
Subject: Gym Rats-Edgehill

From: RICHARD PAUL (rdpaul10@msn.com)

To: mel_thatcher@yahoo.com;

Date: Monday, December 28, 2015 10:13 AM

Hello Mel,

I got your message about your oral history project. You didn't leave a number. Jim Woolley and Brent McMaster suggested that I get in touch, if you are still interested.

I do have a pretty good memory of various events and anecdotes which might be of interest. (i.e., Gym Court . . with the Honorable Judge Howard Richards presiding (summonses) and dispensing justice, with sentences such as cleaning restrooms, locker rooms, washing walls, etc. for unacceptable behavior.

There was a major crisis in 1949 when someone left the drinking fountain propped on in the hall adjacent to the gym, and when the water pressure built up at night it flooded the gym and seriously damaged the hardwood floor causing large warps on the surface, which was a huge, heartbreaking disaster . . . and how, collectively, we organized to repair the problems with work parties involving scores of volunteers including engineers and craftsmen as well as packs of gym rats. To this day one can find the screws in the floor where sanding the boards was not enough.

There were the Invitational Tournaments, between Christmas and New Years, every year with teams in every age classification, juniors, scouts, up to teenagers, and M-Men. There was the EPBST (Edgehill Post Season Basketball Tournament) held in late March every year. Big time hero players like Arnie Ferrin and Wat Misaka were participants. Utah coach, Jack Gardner attended, scouting the talent of the younger players. I remember him talking to me, as a young lad, complimenting my play. That was huge!!

There are the stories of the two Bill Pauls, sr. and jr. Senior was the most decorated coach in All-Church basketball history with eight successive undefeated seasons until either going to the finals, or final four of the All-Church Tournament. Each year they won the Sportmanship Trophy, which was a big deal with a lot of emphasis in those halcyon days, especially for a ball boy like me. I cried when they lost in overtime, 3 times, in the finals. My brother Bill played in two All-Church finals. One for the Explorer Division coached by Paul Hansen, and one in the M-Men Division, coached by his dad.

Bill jr. was a wannabe gym rat, who never played high school b-ball but was recently honored by the U coach as the only player ever to receive a basketball scholarship at the U who never had the experience of playing on a high school team. Church ball was his platform. All others were actually stars in H.S.

He played against Hot Rod Hundley of West Virginia and the great Lenny Rosenbluth of North Carolina in the 1956 Dixie Classic, and had his picture on the cover of Sports Illustrated guarding Lenny, who was everybody's All-American that year. Needless to say, Bill was an area folk hero, especially for all of the unfulfilled wannabees, and gym rats, who would have given their eye teeth to have played up on the hill.

One year we played together at the U. That was after his mission and just before mine. My credentials were two years All-State at East High, and breaking two State Tournament scoring records. His were All EPBST, and All Church-Explorer Division. I think that Paul Hansen loved him more, but we both loved Paul Hansen equally.

Paul was always bragging, in jest, how he played in the famous Madison Square Garden. We kids were taken in by tall tales like that, half wanting to believe the hyperbole. I underplayed, with Hans, that I actually played at Madison Square Garden as a sophomore at the U. That was the year that the great Elgin Baylor took all of the air out of the place with his fantastic skills. His team stayed at the hotel where we were domiciled. That was the first experience I had watching a player being followed everywhere by two or three dozen groupies. But Paul Hansen's saga, though imagined, was still my inspiration.

Sorry for my meandering. Believe me, for us gym rats, the Edghill Gym was Camelot. It was the closest thing to the movie "Hoosiers." (a sports classic).

I just had a friend call me at Christmas time to tell me that he took his grandkids to see the Christmas Street and a tear came to his eye as he explained to them how the Edgehill Gym was like a sacred shrine to him. It was a Boys Town on steroids, and Paul Hansen was like Bing Crosby in the movie "The Bells Of St. Marys."

Respectfully,

Dick Paul

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

