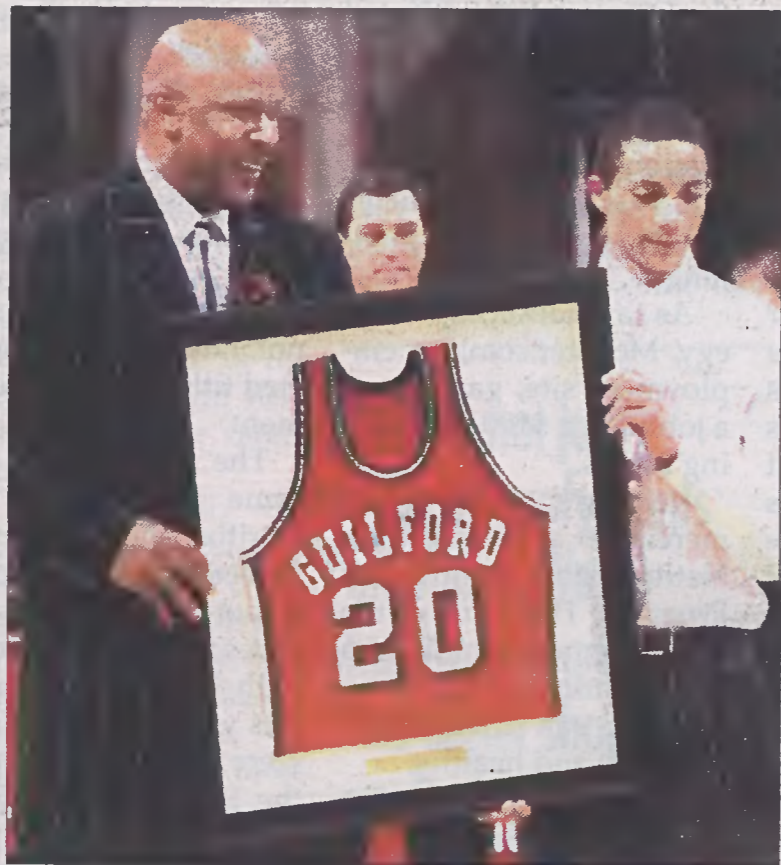


Legacy weekend: Past heroes honored, current stars celebrated



Dan Kuzma '64, Bob Kauffman '68, M.L. Carr '73 and World B. Free '76 gather with family and friends for a group shot in recognition of their athletic achievement (above). World B. Free '76 is joined by his son after rousing the crowded stands with an uplifting speech on his path to success (below). Elizabeth Parker Haskins '76 stands proudly with Kent Chabotar as her supporters' ovation fills the gym. (bottom)



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Carr watched as if his own 1973 NAIA championship team was playing: He yelled at bad calls, cheered for good plays and waited in suspense during tense moments. And yet a smile never left his face as he chatted and laughed with old friends.

As the Quakers took the victory and first place in the ODAC, it was obvious that something bigger was driving the crowd's excitement. By the time Dave Odom, former student-athlete and North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame's newest inductee, took the microphone, fans had pressed to the court's edge on all sides.

"The great thing about today is that we don't have to hurry," said Odom. "Let's take our time in honoring these amazing individuals and have some fun."

Jokes and laughter were plentiful, and a sense of pride was palpable. Solidifying the place of each player and Coach Jensen in Guilford athletics history, the ceremonies went beyond these seven individuals and celebrated the accomplishments of teams and communities.

"If you lettered (with one of these players) or played under Coach Jensen, stand up," said Odom to begin Saturday night's festivities. "Let's honor those that helped (as teammates) and have now come to honor them today."

Each player was joined by friends or family as their number was retired and replica jerseys were hung from the rafters. In addition, the Quakers' home court was renamed Jack Jensen Court in honor of Guilford's most decorated coach.

Although the event honored them, each player credited their accomplishments to others: coaches, teammates, professors, family and

friends.

After congratulating Coach Palombo and his team on their victory, Kuzma directed the praise for his two All-Carolinas Conference honors and Guilford-record 23 field goals in a single game toward his former coach, Jerry Steele.

"You started it all," said Kuzma.

A two-time All-American and Guilford's career points and rebounds record-holder, Kauffman credited his time at Guilford for his successful career in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

"Guilford gave me the chance to go ahead and learn and develop," said Kauffman. "It gave me the opportunity to grow and it's a very special institution."

Winner of two NBA titles with the Boston Celtics, Carr wasn't joined by his family, but instead by best friend and former Guilford teammate Teddy East.

"There wouldn't be a championship banner if he (Teddy) didn't get nine steals and 18 rebounds a game," said Carr of the '73 NAIA Championship banner hanging near his newly unveiled jersey overhead. "All of those 10 guys should be up there."

"When I think back of my time at Guilford, I think of all the great teachers and even the great community," said Carr. "So tonight, I accept this on behalf of all of them."

Free had Jensen to thank the most and remembered being recruited by Guilford.

"They told my mom, 'We can't offer him the big money, but we can offer him an education and a lot of love,'" said Free. "Guilford, you've been very good to me and I want to thank you all for this whole honor. Coach (Jensen), I love you."

Jensen, who won four of Guilford's five national championships, in-

cluding their first in any sport, and who was only the second coach ever to win national titles in two sports, was honored last.

"Jack Jensen's accomplishments as a coach are well documented and it's obvious why we're honoring him," said Kuzma. "But the real reason for this honor is the way he treats people."

Jensen first asked all current and former players and coaches to stand in recognition of the community that makes individuals great. He thanked his predecessor, Coach Steele, for laying the foundation for his success at Guilford. He then thanked his family.

"I was down on my knees praying, remembering when someone asked, 'what do you want most?' and I answered to myself, 'a beautiful wife and maybe a few kids,'" said Jensen turning to acknowledge his wife, children and grandchildren. "The Lord has been so good to me that I can't believe it."

Afterward, pictures were taken and the celebration moved upstairs for a reception in Alumni Gym. Old friends got caught up and embarrassed each other with old stories.

"I remember partying with M.L. (Carr) the day before graduation," said Karen Lee-Staker '72, laughing. "Oh and I had the biggest crush on Bob (Kauffman)!"

Recently retired after 46 years with Guilford food services, Doug Gilmer was on hand to share memories of when he snuck food to Carr, Free, East and other players.

"It's been awesome," said Gilmer of his ceremony Jan. 30, Legacy Weekend and all the friends that came back to visit. "It's been one of the best weekends of my life."