

Lynette Lobban



Visitors to Lloyd Noble Center receive an interactive introduction to the

Interactive displays at the Lloyd Noble Center's Legacy Court bring a literal meaning to the term "hands-on." Here students from Yukon Public Schools see how they measure up against the handprints of Sooners Britney Brown and Courtney Paris.

LEGACY



BY JAY C. UPCHURCH
Oklahoma basketball has experienced its share of magical moments over a century of evolution that began quite humbly with a victory against Epworth College in 1907.

From the profound influences of legendary coach Bruce Drake to the vastly different but equally successful stylings of Billy Tubbs and Kelvin Sampson, to the triumphant rise of Sherri Coale, the Sooner name has been deeply engraved alongside the most elite men's and women's programs in the country.

As OU celebrates 100 years of basketball excellence, Legacy Court offers visitors an opportunity to further experience the rich tradition created and nurtured by so many memorable coaches, players and teams.

The 4,800-square feet of skillfully designed exhibits, prominently featured on two floors of the Lloyd Noble Center, gives fans of all ages a close-up, in-depth look at what Sooner basketball is all about.

"Legacy Court is like the front porch of the basketball programs here at the University of Oklahoma," says first-year men's coach Jeff Capel. "It's the first thing many people see when they visit our offices or step inside the Lloyd Noble Center. I've only been here a short while, but I believe it's something every member of our program aspires to being a part of."

Initially opened in 2003—a year after Oklahoma became just the second school in NCAA Tournament history to send both its men's and women's teams to their respective Final Fours in the same season—Legacy Court received a \$600,000 facelift in fall 2006. Donations from the Tip In Club and Fast Break Club helped make the upgrades possible.

The facility's new look was a joint design effort involving Gallagher & Associates and the

Nashville-based 1220 Exhibits. These two companies also partnered on football exhibits for Legends Lobby at the Switzer Center adjacent to Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium.

"It's important for us to have a place where visitors can go and learn about the history of Oklahoma basketball and get to know the people who have been a part of making it so special," explains OU director of athletics Joe Castiglione. "The cool thing about Legacy Court is it offers fans a very hands-on experience. Plus, there will always be something new because it will be updated constantly."

"We have teams that are making history all the time, and we want to stay in step with their progress."

Five interactive displays, positioned throughout the bottom level, challenge fans to test their leaping ability and hand speed. They also can step into the foot prints of various players on the hardwood floor or compare their hand sizes with those of their favorite Sooners.

Just outside the entrances to the basketball offices, elegant display cabinets filled with trophies and memorabilia conjure up memories of the past, where achievements of players like Wayman Tisdale, Alvan Adams, Stacey Dales and Phylesha Whaley come to life.

"Everytime I step into that lobby, I am reminded of all the people and teams that have helped shape the history of Oklahoma basketball," says Coale. "It's an incredible facility that gets at the heart of what all competitive athletes want to do—and that is leave a lasting legacy."

Another main feature of the lower floor is a pair of giant hologram-like graphics, as well as several larger-than-life banners featuring images of current OU players. Similar banners are draped from the lobby rafters, high above a running timeline that chronicles the history of both OU basketball programs.

Positioned prominently around the upper arc of the center display area are eight large, flat-screen TVs, projecting video footage of players and coaches talking about their various OU experiences.

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history and accomplishments of OU basketball—men's and women's.

COURT

“Over the last 50-60 years, there are few Big 12 programs that can match what OU has done.”

“I took trips to every major basketball school in America during my recruitment, and nobody has anything like this,” says All-American and AP National Player of the Year Courtney Paris, whose rewriting of OU’s record books soon will have her name and face featured in every corner of Legacy Court. “This would have definitely had an impact on my recruitment. It’s a little weird now, seeing big old banners and pictures of myself, but I would have loved that idea as a high school recruit.”

Unveiled in October 2006—a year after Paris arrived—the redesigned Legacy Court does an excellent job of using pictures, video and priceless mementos to fuse the past and present in a way that tells a comprehensive story of OU basketball.

“For all of the history and tradition of Oklahoma football—all of which is greatly deserved—the story of Sooner basketball is one of the better stories in this league,” says Castiglione. “Over the last 50-60 years, there are few Big 12 programs that can match what OU has done.”

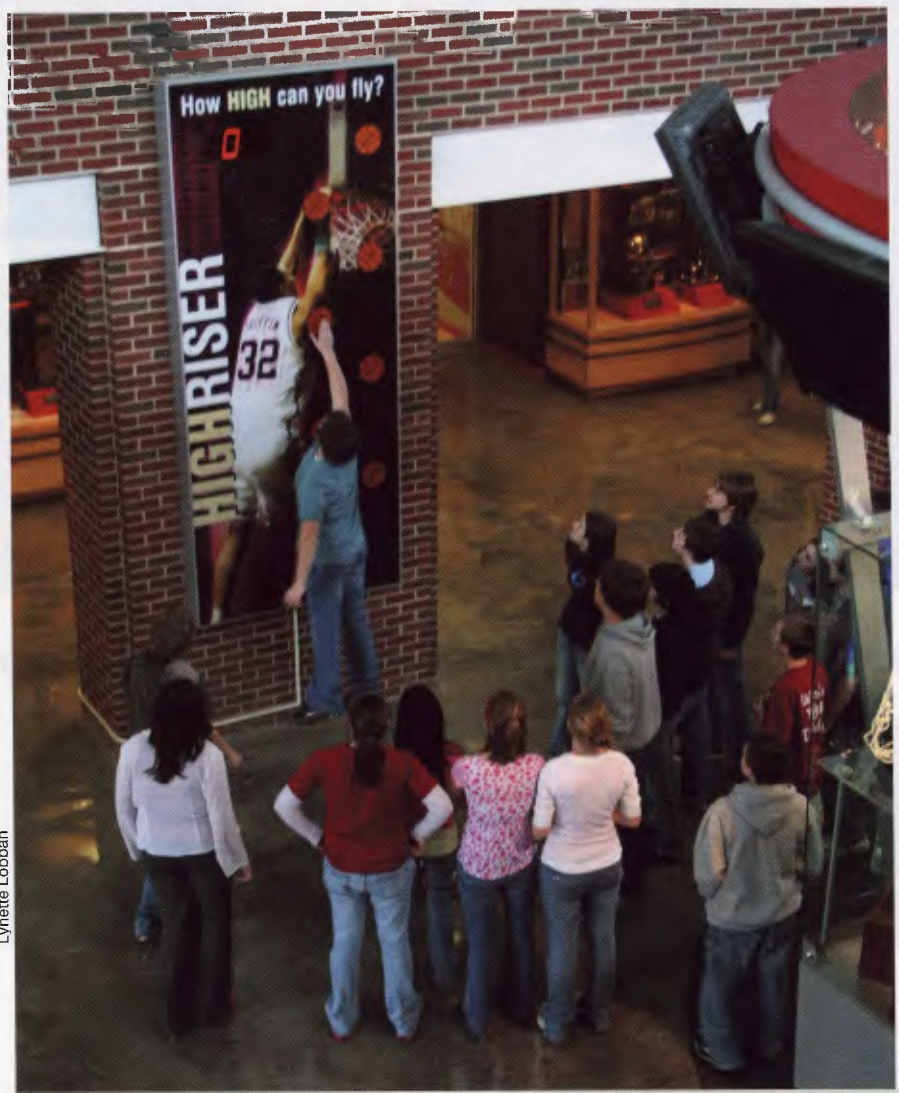
“Coach Coale and Coach Capel regularly bring people here from all over the country to learn about the school, the basketball program, the history and our culture. Legacy Court allows those people to see first-hand what we are all about.”

Jay C. Upchurch is editor in chief of Sooner Spectator and writes freelance OU sports articles for Sooner Magazine.



Robert Taylor

ABOVE: Visitors can get a glimpse of OU basketball history and tradition through the glass display cases filled with Sooner memorabilia, trophies and likenesses of former players. BELOW: Students go one-on-one with Sooner forward #32 Taylor Griffin while testing their vertical jump.



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ABOVE: Big screen televisions allow visitors to relive great moments in Sooner basketball, as well as watch interviews with players and coaches.

BELOW: A facelift to Legacy Court in 2006 added a number of challenges for Sooner fans. Young visitors enjoy testing their reaction time in an interactive display featuring 2006-07 senior forward Krista Sanchez. Displays are updated frequently to celebrate the accomplishments of current players as well as legends from OU's past.



TOP: At Legacy Court, Sooner fans can walk in the footsteps of some of their favorite players. Here a visitor compares her shoe size to that of Harvey Grant, a standout forward and first-round draft pick of the Washington Bullets in 1988. BOTTOM: Glass display cases chronicle the highlights of Sooner basketball from its earliest days to current rosters.

