

## '89-'90 Mountaineer basketball team going into KM Hall of Fame

(Third of a four-part series of this year's Kings Mountain Hall of Fame inductees. The banquet and ceremony is May 15 at 6 p.m. at the Patrick Center. Tickets are \$10 and are available from any member of the Hall of Fame committee).

By GARY STEWART  
Editor of The Herald

Larry Sipe spent 33 years as a high school basketball coach in Lincolnton, Washington, NC and Kings Mountain.

Along the way he was fortunate to coach many outstanding players like college and pro stars Alvis Rogers and Dominique Wilkins.

But his most gratifying season was in 1989-90 when his Kings Mountain Mountaineers finished 26-3 overall and won the Western North Carolina championship before falling to DH Conley in the State championship game at Chapel Hill.

Throughout his career Sipe preached teamwork. And there was no other team during his tenure that exemplified that philosophy more than the '89-'90 team.

"They grew up together in a small hometown that had one recreation department and one high school," Sipe noted recently. "They were friends growing up. I had parents tell me about taking all these kids to different places for practice and games. I think we're missing a lot of that today with consolidated school systems and kids going everywhere."

That team also had a wealth of talent. Eight of the 15 players went on to play college basketball, and the team members that Sipe has been able to locate are now successful in their careers.

"They were good athletes," Sipe said. "The 1980s and early 1990s was a great time to be at Kings

Mountain High School. We had two state championships in baseball, had three football teams to go deep in the State playoffs, a golf team to win the State, and a basketball, baseball and wrestling team to finish second in the State. We had boys and girls that did well in track and tennis and other sports. It was an amazing time to beat in Kings Mountain."

Kings Mountain's team concept paid off in many close victories during the '89-'90 season. Sipe recalled a narrow 3-point regular season win over South Point and Migjen Bakali, who later played at N.C. State. The Mounties and Raiders met again in the Sectional finals in Asheville, with KM winning 93-68 to advance to the Final Four in the West.

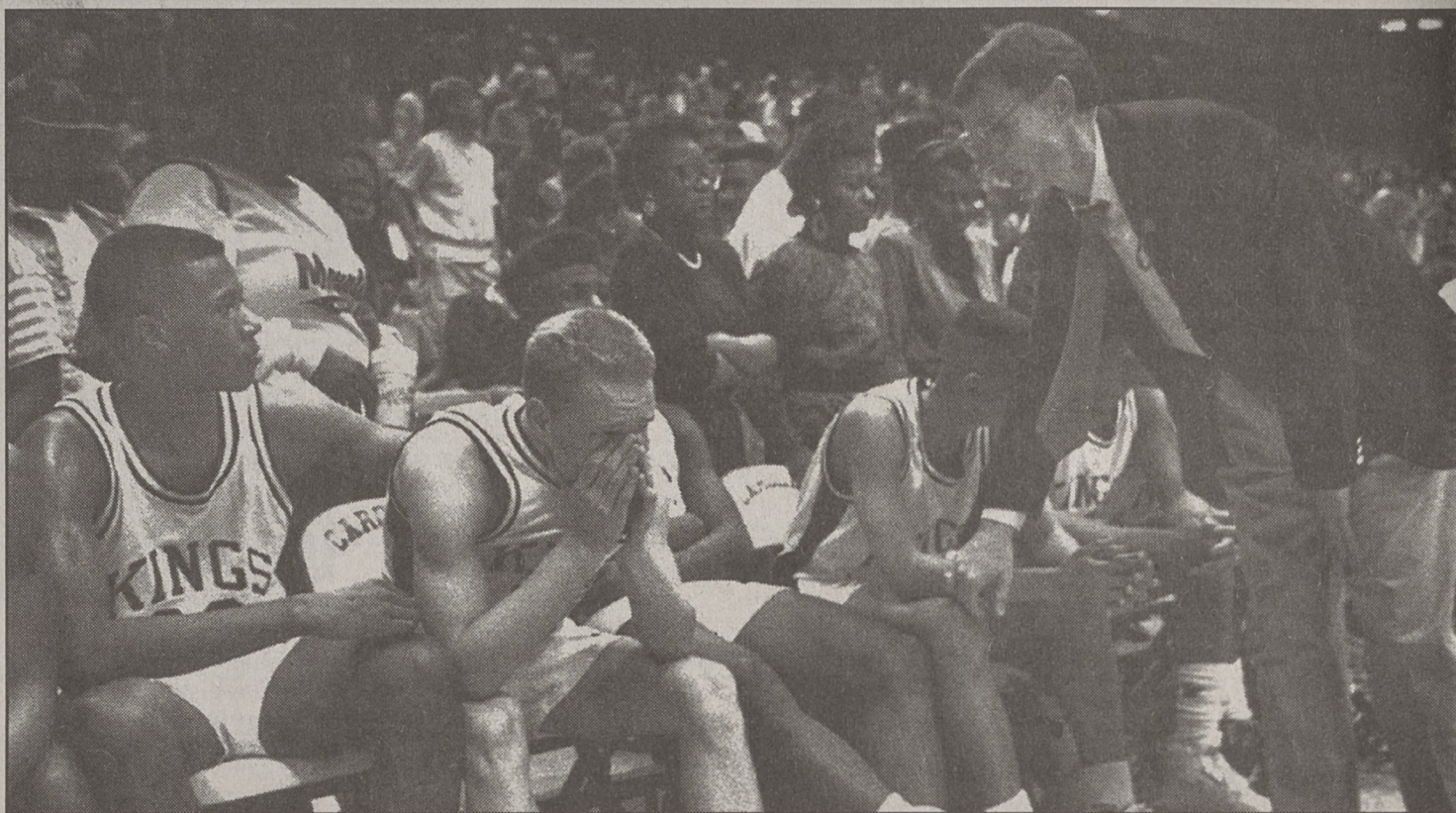
Kings Mountain's only regular season losses that year were to R-S Central 73-66 at a time when KM was 13-0 and R-S was 13-1; and to a strong East Rutherford team 78-75 in the Southwestern Conference tournament finals.

After easy wins over Smoky Mountain and South Point in the Sectionals, the Mounties beat West Rowan 72-56 and Concord, the State's #1-ranked team, 80-74 in the Regionals to qualify for the State championship game at the Dean Smith Center.

"Those kids were a team in every sense of the word," Sipe said. "They finished 26-3 and that is amazing, but the thing that really bears it out was that only two kids averaged double figures."

Senior Daniel Honeycutt was the Mounties' top scorer with an 18-points per game average, and junior Era Vaughn averaged 11 per game.

But the Mountaineers had a host of other starters and reserves like Darius "Nu Nu" Ross, Rodgerick



Coach Larry Sipe consoles his players in closing moments of state championship game at Chapel Hill in 1990. HERALD / FILE

McClain, Darian Hager, Ryan Hollifield, Petie McNeal, Tony Currance, Shane Sessoms, Scottie Hopper, Kevin Moss, Mark Byers, Allen Williams, Quan Smith and Marquiz Williamson who knew their role and contributed to the success of the team.

"Several games we got lifts from people coming off the bench and scoring a lot of points," Sipe noted. "I remember Ryan Hollifield had gotten hurt in football and had to play a reserve role for much of the season. I remember a quote that he gave a reporter after one game. He said 'everybody has a role to play and we play it.' It was a deep, talented team and so many times today when a player is not in the starting five or not in the limelight they will pack it up and quit or transfer, but not with this group."

Kings Mountain's players that went on to play college

ball were Rodgerick McClain and Petie McNeal at USC-Walterboro (they played in the gym where part of the movie 'Radio' was filmed); Daniel Honeycutt at Limestone, Darian Hager at NC Central, Era Vaughn at Northern Iowa, Mark Byers at Pembroke, Ryan Hollifield at Appalachian State, and Marquiz Williamson at Radford.

Sipe has had a ball locating and notifying the players about their selection into the Hall of Fame. He has found out some interesting facts about their careers.

- Marcus Byers is in management in New York. He drives past Yankee Stadium every day on his way to work.

- Darian Hager lives in Durham, and often makes the trip down to Chapel Hill to see Sipe when he's working in the Carolina Basketball Camp.

- Daniel Honeycutt lives in Gastonia and operates his own guttering business.

- Era Vaughn lives in Charlotte and works in management.

- Ryan Hollifield works as a physician's assistant in Shelby.

- Shane Sessoms lives in Raleigh and is a manager for Old Navy.

- Kevin Moss teaches and coaches in Kings Mountain.

- Marquiz Williamson lives in Kings Mountain and works for Duke Power and is getting into basketball officiating.

- Rodgerick McClain, Pedro McNeal and Tony Currance all live in Kings Mountain.

- Quan Smith completed a stint in the U.S. Navy and is now serving in the Marines in Japan. He is trying to work it out to get some leave days to come to the Hall of Fame ceremony.

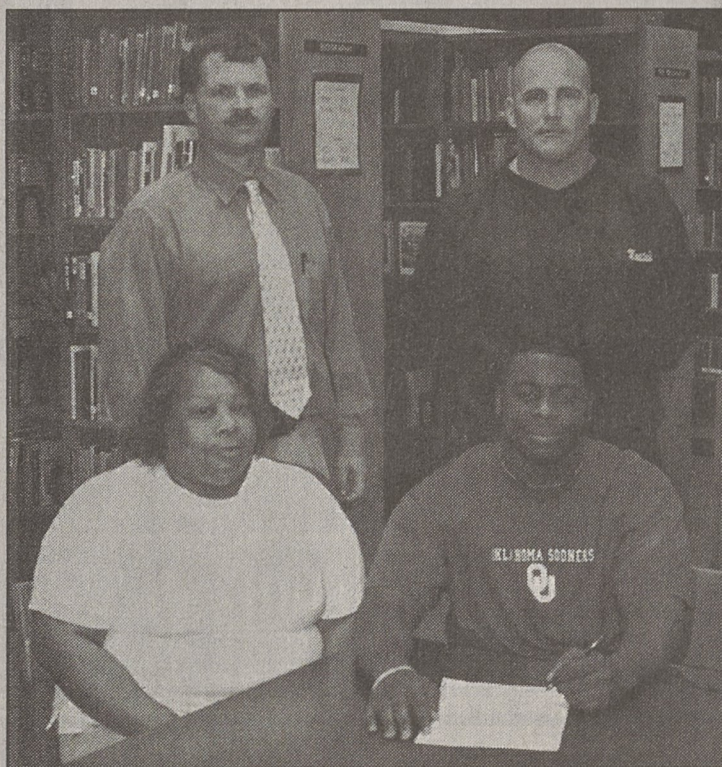
- Scorekeeper Susie

Hardin works with Bank of America in Charlotte.

Sipe hasn't been able to get in touch with Darius Ross, Alan Williams and Scottie Hopper. Anyone knowing whereabouts, is asked to call Coach Sipe because he is planning a get-together for the team prior to the Hall of Fame ceremony.

"This was just a super group attitude-wise," said Sipe. "They were good athletes and good people, and what they're doing today in life just bears out what we were seeing in high school."

"Being selected to the Hall of Fame is a great honor for them. It's been 14 years and the disappointment of losing the State championship is still there, but it's great that people still remember this basketball team and I'm proud of them. It's an honor for them, and an honor for me to be associated with them."



Orlando Curry signs scholarship as his grandmother Brenda Hood, front, and KMHS principal John Yarbro, left, and coach Dave Farquharson look on.

## Curry to play at Tusculum

By GARY STEWART  
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain High's Orlando Curry Monday signed a scholarship to play football at Tusculum College in Greeneville, TN.

A four-year starter at linebacker for the Mountaineers, Curry will play defensive end for the Pioneers who finished 9-2 last fall and won the South Atlantic Conference.

Curry chose Tusculum over Lenoir-Rhyne and North Carolina Central because he was impressed with the school's academic and athletic atmosphere.

"The atmosphere up there is great," he says. "The coaches are knowledgeable. I was impressed with the chemistry of the players. They're a close-knit group."

Curry and Coach Dave Farquharson had visited Swannee College in

Tennessee earlier, and they and Lenoir-Rhyne had proposed a financial package. Then, according to Farquharson, the coach that was working with Curry at Swannee, Jason McManus, took an assistant's job at Tusculum. He called and asked Curry to come to Tusculum in April and work out for the head coach and defensive line coach.

"They put together a package and made him an offer that was a little better than Lenoir-Rhyne," Farquharson said.

"The facilities up there really impressed him," Farquharson noted. "He had lunch with some of the football players and he liked them. The school is close enough to home (156 miles) that he can get back and forth, and they really have a good facility and a unique academic schedule where you take one class a day for 18 days; on the 18th day you take an exam, have four days off and then take

another class."

Curry was a two-time All-Conference choice at linebacker for KMHS and had 397 career tackles. He also played tight end his senior year.

The 5-11, 230-pounder will be expected to gain to around 260 or 270 pounds, Farquharson said. But Curry welcomes the challenge.

"I'm going to be lifting weights and running every day," he says. "I feel like I've got a good chance to play and make a name for myself. Defensively, they run a 3-5 stack and the second level of defenders have to be extremely fast. The guys up front have to be quick."

Curry said he enjoyed his four years at KMHS, where he also was a stand-out wrestler.

"We didn't win a lot of games but I had fun playing the sport I love," he said. "I had a great coach that cares See Curry, 8A






Angela Biggers Robin Bradshaw Laura Ford Sherry Terry

We invite you to visit us at our new location:  
**ULTIMATE HAIR & NAIL SALON**  
402 E. King Street, Kings Mountain  
(704) 739-3348

Check Out Our Lower Prices!!!  
Dry Cuts .....\$9-\$13    Perms.....\$48 & up  
Color .....\$35 & up    Updos .....\$25 & up

Best Retail Prices In Town!  
WALK-INS WELCOME  
Appointments Appreciated  
We hope to see you soon!

**It's Cool Cash time.**

Save up to \$1000 on qualifying new Carrier systems. We have the perfect comfort system for your home...at spectacular Cool Cash Savings!

That means you can get my expertise for less.



**SHELBY Heating & Air**  
704-487-7877  
828-245-1141

Offer expires 5/30/04. See dealer for details.

Turn to the Experts

**Live it.  
Lose it.  
Love it.**

With Weight Watchers you can handle any kind of food, stay in control and lose weight. Call or click for a meeting near you.  
**1 800 651 6000 • WeightWatchers.com**

**FREE REGISTRATION FOR MEETINGS. PAY ONLY THE WEEKLY FEE.**

**WeightWatchers**

Valid for a limited time at participating meeting locations. Not valid for At Work meetings or Online subscription products. ©2004 Weight Watchers International, Inc. owner of the WEIGHT WATCHERS registered trademark. All rights reserved.