

April 2022 Newsletter

Inaugural Class Inducted Into Hall of Fame

On Friday, February 18, 2022, the Pitt-Greensburg Athletics Department ushered in a new era at the University. Athletic Director Jeromy Yetter and President Robert Gregerson welcomed over 160 guests to Wagner Dining Hall to induct the first members of the new Pitt-Greensburg Athletics Hall of Fame.

Yetter eloquently and graciously introduce each of the new inductees. The introductions began with Dan Swalga, the Athletic Director who brought the four-year athletics programs to Pitt-Greensburg and guided the efforts to obtain membership into the NCAA. Following Dan were Matt Furjanic, who won back-to-back championships in 1999 and 2000, and Carol Gelet, whose teams won the AMCC title and went into the D3 NCAA tournament in 2003, 2004, and 2009.

The first two players inducted into the Hall of Fame were women's soccer player Jen McIntosh Luciew '06 and basketball player Jason Trout. Although they played in the early years of the four-year era, they still dominate the record books today.

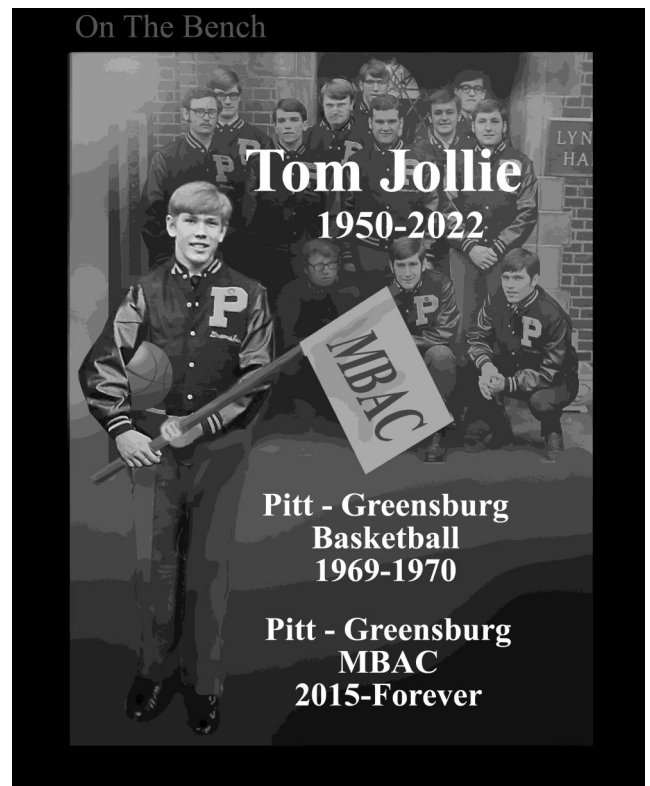
The final two inductees were teams. The first was the 2002 men's soccer team who was the first team to make the NCAA tournament. The other team was the campus' first-team -- the 1969-1970 men's basketball team. They pioneered the athletic programs at Pitt-Greensburg, and now they are pioneering alumni involvement on campus.



Top: Matt Furjanic (left) with players and coaches from the '99 and '00 teams.

Above: AD Jeromy Yetter (left), Dr. Robert Gregerson (right) with members of the '69-'70 men's basketball team.

Right: Award presented to the '69-'70 men's basketball team.



On page 2, the MBAC and members of the campus community remember Tom Jollie '73

REMEMBERING THOMAS M. JOLLIE

On January 7, the MBAC lost Tom Jollie. The quiet, humble man said goodbye in his own way with a private viewing and service. He will be remembered for all that he did for the campus, such as helping to purchase a shooting machine for the men's basketball program. The MBAC has created the Thomas M. Jollie award in his honor. Members of the campus community share their memories of the gentle giant:

"Tom was the first person I met at Pitt-Greensburg, and we remained lifelong friends. All who knew Tom and I knew how we felt about one another. I don't need to say anything more."

— **Fred Charles '72,**
MBAC President

"Tom's humility, pride, passion, generosity, and compassion created a legacy that will stand taller than he did. We were friends for well over 50 years and never had an argument."

— **Harry Bowser '72**

"Tom was a mountain of a man, our quiet gentle giant. His generosity gave the players on the squad gifts they knew nothing about and one they did, the shooting machine. The players should know Tom will be rooting for them from afar."

— **Bernie Cobetto '73**

"During our playing days, Tom was our big man and could be counted on to make his mark on the scoreboard. As our lives progressed Tom proved to be a big man in life, and he made his mark there also. He actively helped people in his professional life as well as his personal life. He is and will be irreplaceable."

— **Rich Hardway '73**

"Tom was a genuine soul who gave of himself and made a difference. He was a friend to the students, alumni, and campus. He is truly missed."

— **Sheila Kudrick,**
Constituent
Relationship Manager

"Tom was a kind man. He was always ready with a joke. I enjoyed working with him. He will be missed."

— **Julia Sefcheck '99,**
Alumni Engagement
Officer

"When I was introduced to Tom about three years ago, as we shook hands I instantly knew that he was a man of rare quality. He was someone with whom you could talk about things that mattered, and you wanted to listen to what he had to say. Tom was a devoted alumnus of Pitt-Greensburg who truly cared about his alma mater, and he remained a close and loyal friend to his basketball teammates. He was kind, knowledgeable, and respectful. I'm very happy that I got to know him, even if only for a few years. Tom was a gentleman in every sense of the word, and he will be missed so much by all that knew him."

— **Dr. Robert Gregerson,**
President

"Tom was an active participant on the PGAA board and within the Events Committee, which was greatly appreciated by all who had the pleasure of working with him. You always could rely on him because his commitment level was so high. Tom was a role model for the younger members of the group. What I will miss most about him is his smile and ability to liven up a room and keep everyone laughing"

— **Scott Szypulski '14**

"Tom was always supportive of both the men's and women's basketball teams. As a parent of a player, it was a pleasure to talk to him at the games as he was always upbeat and friendly. His valuable contributions to the alumni efforts showed how passionately he felt about the institution and about giving back to his alma mater."

— **Jim Murphy '76**



PGAA President Rob Najim (left) presents Tom Jollie '73 with the Volunteer Excellence Award in 2019.

"Tom was on the search committee when I applied for the job at Pitt at Greensburg. He asked me what I would do with a player like him, a bruiser who couldn't score, but could get rebounds and a foul here and there. I replied I would tell him to go play football somewhere because this team needs someone that can score. Tom laughed that famous laugh of his and we were friends from that point on."

— **Brody Jackson,**
Former head coach

"Tom was one of the kindest most caring people that I have ever met, I had the pleasure of meeting Tom through the PGAA. He was a dedicated member of the board and devoted a lot of his time to the MBAC. Tom had great ideas and an open mind. He could make anyone feel comfortable with his humor. He was also someone you could trust and rely on. He was always offering me words of support and encouragement. Tom will be missed greatly by many. My heart goes out to his family."

— **Huong Vo '14**

"Tom was a great friend and supporter of "his" university. Most importantly, he was a true and genuine lifelong friend to me. I think of him often, particularly during my frequent visits to the campus. I really miss the rare visits to his office where he was in his element."

— **Andy Garsteck '74**

MBAC PRESENTS THOMAS M. JOLLIE AWARD AT AWARDS DINNER

The MBAC is proud to announce the establishment of five player awards. The first MBAC awards ceremony was held Tuesday, March 15, at The Boulevard restaurant in Greensburg. The event included members of the MBAC, the 2021-2022 men's basketball team, Coach Chris Klimchock, and members of Tom Jollie's family including his widow Sharon.

Named after one of the MBAC founders, the Thomas M. Jollie Character Award is given to the player who demonstrates the qualities that Tom showed in his support of the men's basketball program, including but not limited to loyalty, humility, dedication, generosity, and a selfless willingness to do anything to help the team. Selected by the players and coaches, the award was presented to guard Michael Gaffney by Sharon.

Voted on by players and coaches, the Player's Player Award is given to the player who gives his all when he steps on the court. He is a competitor and an outstanding example of what a coach wants in all his players. This year's recipient is forward Reggie Priah.

The merit-based Scholar-Athlete Award is given to the player who displays exceptional performance in the classroom as well as on the court. Guard and forward Jalen Williams is this year's recipient.

The Most Improved Player Award, which is determined by the coaches, is given to the player who through hard work shows the most development from the beginning to the end of the season. This year's winner is guard and forward Micah Jones.

Also voted on by the coaches, the Nose to the Grindstone / Gym Rat Award is given to the player who puts the most time in the gym beyond scheduled practices and displays extra effort working on his game. The coaches selected guard Matt Johnson for this award.

Seniors Matt Johnson and Nick Kotecki each received an appreciation award for their years as Bobcats.

The MBAC thanks Head Coach Chris Klimchock, Assistant Coach Al Heter, Assistant Coach Rick Klimchock, and Assistant Coach Harry Bowser for their valuable insight during the award process, and they congratulate all of the award winners for their hard works and efforts for the team.



Top Row (L-R):
Sharon Jollie with Thomas M. Jollie award winner Mike Gaffney.
MBAC member Rich Hardway with Scholar Athlete Award winner Jalen Williams.
Assistant coach Al Heter with Most Improved Player Micah Jones.

Middle Row (L-R):
Sharon Jollie (center) with members of Tom Jollie's family.
MBAC member Andy Garsteck (center) with Matt Johnson and Jojo France.

Bottom Row (L-R):
Garsteck with Nose to the Grindstone/Gym Rat awardee Matt Johnson.
Chris Klimchock with Player's Player award winner Reggie Priah.
Sharon Jollie and family.

JOHNSON JOINS 1,000-POINT SCORERS



On February 16, against Mount Aloysius, Matt Johnson joined his teammate Jojo France as a member of the 1,000-point club. Matt becomes the 16th player in school history to join that elite club. The MBAC congratulates Matt on his accomplishment.



Top: Matt Johnson marks his achievement beside the 1,000-point banner.
Middle: (L-R) Matt's father Eric Johnson, Matt Johnson, and fellow 1,000-point scorer Jason Trout celebrate Matt's historic record.
Bottom: (L-R) Jojo France, Matt Johnson, Cam Seigfreid, and Jason Trout have all scored 1,000 pts during their collegiate careers.



SENIOR NIGHT



Pitt-Greensburg said goodbye to two seniors this year. Pictured are Nick Kotecki (center) and Matt Johnson (second from right) with their families and coaches. The MBAC congratulates them, wishes them well in their careers, and welcomes them to the alumni family.

LADY BOBCATS: A SEASON TO REMEMBER

The Lady Bobcats' miraculous comeback and last second victory in the AMCC semifinals may be what most players and fans will remember about this talented, never-say-die team, but it would take a pretty thick scrapbook to hold all of the great memories from the '21-'22 season.

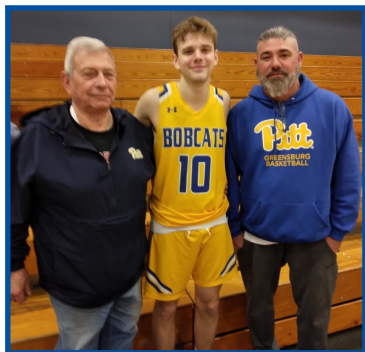


The Lady Bobcats huddle at the AMCC Championship on Feb. 26.

Not only did the Bobcats compile an impressive record of 20 wins and six losses, 13-3 in the AMCC Conference, but they also garnered a Co-Player of the Year award in Nadege Durand and three All-Conference selections in Durand, Sidney McCully, and Melina Maietta. Shaquoia McCray and Maddie Sitler were equally valuable players, contributing to team chemistry and success with their tough rebounding, steady defense, and unselfish play. Lizzie Penrose, Lee Ann Harris, and Ashley Baldwin played key roles off the bench, while a supporting cast of Alysia Lynch, Quitarah Hardison, Keira Coleman, Abigail Benally, and Gia Scala not only helped to sharpen the teams' skills in practice, but also encouraged their teammates to play hard, to play tough, and to play as one.

First-year coach Kelsey Oddis and assistant Emily Nelson proved a winning combination in finishing a close second during the regular season and in orchestrating a playoff run that fell just short of the conference title. But while this team was a continuous highlight reel, it was no one-year flash in the pan. Since 2017-18, the Pitt-Greensburg women have made steady and impressive strides in reclaiming their place in the AMCC hierarchy, and, when seniors Durand, Sitler, McCray, and Lynch graduate this spring, they will do so knowing that they were instrumental in reestablishing a tradition of excellence not achieved since the early days of the program. Perhaps most noteworthy about this team, however, is that they persevered through cancellations, rescheduled practices and games, illness, empty gymnasiums, and all of the uncertainties and inconveniences of life in a pandemic, and still came out on top. Perhaps more than anything, this should be their legacy. And this is what should make them most proud!

JOJO FRANCE: AN ATHLETIC LEGACY



Jojo France (center) with grandfather James (left) and father Jason (right) have built a family sports tradition.

At Medaille College on February 22, Jojo scored 12 points to bring his career total to 1,213, which places him at sixth place on the all-time scoring list at Pitt-Greensburg. With another year of eligibility remaining, who knows where Jojo will finish on the all-time scorers list.

Jojo's physical stature would not indicate that he could accomplish such a feat. When Jojo plays, an old cliché comes to mind, "It's not about the size of the dog in the fight but it is about the size of the fight in the dog." Where does that will to compete and win come from?

He comes from a family of athletes. Jason, Jojo's father, was quite an athlete. He was an all-league quarterback in high school for two years and an all-league point guard for two years for his basketball team at Manchester High School in New Franklin Ohio. After high school Jason went into coaching football and has been doing that for almost 30 years. Jojo also went to Manchester high school and was a four-year letter winner at football besides being a star on the basketball squad. Jason had a hand in Jojo's basketball career, coaching his son in the 7th and 8th grades.

"When Jojo was young and playing baseball, he made an unassisted triple play. Everyone was startled that a player his age had the knowledge of the game and the ability to put it to action and make that play," explains Jason when asked when he realized Jojo had what it took to be an athlete.

There are a couple of things about Jojo's football career that stand out. Jojo, a three-year letter winner in football, was a wide receiver and defensive back. During his senior season, the starting quarterback was injured, and Jojo became the quarterback leading the team into the playoffs. Jason was the team's assistant coach, and Jojo's grandfather, James France, was the head coach on the team. He adds another chapter to the France family history.

James was quite the athlete too. He earned 12 varsity letters at Springfield High School, but James's real claim to fame was his coaching career at Manchester High School. He coached there for 50 years, and, along the way, he became the winningest high school football coach in the history of Ohio with 401 wins, 129 losses, and 4 ties. While this is an accomplishment worth exploring, James would rather talk about his children and grandchildren. His eyes light up as he speaks about his family. Nancy, his wife of 56 years, passed in 2019. His children and grandchildren are his hobbies, and he attended his grandchildren's events while they were in high school.

James is a fixture at midcourt when the Bobcats play in Chambers Hall. In the years Jojo has played for Pitt-Greensburg, James has only missed a handful of games. What makes his attendance even more memorable is seeing how Jojo and his grandfather interact with each other after the games.

"He is our first grandson, and I like to watch him play because his will to win is so strong," says James about his and Jojo's bond and added that he hopes to be at all of Jojo's games next year.

As for Jojo, it's easy to see where the fight in the dog came from, but there is also another cliché that fits, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." In this case, the apples fell twice with Jason and Jojo.

Despite their own athletic careers, both Jason and James agree without hesitation that Jojo is the best athlete in the family.

The MBAC wishes Jojo luck as he adds to the family legacy during his time at Pitt-Greensburg.

MBAC MEMBERS — JOIN THE PITT-GREENSBURG ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AT THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

SENIOR SEND OFF: CELEBRATE THE CLASS OF 2022
FRIDAY, APRIL 29 - 6-8 P.M.
WAGNER DINING HALL.

PITT-GREENSBURG AT PNC PARK:
TAILGATE & BALLGAME
FRIDAY, JUNE 3

Visit <https://www.greensburg.pitt.edu/alumni> to learn more or to register for events.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW: THE WINFREY BROTHERS

In Uniontown, PA, outside of their places of worship, there was once no more sacred ground than the public playgrounds, the places that legends were born. And what legendary teams they produced! Dating as far back as 1925, this remote Fayette County region poured out more than the coke and bituminous coal that fueled the nearby U.S. Steel blast furnaces; it also turned out a nearly endless stream of talented, hard-nosed teams whose impressive achievements helped to cement a legacy in Western Pennsylvania and beyond. In Uniontown, tradition is truly more than a word – it's a way of life.

This is the world where former Pitt-Greensburg players Scott '05 and David '06 Winfrey cut their basketball teeth, and where they learned from their gospel minister parents that success knows no shortcuts, that respect is earned, that humility and regard for others is fundamental, and that anything is possible with faith and hard work.



David Winfrey with wife Brishonna and children .

Scott and David set out to put these principles into action as they picked up the finer points of the game watching their father and older brothers competing on the playgrounds, and they soon became accomplished players in their own right. At Uniontown Area High School, both Scott and David played in a state championship game and they followed up their successful high school careers by making their mark at Pitt-Greensburg. Scott, who played in '00-'04, was a four-year starter and an all-conference selection, and his success in the program helped to attract other quality players. David came along a few years later ('02-'06) to play an instrumental role in two conference title runs and an ECAC tournament berth during his senior year.



Scott Winfrey , wife Jill, and daughters.

They were recruited by Harry Bowser '72. Scott played a year for Karl Radday and three years for Marcus Kahn, while David played all four years for Kahn. Aside from the many good teammates both played with, the brothers each have one vivid memory: for Scott it was hitting a winning shot against Lake Erie during his sophomore year, and for David it was a run-and-gun game played against Redlands College in California where Pitt-Greensburg scored 142 points! They also remember, however, that even though they played a game that ultimately relied on scoring, at Pitt-Greensburg they never felt as if they were just a number. The professors were always there for them when they needed something, and the classes were small and inviting.

After graduating, Scott went on to work as a youth counselor and then accepted a job in the federal prison system as a specialist in recreation and then specializing in drug treatment. Although his work took him to sites in Maryland and Kentucky, he has now transferred back to his hometown to be closer to his family. David also used his people skills but took a different path. He worked a few years in customer service before becoming an assistant basketball coach and substitute teacher in the Uniontown Area School District. This experience led to a position as a school resource officer, and, after obtaining his master's degree in special education with a concentration in applied behavioral analysis, David moved up the ladder to his current position as the district's director of transportation.

Scott and Jill Winfrey have been married for 16 years and have two daughters, Bristol and Brenna. David and his wife Brishonna are also blessed with two young children, Deion and Drew. Scott and David's father, Vincent, will be completing his 29th year in March as pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church, where their mother, Marilyn, is also a minister of the gospel. Vincent and Marilyn will have plenty of company in commemorating this accomplishment as Scott and David have three brothers, one sister, and many nephews and nieces. Considering their life-service to the faith community and their achievements on the court, perhaps it's safe to say that faith, family, and basketball are inextricably woven into the Winfrey fabric. It's also safe to say that Scott and David Winfrey will always be a part of the campus fabric as well!

COACH'S CORNER



We wrapped up our season a few weeks ago and were proud of how we closed out the year. We finished with an overall record of 10-15 and a conference record of 8-8 while qualifying for the AMCC Tournament. We lost in the quarterfinals by three points to Medaille, who went on to win the whole thing. It was a tough loss, but I was thrilled with how hard we played.

We were extremely happy with the improvement that was made from Day 1 of practice to the end of the year. We preached “progress” all throughout the season, and that is exactly what we did. For it being my first year as the head coach, it was an easy group of players to coach because of the care and effort they put into everything they did.

JoJo France made AMCC Second Team All-Conference, and Reggie Priah made third team. JoJo and Reggie were huge for us all year and helped lead the way. We had contributions from so many players throughout the season, and that credit goes to the job that guys put in at practice each day.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done now until the beginning of next season to make sure we are prepared and ready to go for the 2022-23 season. Our guys are already in the gym playing pick up, getting shots up, and lifting weights, which is a great sign. We look forward to continued progress and being the best team we can be on and off the court. Go Bobcats!

PITT-GREENSBURG ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY

