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Ronald Warner: The Unknown Superstar

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Ronald Warner: The Unknown Superstar

Description

Gettysburg is a place with plenty of history. Everyone knows about the battle of Gettysburg in the civil war and that it took place on this campus. Everyone knows that President Abraham Lincoln gave his famous Gettysburg Address just minutes from the Gettysburg College campus. This area is rich in history that Americans know. When Gettysburg College opened in 1832, it too began to make its own history space. New buildings erected, some buildings knocked down, new memorials, and everything on this campus has a certain history. [*excerpt*]

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- Course Title: *HIST 300: Historical Method*
- Academic Term: Spring 2006
- Course Instructor: Dr. Michael J. Birkner '72

Hidden in Plain Sight is a collection of student papers on objects that are "hidden in plain sight" around the Gettysburg College campus. Topics range from the Glatfelter Hall gargoyles to the statue of Eisenhower and from historical markers to athletic accomplishments. You can download the paper in pdf format and click "View Photo" to see the image in greater detail.

Keywords

Gettysburg College, Hidden in Plain Sight, Athletic Hall of Fame, Bream Wright Hauser Athletic Complex

Disciplines

Public History | United States History

Campus Location

Bream Athletic Center

Gettysburg College

Hidden in Plain Sight:
Ronald Warner: The Unknown Superstar

History 300

Historical Methods

Dr. Michael Birkner

By

Eric Schroeder

Spring 2006

Gettysburg is a place with plenty of history. Everyone knows about the battle of Gettysburg in the civil war and that it took place on this campus. Everyone knows that President Abraham Lincoln gave his famous Gettysburg Address just minutes from the Gettysburg College campus. This area is rich in history that Americans know. When Gettysburg College opened in 1832, it too began to make its own history space. New buildings erected, some buildings knocked down, new memorials, and everything on this campus has a certain history.

The Bream Wright Hauser athletic complex was built on this campus in 1962, an addition was added in 1973, and it was renovated in 1989.¹ When you first walk down the path to this refurbished building the first thing that you notice is the size, it houses the basketball team, and indoor track, weight room and much more. You first enter the big glass doors and walk into the lobby. As you take a quick look around, you see the home of the Gettysburg College basketball team through the wooden doors in front of you. To your left and up the stairs is the office of the campus recreation, and to your right is a long hallway. When you make that left turn the first thing that you notice is all of the pictures of Gettysburg athletes on the walls excelling at their individual sports. There are pictures on every wall you look. As you walk forward towards the long hall, you go through a small sitting area and down a few stairs into the hall. When you look around the hall you notice about three or four big pillars in the middle with black and gold plaques covering the entire thing. You get closer and begin to read a few of them. It is the Gettysburg Athletic Hall of Fame, telling stories of people from all generations of Gettysburg College and from all different sports; baseball, basketball,

¹ Lambda Chi Alpha, The House and Community, 2006, available at <http://www.thetapi.com/content.asp?contentid=86>; Internet; 15 February 2006.

soccer, track football, etc. After you read a few of the plaques you begin to wander and look around a little bit more. As you look at the walls in the hallway you see that they are big glass display cases, and they are all full. There are trophies, plaques, awards, anything that Gettysburg college teams and athletes have won is somewhere in those display cases. You then are finished with looking at the cases so you continue to the end of the hallway to see a big mural of Billy the Bullet on the end wall. Now, with all the time you spent in the Gettysburg Hall of Fame, you probably did not even notice the dedication to arguably the greatest Gettysburg College basketball player ever, Ronald Warner.

When you first came down those stairs, while you were in awe of the pillars that held all of the Gettysburg Hall of Fame athletes, you passed a glass case that most people do not notice. Hunter McMillan, a current Gettysburg College athlete, says, "I go into Bream Complex close to threes to four times a day, I'm in there for work, football, watching tape, lifting and I have never even noticed that case before." This is an example of an object that is hidden in plain sight. This case is there everyday and not many people take the time to even notice what is in it, and who Ronald Warner is.

The case is shaped like a house; it is a big glass square, with a glass pyramid on top. It stands about five feet high and has two shelves all filled with memorabilia about Ronald Warner. First, on the bottom shelf are pictures of Warner, receiving different types of recognition, from points scored, to breaking school records of points and even a crazy drawing of Warner with a big head. On the hand the top shelf is much different, it is filled with articles about Ronald Warner, and the awards he has received. There is also his Gettysburg College basketball jersey, number 14. Also on the upper shelf is a

basketball signed by all of Ron's teammates in the 1962 season. Finally, there is a plaque and a letters stating all of the records that he holds and how he was the model gentleman.

So who is Ronald Warner? I asked numerous kids around campus if that could tell me who Ronald Warner was and one fact about him and I received the same answer from every person, "Sorry, I've never heard of him." These were kids ranging from basketball players to football players to non-athletes; no one could give me an answer. A school that is so committed on school spirit and pride and not one person on campus could tell me who the greatest basketball player to ever play at Gettysburg was.

The story of Ronald Warner begins in the nearby city of York, Pennsylvania on January 3, 1941.² He grew up on 209 North Newberry Street in York and learned to play basketball in his back yard.³ As he grew up, Ron was very fond of baseball and did as much as he could to excel in the sport. As he grew older, he attended William Penn High School in York and continued to perform on the basketball court. He was a guard, and was not very tall at that. Ron stood at 5'11", which is relatively small for a basketball player but that never stopped him. He was selected as an all state player his senior year and high school and graduated from William Penn in 1958.⁴

Ron wanted to continue to play basketball as well as continue his education, so he decided to attend Gettysburg College in the fall of 1958. He chose this school, not only for great academics, but also because he was recruited from York to play basketball there. He began to study health and physical education as well as continuing to work hard on the basketball courts. In his four years at Gettysburg, Ron broke and set 10 Gettysburg College basketball records. In on season he accomplished to set the following records;

² Memoranda written about Ronald Warner in Display Case.

³ Memoranda written about Ronald Warner in Display Case.

⁴ "Yorker named Top Athlete," Gazette and Daily, York, PA..

Points scored in one season (657), number of field goals in one season (244), foul shots made in one season (169) and season scoring average (25.3 ppg).⁵ In just his senior year Ron accomplished more than most people could do in their entire careers. Playing big names teams such as LaSalle, Penn. St., St. Joe's, Temple, Hofstra, Villanova and Navy his team played one of the hardest schedules in Gettysburg college history.

Ron's one year season totals were amazing, but the real achievement comes from what he did in his entire career. Along with the records that were listed before, Ron also holds the following records: Games played (76), Career Field Goals (694), Career Scoring average (24.7 ppg), foul shots made in one game (22) and Career Points scored (1880), which tied Jerry Lucas for 10th all time collegiate scoring leaders.⁶ Dave Gourley, another current Gettysburg College athlete said, "24.7 points per game in a career? That's unheard of. Those number that you just said, are ridiculous, and 1880 points in a career, WOW!" With these numbers, Ron was a three time Middle Atlantic Conference Division player and a two time conference MVP.⁷

Throughout his four years in college, Ron not only broke school records, but he also received a number of awards for his accomplishments on the basketball court. He was named to the Associated Press' "Small" All- America team.⁸ These were the top five players in the country who were less than six feet tall. Also he was selected both his junior and senior years to the All-State and All-East teams.⁹ He was given honorable

⁵ Memoranda written about Ronald Warner in Case.

⁶ Bob Dugan, "York Sports," Gazette and Daily.

⁷ Memoranda written about Ronald Warner in Case.

⁸ Gettysburg College, 1978 Hall of Fame Inductees, 2006, available at http://www.gettysburg.edu/athletics/orange_and_blue/hofh/1978inductees.htm#warner; Internet; accessed 15 February 2006.

⁹ Gettysburg College, 1978 Hall of Fame Inductees.

mention as a major college All-American on both the UPI teams and the AP team.¹⁰ Also, Ron was the first person ever to receive the most valuable player visiting Philadelphia award, who did not play in the Palestra.¹¹ This award was received by a visiting player on a team who played one of the schools in Philadelphia (Villanova, St. Joe's, LaSalle), but it was the first time in history that the award was not given to a player who did not play in the Palestra, the most famous basketball stadium in Philly, located on the University of Pennsylvania's campus.

Ron graduated in 1962 with a degree in health and physical education; where he went on to serve in the army.¹² After a few years of work in the army he was already up to the ranks of Lieutenant Ron Warner. For an early birthday present he received the Athlete of the year award for the second time in his life in Vienna, Italy.¹³ After his time in the army, Ron returned home to his wife Lucille who was from Clear Springs, Maryland and his two kids.¹⁴ Ron continued to work in York with his family and made a life as a businessman. Also, Ron continued to play basketball for a Mid-Atlantic basketball league, where he put up 421 points in the first 13 games of the season, including one game with 51.¹⁵ Ron lived in York till he died at the young age of 54 on March 3, 1995.¹⁶ One year later Ron was inducted into the Gettysburg Athletics Hall of Fame.¹⁷

¹⁰ Gettysburg College, 1978 Hall of Fame Inductees.

¹¹ Gettysburg College, 1978 Hall of Fame Inductees.

¹² Gettysburg College, 1978 Hall of Fame Inductees.

¹³ "Yorker named Top Athlete," Gazette and Daily, York, PA..

¹⁴ Bob Dugan, "York Sports," Gazette and Daily.

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¹⁶ Bob Dugan, "York Sports," Gazette and Daily.

¹⁷ Gettysburg College, 1978 Hall of Fame Inductees, 2006, available at http://www.gettysburg.edu/athletics/orange_and_blue/hofh/1978inductees.htm#warner; Internet; accessed 15 February 2006.

Ron Warner may have been the greatest basketball player to ever play at Gettysburg College but not many people even know he existed. Not many people take the time to look around and see what is around them or they would know his name. Bream Wright Hauser Athletic Complex holds a display dedicated to one great person that no one on campus would even notice without being told about it. Dave Gourley says that, "Yes, it's there, but no one is looking for something like that, it does not stick out in any special way so why should I notice it." If you take the time to look around wherever you are, you will notice many things, even if you are not looking for them that is an object that is hidden in plain site, and that is where you will find the story of Ronald Warner.

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