November 2014

NEWS FROM THE LION'S DEN
WITH HEAD COACH STEPHANIE GLANCE

Our team started practice almost one month ago, and my staff and I are very encouraged with the progress that each player has made. The returners continue to set a high standard of effort, execution, and approach that the first-years have completely adopted. It has been fun to watch each player find small ways to ensure the team is improving each practice – the returners, with the skills they developed over the summer, and, the first-years, with the strengths they brought to Columbia this fall.

To select the leadership unit for the ’14 – ’15 season, each applicant presented an essay about her philosophy on peer leadership, what the team can count on her to do, and a resume of leadership experience. After a series of thorough questions to which each applicant provided a response, the players voted seniors Campbell Mobley and Miwa Tachibana, junior Sara Mead, and sophomore Tori Oliver as the leadership unit for this season. This unique combination of varying personalities, approaches, and abilities will provide outstanding leadership for our team!

Throughout the past month, the Women’s Basketball Advisory Committee and our broadening base of alumnae have stepped up immensely to help us achieve several victories!! It was so great to see the alumnae and visit with them at our PEP Kick-Off Event. The alumnae’s devotion to mentoring, which was evident with their presence at and engagement in the event, really meant a lot to our players. Additionally, my staff and I, along with the players, could not be more appreciative of the amazing effort put forth on Giving Day 2014 by our alumni, friends, and family! From posting on social media, to rallying others to donate, to making your own gift – each of you made a significant contribution! We cannot thank you enough for all you do for this program!
Women’s Leadership Council Fall Event

The month of October featured several special events hosted by the Columbia Athletic Department. The first was the Women’s Leadership Council (WLC) Fall Event held at Freds at Barneys. The WLC is a leadership giving recognition society for women donors. Since its inception in 2007, the WLC has included more than 100 women and raised over $1.7 million in support for Columbia Athletics. The purpose of the Council is for women to support women – through financial gifts, meaningful connections, and having a strong voice in the athletics program. At the Fall Event, several new changes were announced, including a new membership level. The Council also thanked Dr. M. Dianne Murphy for her daring originality in establishing the WLC and her unwavering support to women’s athletics throughout her decade of leadership at Columbia. The Women’s Basketball Program was well represented at the Fall Event, with the coaching staff and five alumnae in attendance (Megan Bramlette, ‘02SEAS, Lauren Dwyer, ‘11CC, Katie Day Benvenuto, ‘03CC, ‘12BUS, Virginia Harnisch, ‘87CC, Manju Dawkins, ‘01CC).

2014 Hall of Fame Class Induction

A sold-out audience in the Low Library Rotunda witnessed the induction of the Columbia University Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2014. This class featured the first ever women’s team inducted into the Hall of Fame and Al Barabas, who scored the only touchdown in the Lions landmark victory over Stanford in the 1934 Rose Bowl.

The Hall of Fame was founded in 2005, to honor, pay tribute to, and perpetuate the memory of those individuals who have made outstanding contributions in the field of intercollegiate athletics either through participation, support, or interest. It inducts one class every two years, with the first class being inducted in 2006. Some of the most notable names in American sports history are members of this inaugural class, such as baseball icons Lou Gehrig ‘23CC and Eddie Collins 1907CC and football legends Sid Luckman ‘39CC and Lou Little (head coach 1930-1956). The Women’s Basketball program has laudable representation from Ula Lysniak ‘87BC; Kathy Gilbert White ‘91CC; Nora Beck ‘83BC, ‘89SOA; and Ellen Bossert ‘86CC.
The Kick-Off Event for the Professional Enrichment Program was a great success!! PEP is a mentoring program that connects our current players with alumnae to assist the players in preparing for and obtaining job opportunities, promote their professional growth, and build and maintain relationships between current and past players. We had a fantastic turnout for the event, with over 20 alumnae and our 17 players in attendance. The event started with an intimate, interactive panel of three very established alumnae. A variety of relevant topics were covered, including the importance of time management and finding a balance during undergraduate years and one’s professional career. The panelists provided the current players with tools on how to transfer the experience of being a student-athlete into the workplace. Finally, the panelists encouraged the players to follow their passion, even if it is constantly changing.

During the reception, the mentors and mentees were able to meet and begin building their relationship. It was really fun to watch all the meaningful connections that were being made between former and current women’s basketball players. During dinner, Head Coach Stephanie Glance spoke about two of the most important mentors in her life – her mother and the former North Carolina State Women’s Basketball Head Coach, Kay Yow. Helen Doyle Yeager and Katie Day Benvenuto spoke on the importance of a commitment to mentorship and giving back. Helen explained this by quoting the legendary UCLA Men’s Basketball Coach John Wooden - “You’ll never know a thing that you didn’t learn from someone else.”

The night ended with a highly competitive game of “PEP-ARDY!” There were several highlights, such as Christina Dugger’s impressive geographical expertise and table three’s team effort to piece together song lyrics. However, the most notable performance undoubtedly goes to Megan Bramlette and table four – who knew a wide-range of trivia and the “Final PEP-ARDY” answer, to go home with a victory! The commitment displayed by the alumnae at this event, ensures a promising future for PEP.
Megan Bramlette
SEAS, ‘02

Where do you currently reside?
Seattle. My wife and I moved here 2.5 years ago from Brooklyn.

Where do you work currently and what do you do there?
I work at Amazon.com. I’m a Principal Product Manager, and I run a new business called Amazon Local Register. It’s a mobile point-of-sale product that allows small businesses to accept credit cards at their physical store (if you’re familiar with Square, we are a competitor). We launched the business in August, so lately I’ve been busy talking to our customers, prioritizing our next set of features, and improving our operations.

What do you enjoy most about the career path you have chosen?
I’ve spent my entire career in the payments industry. Paying for things, and getting paid for things is fundamental – we all do it every day, regardless of our age, affluence, or interests. In that respect, payments are a utility – but it’s the only utility that I know of that is both universal and profitable. This profit margin allows for innovation and competition – every company is thinking about ways that they can process payments more effectively and profitably. I enjoy this industry because the products I build are universal, the problems I solve are complex, and it impacts our daily habits.

What are your current interests, hobbies, and/or activities?
Music is a huge passion of mine. I spend a lot of time listening to and learning about music. And a lot of our vacations incorporate music into the itinerary – we just got back from Austin City Limits, and this winter, we’ll go to a music festival in Mexico. I used to play more music, but works seems to be getting in the way of that lately. :(

Describe your experience at Columbia University.
I was a student at SEAS (graduating in 2002), and I majored in Operations Research-Management Systems. Juggling the engineering course load with basketball was tough – I took 5 or 6 classes plus labs each semester. I was one of three basketball players in my class, but was the only one to play all 4 years. My first year, we only won 6 games. Our record got better every year, which I’m really proud of.

What are your fondest memories of your years at Columbia?
My best memories are of spending time with my friends and teammates – long bus rides, joking around in the training room, and long conversations about what was important to us and what we wanted to do with our lives.

What advice would you give to the current women’s basketball players?
Take advantage of the opportunities Columbia presents. Say “yes” to new opportunities and explore things outside of your comfort zone. Being curious is the best way for you to expand your horizons and identify your passions. And ask for help when you’re not sure what path to take. Most people are very generous with their time and are flattered when they are asked for advice; take advantage of this tendency and you will benefit from others’ experiences.

Looking back on your life, what are you most proud of?
I’ve always been eager to take on new challenges. Professionally, I’ve taken a lot of risks without knowing exactly what business I was going to run. That was pretty scary, but ultimately, I knew that if it wasn’t my dream job, just working at Amazon would be a great learning experience and a positive next step for my career.

What are your plans for your future?
Right now, I’m focused on getting Amazon Local Register through this “growing pains” period, so that we can start to build cool new features for our customers. We are pretty happy in Seattle, so I think we’ll be here for a while.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!!

In just a mere 24 hours, Columbia University raised $11,064,924!! This record-breaking amount was donated by 10,452 donors and distributed through 19 different schools and departments to enrich the experience of a Columbia education!!

Of all 19 University departments, Columbia Athletics finished second only to Columbia College, in terms of dollars raised. Athletics received over 2,500 gifts and raised over $2.3 million dollars - the highest total for athletics in the three years of this event! Athletics also won incentive funds from several of the Giving Day “challenges,” bringing the total to $2,415,143!

Women’s Basketball had a remarkably successful Giving Day 2014! More than doubling the amount from last year, we raised $69,230! Our program received gifts from 137 donors, and is so appreciative of all the alumni, family, and friends of the program that joined efforts to make it happen! Because of your generosity and willingness to help spread the word, the college experience for current and future women’s basketball players will be greatly enhanced.

Thank you for supporting the Columbia Women’s Basketball Family!