

the Circuit

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Talia Rawls running in the Murphy Rec Center on February 10 during the old mask policy. Photo by Aretha Victalino

Online Scholarship Ball successful

Sarah Temple
The Circuit

It was a night for the record book.

The annual Benedictine College scholarship ball, despite being moved online broke record numbers in donations and raised over \$1.1 million in scholarships for students.

In anticipation of the change of venue from banquet hall to virtual, college officials created a video that included performances from the marching band, dance team and guest speakers who told stories of how their scholarships helped them to reach their goals.

Doug Longstaff, the director of annual giving, was part of the team who worked to duplicate the communal feeling and authentic reactions of being in-person.

“We knew the production of the video had to be something alumni, parents and friends would be moved by, and they really, really were,” Longstaff said.

The main speaker, Miguel Monteclaro, a battalion commander in Army ROTC, shared how grateful he was to be able

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Updated mask policies create conversation among students

Rachel Oberfoell
The Circuit

With spring on the horizon, the United States is approaching a bitter milestone: the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic. A year later, many are still grappling with how to handle the response to a virus that has upended every part of daily life. Benedictine College is no exception.

The newest change in COVID-19 policy on campus

was sent out to the student body via email on March 2. Masks are no longer required to be worn outside. Face coverings are still required in most buildings and when social distancing is not possible for more than 15 minutes.

Megan Domann, a COVID-19 nurse at the Atchison County Health Department, explained when masks should be worn.

“I would highly recommend a mask anywhere, if you can’t keep

a social distance,” Domann said. “If you’re walking with somebody, even somebody from your living quarters, you should still have a mask on.”

In addition to this change for masks outdoors, there has also been a change for masks indoors as well.

Late last month, an email was sent out to all students announcing a change in the mask policy at the Murphy Recreation Center

(Rec). The email read in part, “in the spirit of “normalcy”, individuals exercising at the Rec will no longer be required to wear a mask while engaging in strenuous activity.”

Charlie Gartenmeyer, director of athletics, was at the forefront of the decision to change the rule.

“While the individual is doing [that] particular exercise, they can take their mask off, but once they’re finished with it, have to

put [the mask] on,” Gartenmeyer said. “My observation of being down [at the Rec] is that it’s been implemented pretty well on their part.”

This change comes on the heels of a stricter precedent, in which students could be removed from the Rec for repeatedly not wearing a mask.

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voices

The science behind the perfect bracket



Liam Keating

Managing Editor

The best time of the year is upon us, March Madness. On Sunday, the NCAA Selection Committee selected 68 teams to be a part of the 2021 tournament.

Local teams such as Wichita State, Kansas and Missouri

have made the field. Maybe, one of these teams is poised for a national championship, maybe an early exit. Here is how to pick the perfect bracket:

First, mascots are the easiest way to pick a great bracket. #7 Oregon faces #10 VCU in the first-round matchup, the ducks versus the rams. Who wins in a battle between these animals? That's one way to pick a winner. The Texas Tech Roughriders have to be shoo-in for the Final Four if you go this route.

Another way to pick the perfect bracket is by colors. Is your favorite color yellow? Then you would have one interesting Final Four with #9 Missouri, #1 Michigan, #1 Baylor and #3 West Virginia rounding out the field.

How about this? The coin toss, take each matchup and have the higher seed as heads and the lower seed as tails. Play a coin toss all the way to the national championship and have your winner based entirely on luck. It's a good way to figure out if all those hours of research were worth it.

I have one lock for this year's March Madness. #12 UC Santa Barbara will defeat #5 Creighton in the opening round. Why? Because the Jays are my favorite team and always find a way to break my heart in March. Or, maybe by writing this, I have finally reversed my luck.

Nevertheless, enjoy the basketball whether it is in the back seat of your philosophy class or at home. The action never fails!

The Dragons and the Weather



John Tuttle

Online Editor

J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis were good friends within their academic community at Oxford. Among their conversations, dragons were said to be mentioned as often as the average person

might discuss the weather. I think many people have developed a preference for talking about the "dragons" that we can experience nowadays. The weather is just too stormy.

Fantasy has become a means of lifting the burden of the social anxiety of the past year – by compartmentalizing it into a darker, less-visited corner of our psyche. Let's be honest. It's far more enjoyable to sit back and talk about the world of entertainment than it is to discuss COVID-19.

It's more relaxing to look into the latest streaming service than it is to research the latest strains of the virus that have developed in recent months (in locales as diverse as the US, the UK, South Africa, and China). Meanwhile, the fandoms have had plenty of time to do their homework and

make theories regarding their favorite franchises.

It's nice to leave behind your day-to-day worries and binge something you've been wanting to watch. It's nice to get away from it all, slip into someone else's shoes, and wait for the problems to just work themselves out.

The last year has not only been surreal in its actuality. It has made us turn to escapism all the more, making for a life that increasingly feels like walking in a dream. As much as I love reading about Hobbits and watching dragons swoop down upon their prey, I think I also need to start noticing the weather again, to look at the sky above the dragons. Soon summertime will begin to blossom, and with it – hope.

The Rambler: Per Annum



Fisher Ward

Copy Editor

About a year ago I wrote two articles on the emergent COVID-19, where I discounted the impact it would have on Benedictine College and America.

I didn't think that it would hurt us so badly, and when it did, no one was more surprised. Truth is, I was devastated when campus closed and when the world followed suit. In the beginning, quarantine looked kind of hopeful; everyone seemed to have a "we can do this together" attitude.

And then, as usual, the whole situation devolved into arguments and conspiracy theories.

I was left with a lot of free time, time I needed for some serious self-reflection. I needed to ask myself some serious questions about my career, life, and faith. I've been asking the same questions all through the year, and I still don't have answers. I don't expect any, to be honest.

Last year has been a mile a millisecond rush of change, both what I value and believe and appreciate. But I have had quiet moments, which I have learned to love. Standing outside at night staring up at the sky is one. It feels like I'm staring at the unknowable face of God, where answers don't matter.

I don't do that enough. I'm too caught up in the ever-changing status quo. What a year it's been.

features

New coach looks to incorporate faith into coaching

Will Russum
The Circuit

The Benedictine College volleyball team has a new leader.

The Raven Athletics Department announced the hiring of Victoria Hurtt as the new head coach late last month.

Athletic Director Charlie Gartenmayer said Hurtt was a standout among the candidates for the job.

"She jumped out to us," Gartenmayer said. "She had several interactions with the staff members and she has got a lot of great skill sets."

Hurtt comes to a Raven volleyball team that finished 8-9 overall and 5-7 in conference play last season, missing the post-season tournament.

"I came to Benedictine to incorporate my faith into coaching. My main goal is win, but first and foremost before winning I want to build women for after college in making sure that they are getting what they need here," Hurtt said.

The new coach was a standout volleyball player at Iowa State, earning a first team All-Big-12 selection and AVCA All American Selection. She also was a two-time Academic All-Big 12 selection and part of the Big 12

Commissioner's honor roll.

And that winning philosophy is evident in her approach to the team.

"I'm excited about building culture and getting the community involved," Hurtt said.

The team met Coach Hurtt last Monday and started practicing on Tuesday. Lots of players were impressed with what Coach Hurtt has offered, including middle blocker Haylie Dickerson, junior.

“

She's very focused on culture and building our team culture will help us do better on and off the court."

- **Haylie Dickerson**

"Getting new concepts and ideas of the game will help benefit us a lot," Dickerson said.

Dickerson also believes the new coach will help boost the team chemistry more than ever before.

"She's very focused on culture and building our team culture will help us do better on and off the court," Dickerson added.

The volleyball team has lots of returning veterans for next

season, only losing one senior and returning most of the starters.

With most of the team returning for next season, the group has set some bigger goals, including getting to the National Tournament.

Junior Defensive Specialist Hailey Folkers knows what the team must do to reach the National Tournament.

"Sioux City is our biggest goal, but we also need to beat the teams like Park and CMU. I think those are little goals that will bring us to Nationals," Folkers said.

There is no schedule out for next season but fall athletes will return to campus in August. The team will continue to practice until the end of the semester.



Hurtt comes to Benedictine with major goals such as reaching the National Tournament. Photo by Raven Athletics

Masks from page 1 ...

Zach White, sophomore, was the first student suspended from the Rec under this policy.

"I kinda did what the majority of students that went to the Rec Center did, we would have our mask on but have it under our nose or mouth or around the chin," White said. "I personally felt like I was a little bit singled out."

According to White, he did not receive any verbal warning for his first "strike", just an email. He was suspended from using the Rec for two weeks after a second strike.

White made an appointment with President Stephen Minnis to express his and other students' frustration with the policy.

After their meeting, Minnis brought these concerns to the cabinet meeting later that week and the rule was changed shortly after.

When asked if he believed he had a direct influence on the change, White had no hesitation.

"Oh yeah, 100%," White said.

Adam Gardner, director of recreational services, declined to comment on the new mask policy in the Rec.

“

I personally felt like I was a little bit singled out."

- **Zach White**

While some students are pleased with the new updates in mask policy around campus, others do not share this same sentiment.

Former Student Government Association Vice President, Mary Claire Aranowski, senior, said she's against the latest policy.

"I think it's better to have the policy of wearing masks," Aranowski said. "There are a lot

of people who want to go to the Rec and still feel safe. Especially since things are getting better, it's important to keep these procedures that have been working in place."

Maddie Juul, sophomore, is another who is concerned about her health.

"It definitely feels less safe now," Juul said. "I just feel like people don't care about my safety. I am immunocompromised and I chose to come back on campus because I thought that people would be considerate."

If you have any questions or concerns regarding COVID-19 policies on campus, please contact Dr. Linda Henry at (913) 360-7520 or lhery@benedictine.edu. If you have questions regarding health information and COVID-19, contact Laura O'Grady at (913) 360-7118 or logrady@benedictine.edu.

Scholarship from page 1 ... to share his story with the community about his journey.

"I was excited to talk about my experiences with the ROTC program and about my peers," Monteclaro said. "Overall, I want them to be supported in their endeavors as well as we (seniors) have been supported here."

Monteclaro was not the only one who was given a scholar-

ship that led to a life-changing opportunity.

Guest speaker, Keenan Graef, shared with the more than 20,000 who logged on that night about the opportunities and impact of Benedictine.

"Getting me to be able to be here was all it took to change my life, so I am forever grateful for the scholarship I received," Graef said.

Remembering Chic

Legendary player and coach passes away at 72

Liam Keating
Will Alexander
The Circuit

Known as one of the greatest basketball players in Atchison history, Matthew "Chic" Downing passed away at the age of 72 late last month.

His career records may one day be beat, but his influence on the Atchison community will live on forever.

Downing was known for being a "homebody" and always wanted to stay close to his family. This is why he decided to stay at home play basketball for Benedictine College rather than pursuing

he averaged 25.4 points per game and also averaged 14 rebounds a game.

Downing finished his career at Benedictine with 2,042 points including a 40 point performance. In one game he hauled in 21 rebounds. He averaged 14 rebounds per game. All of these statistics are Raven records.

He missed out on the NBA draft in 1972 but there are reports that he was selected in the American Basketball Association (ABA) draft that same year.

Even though he had amazing stats, Downing decided to forgo his professional playing opportu-

“

“He always treated everyone as they were his own kid whether it be through coaching, whether it would be us having friends just coming over and staying;”

-Anthony Downing, grandson

bigger offers from Division I programs.

Current assistant basketball coach, John Peer played under Downing at BC. He described Downing as larger than life and a role model off the court who had a huge impact on everything.

“He took me under his wing and opened my eyes to some different experiences I've never had before,” Peer said. “It was probably more off the court more than on the court really...it was more about life experiences and learning some things off the floor that ‘Chic’ could explain to me in some ways, I've never had a role model or a person that could help me out with.”

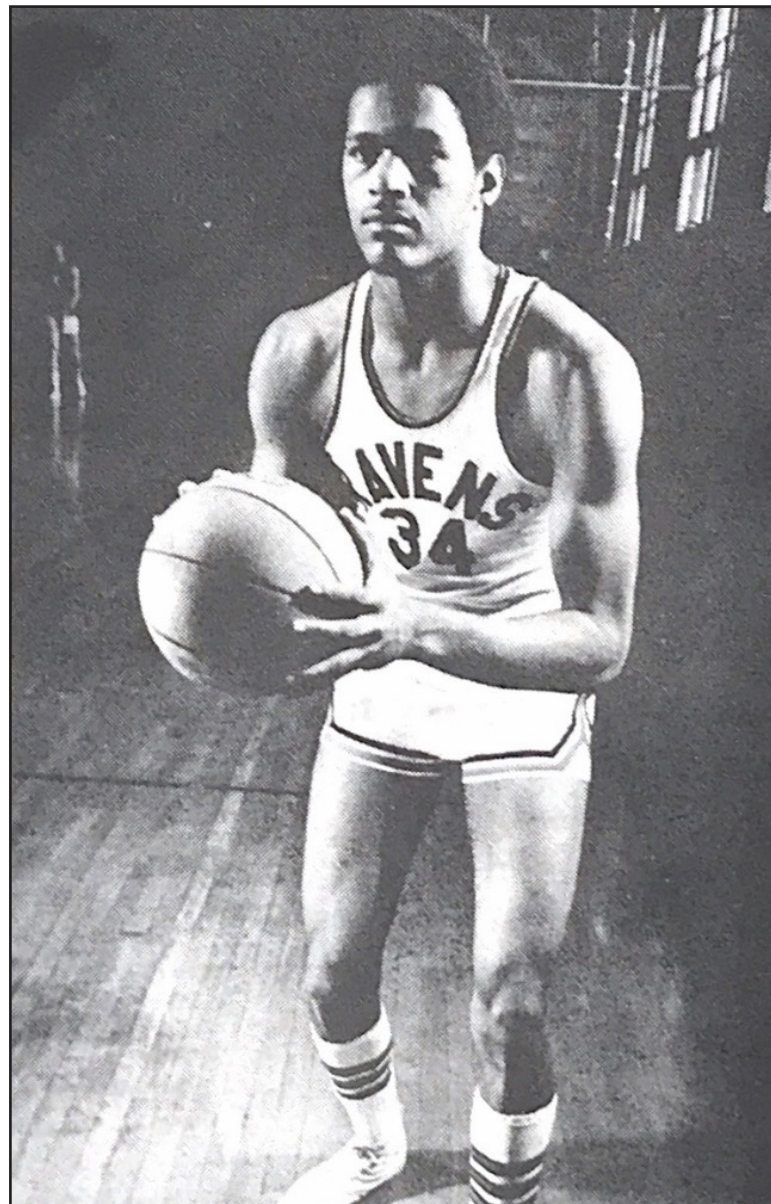
In his time with the Ravens, Downing was an NAIA All-American and held many school records. His senior year

nities in order to stay close to his family and give back to the Atchison community through coaching. He coached and taught at Atchison High School from 1972-1991. He won four state championships for the Redmen including 255 career coaching wins, both school records.

Peer describes Downing as someone who always gives back to others and that he will forever be remembered as the guy who truly believes in always paying it forward.

“‘Chic’ had a really big impact on the community of Atchison... maybe not for ‘Chic’ himself, but he was there to support a lot of people that went on and do good things and that's what mattered most,” Peer said.

Anthony Downing is the grandson of the late Downing.



Downing poses for a photo in *the Circuit* during the 1972 season.

Anthony graduated from Missouri State where he played college basketball for the Bears. Anthony sees his grandfather as a hero, not just because of what he did athletically, but how he treated his neighbors.

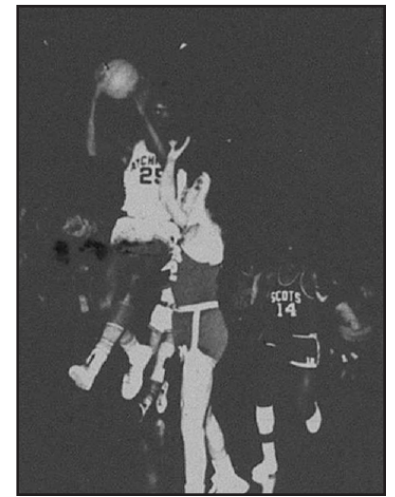
“He always treated everyone as they were his own kid whether it be through coaching, whether it would be us having friends just coming over and staying,” Downing said. “He was really big on if someone couldn't afford something, he could afford to help them, he would be the first person

to put his hand out to help.”

Downing said that the real legend of his grandfather is far beyond basketball and it's really about him as a human being.

“He always believed in that if you can help out somebody and it doesn't hurt you or even if it does hurt you but you could bounce back from it, do it if they absolutely can't,” Downing said.

RIGHT: Downing scores the ball over a Washburn defender. It was this game when he hauled in 20 rebounds, a Raven record. Photo by *The Circuit Staff*



Downing goes for a layup against Highland Park on Feb. 18, 1968 during his Redmen career. Downing won two state titles as a player and four as coach for Atchison Highschool. Photo courtesy of *Atchison Globe*.



Downing's jersey hung on the bench during Atchison High's game against JC Harmon on Feb. 24. Photo by Liam Keating

