

CHEERING FOR
DANIELEY

DIEGO PINEDA | Photo Editor
Students wave rally towels during the men's basketball game against Florida International University in honor of Danieley Wednesday, Nov. 30.

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The moment was coming, no matter if senior Luke Eddy wanted it to or not. He was dreading it, knowing how that time was usually reserved for one man, and that man wouldn't be around to experience it.

"That media timeout will be extremely difficult," said Eddy, the guard for Elon University's men's basketball team.

The under-eight media timeout of the second half, that is, when the student section cranks up its "Doctor Danieley" chant in honor of President Emeritus J. Earl Danieley, the team's biggest fan and the most transformational figure in the university's history.

"Somebody's going to have to do something," Eddy said. "That's his time. He's the only person I've ever heard get their name individually chanted at Alumni Gym."

And so, a day after Danieley died at 92, the time came during Elon's game against Florida International University. And with palpable emotion, and his seat clad with flowers, the fans chanted.

The band started it. The students and fans joined in. And the cheerleaders and dance team stood on the floor, waving the towels.

A video of Danieley appeared on the video board, and cheers erupted. Then, after the silence, the chant started back up.

His presence was prominent. "I think the towel wave is our external symbol of what he did," said Adam Constantine '10, social media manager and former basketball player. "But everything that this place stands for is who he was."

It was fitting, in a way, that the first true gathering of the Elon community after Danieley's death came at a basketball game. He was a mainstay at basketball and volleyball games throughout his 75 years at Elon, and had a heavy hand in the formation of both the women's athletic program and the Elon College Sports Hall of Fame.

There's a painting of Danieley at the entrance of Alumni Gym. Elon players wore a Dr. D patch on their jerseys, as they'll do the rest of the year.

And each seat was donned with a white towel before the game, a symbol of the rally towel Danieley

would wave when the students chanted his name.

"There's a yearning for us all to be in the same room because we lost an icon," said head men's basketball coach Matt Matheny. "We lost our guy. ... I'm sure there's a lot of people who would come to our games, and part of their ritual was to come by and talk to Dr. D."

After each game, that's exactly what the men's basketball team would do. They circle the court, shaking fans' hands.

But they'd stop for a little longer by Danieley's chair.

Eddy first met Danieley his freshman year because then-senior Jack Isenbarger '14 was close to Danieley. Isenbarger was one of a number of basketball players who lived with Danieley at times during the last few years.

Eddy shared meals with Danieley many times, and even went to his house to help move furniture.

But nothing compared to those moments after games, moments that Eddy and others cherished.

"After the game, that's something we always look forward to," he said. "A firm handshake and a sloppy kiss."

On Wednesday, a 30-second



DIEGO PINEDA | Photo Editor
Danieley's daughter, Jane Shutt waves a rally towel in honor of her father at the men's basketball game against Florida International University Wednesday, Nov. 30.

video tribute to Danieley played before the game, and a moment of silence was observed. Those in attendance wore stickers that read Dr. D, and the game's program had a photo of Danieley waving his towel.

Afterward, both the men's and women's basketball teams and the volleyball team walked over to Danieley's chair together and placed their towels on the seat.

And with that, it was clear. Danieley's memory will hang over those teams for days, years, decades to come.

"He was one of us," Eddy said. "We're going to go out there and fight in the same ways we have been. But he'll be in the back of our heads the whole time."

Kailey Tracy, senior reporter, contributed reporting.

Danieley towel wave will be absent from Elon basketball games

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Played within the intimate confines of historic Alumni Gym, the Elon University men's basketball games tend to be an exciting affair. Although players and opponents have changed from year to year, one tradition has cemented itself as an unmissable part of any Elon game in the last decade.

Without fail, after the under-eight media timeout in the second half, students begin to chant, "Dr. Danieley."

And without fail, in response, President Emeritus J. Earl Danieley stood up and waved a towel to appease the crowd.

It's a tradition that started in 2005, ac-

ording to a Pendulum article from 2008. Although the chant has become an iconic part of every game in Alumni Gym, nobody quite knows why students first called Danieley's name.

Danieley was one of Elon Basketball's most dedicated fans. His Elon pride was a part of his personality every day, but his passion for Elon athletics was unmatched on game nights inside Alumni Gym.

While Danieley was a fan favorite in the stands, his presence was also felt by players on the court.

"For me, it was a reminder that somebody was there that cares about you, cares about the team, and cares about the university in general," said Adam Constantine, who played on the men's basketball team

from 2006 to 2010.

Head coach Matt Matheny, who has been at the helm since 2009, watched Danieley build relationships with generations of Elon basketball players.

"To sit courtside, to have the towel in his hand, to be there after games, to give our guys a hug and a handshake, it's really really special," said Matheny. "He's been to practices, you know, for us to practice and have Dr. D on the sideline watching us practice, I think, wow, how fortunate are we to be able to share time with Mr. Elon."

The chant and ensuing towel wave became so legendary that they were commemorated on multiple occasions when fans attending an Elon game received rally towels bearing a silhouette of Danieley wav-

ing his own.

On Wednesday night, as Elon took on Florida International University in Alumni, Danieley was not there to watch, and was not there to hear students chant his name. But his legacy was celebrated.

At the game against Florida International University, Danieley was honored with a moment of silence before the game and a moment of silence and a chant during the under-eight media timeout. Fans in attendance, as well as athletes from various Elon sports teams, left rally towels on Danieley's favorite seat.

With Danieley's death, Elon basketball has lost one of its most vocal supporters, and the second row of seats in Alumni Gym will be missing a familiar face.