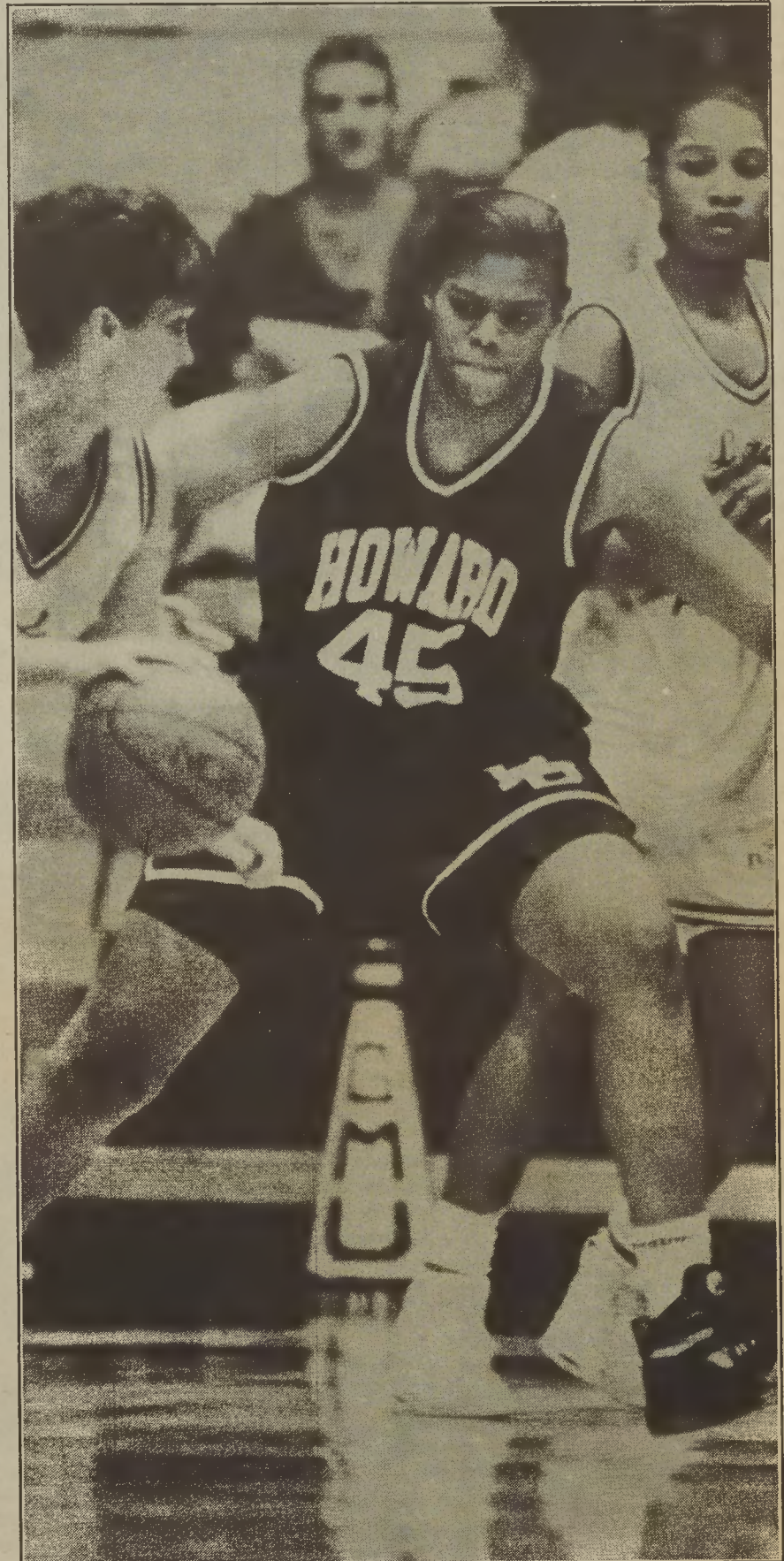
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Perhaps the biggest selling point came when both Graves and Ferrell came to Howard's homecoming on Halloween. They attended the game, talked to the male athletes, administrators and instructors. Graves visited the engineering center, where she will spend most of the time.

Ferrell is undecided about a major at press time.

"She came in my backyard and took one of my children," laughs Temple Head Coach Charlene Curtis. "Denique had a number of schools chasing her, Iowa, Michigan, but Sandra had the hard sell and that won out."

"While I clearly want Denique here with me at Temple, personally, I feel com-



Howard, soon to be a senior will work with Denique Graves and Visa Farrell.



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ship is also one of her assets."

Graves scored 1500 points during her career at University High. She also participated in the NIKE All-American game in Hampton, Va in mid-April.

Visa Ferrell, a 6'2" guard from Grant Union High School, was a hot prospect. She was on the All-City team in Sacramento, averaging 20 points a game with 12 rebounds. She holds an area records in rebounds.

"Visa can play at the level of the rim and is a tenacious rebounder," says Tyler. "She's a standout player in a tough part of the country to stand-out-California."

Both of these young women were highly recruited by the leading women's basketball powers, such as Texas, Texas Tech, Ohio State, and Maryland. Tyler, realizing the competition was tough, used Howard as a selling point.

"I told these youngsters that if they

portable with her at Howard."

Joe McKeon, the coach at George Washington in Washington believes that Graves will put all of Washington women's basketball back in the map.

"She will make a big, big difference in the program. It's like if you had a Rashed Wallace go to Howard instead of the other schools. The publicity will be there along with Tyler's ability to bring the best out of her players."

"Howard will be the school to watch in this area."

"A lot of my colleagues were telling both Denique and Visa that they made a mistake by coming here," says Tyler.

"They were saying that she, Denique, won't be a Kodak All-American, or an Olympian (participant in the 1996 Olympics). Visa was reminded that she will be 3000 miles away from her family."

"But both young ladies feel they

made the right decision," beams Tyler.

Tyler's 1992-1993 was a dismal 5-22 overall, 5-7 in the MEAC. Her record stands at 165-195.

Nevertheless, she is optimistic.

"No 17 year old teenagers are going

to come here and change the program overnight," remarks Tyler. "However, with work, perseverance, and a little luck, we may go to the NCAA Championship real soon."

That's the next thing she wants.