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KAYLA PITTMAN | CONTRIBUTOR

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In SGA

Lancer Card center and library updates

by Allison Turner | Assistant News Editor | @allisonkturner

In this week's Student Government Association (SGA) meeting, representatives from the Lancer Card Center and library came to give updates to the Senate.

Chrissy Sampier, director of the Lancer Card & Campus Services Office, explained the new card system that the university switched to over the break, and why there were issues with it recently.

Sampier said, "We converted three card systems in three months, and with that, chances are that things may not go right."

Longwood's reasoning behind the switch was to reduce costs and open up opportunities for the future as far as automation goes. Their goal is to make this a truly automated system, where students can eat as soon as they purchase a meal plan or add money to their card, as well as create access to all buildings on campus as well in real time.

Sampier also mentioned that over the break they replaced the registers at each dining location that way students can use their phones and scan the barcode to use a meal swipe.

They also switched out the washing and drying machines in the residence halls, which use an app, SpeedQueen, for payment instead of coins. Each residence hall now has this option, with the exception of South Ruffner and Lancer Park North and South.

Natalie Browning, research services librarian, also came to Senate to talk about updates that the library made over the break. The library has extended the checkout periods for their items, increasing it to 90 for books, 72 hours for laptops and equipment and seven days for DVDs.

Browning added that students will no longer be charged overdue fines, instead, if an item is not returned on time, they will be charged a replacement fee. In order to get rid of the fee, students just need to return the item and it will go away.

In New Business, two students, Norman Hurt Jr. and Caitlyn Martens, were sworn in as Senators. SGA President Haleigh Pannell officiated the proceedings as they took the oath. The students will begin their roles on Senate effective immediately.

The Senate also approved a new club, the Game Development Club. This club is designed for students who are interested in coding and want to get involved in developing their own games. An interest meeting will be held soon.

In the Advisers' Report with Dr. Tim Pierson and Dean Cheryl Steele, Dr. Pierson made sure all students were aware that no one at Longwood has been to China recently or has contracted coronavirus. He warns students to be careful and to stay healthy.

In the President's Report with Haleigh Pannell, Pannell reiterated that there will be presentations for positions on SGA throughout the month of February, and urged students to attend if they are interested in a specific position. The presentation for Senators will be on Tuesday, Feb. 25.

In the Treasurer's Report, Samuel Torpy announced that budgets are due for all clubs and organizations on Friday, Feb. 28, before students leave for spring break.

The next SGA meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 4 at 3:45 p.m. at the R.R. Moton Museum, located at 900 Griffin Boulevard in town.

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Change is always in the air at Longwood University, with multiple construction projects going on at the same time. Louise Waller, vice president for administration and finance, and Matt McWilliams, assistant vice president and associate editor for Longwood Magazine, provided updates on all of the construction work going on.

Arc Hall, Longwood's functionally oldest residence hall, has been closed since the summer to do maintenance work. Waller confirmed that Arc will remain closed the rest of the academic year and likely into the fall semester in order to continue the work. As of right now, there is not a projected date as to when the building will re-open for student use.

The other residence hall that is currently closed, Curry, will officially re-open for student use in August for the 2020-2021 academic year. Curry has been closed since May 2019 in order to refurbish it, just like how Frazer was closed the year prior. Curry is actually ahead of schedule, and Waller said that the work on Curry has been easier than what they experienced with Frazer.

She said, "There were a lot of lessons learned on Frazer that they were able to apply to Curry." She noted that although

Curry is ahead of schedule, the building will not open until August.

A project that the university has been working on for a while is the construction of a new academic building, which will be across from French Hall on Venable St. This building will be the new home for the communication studies department, as well as multiple other departments such as neurosciences. It will have classrooms, offices, labs and study space for students to utilize. It is slated to open in the fall of 2020 for student use.

The university is also working on a multi-phase project, involving the construction of new tennis courts and a new convocation center. In April 2019, philanthropist Joan Brock '64 contributed \$15 million to the university to go towards building a convocation center, located in the heart of campus where the tennis courts are.

In order to begin this process, the university changed their parking design in order to accommodate the construction of the new tennis courts on Wynne Dr. The tennis courts are currently being built, and once they are finished, construction will get underway on the new convocation center.

Waller said, "What is truly special about this building is that this is going

to be a building that everyone on this campus and in this community is going to enjoy."

The building will be 64,000 square feet, and will become the new home for Longwood's basketball programs. As of now, construction is slated to break ground in the spring, with a completion date of summer 2022.

McWilliams said on the amount of construction happening, "A campus that is always building and growing and evolving is a healthy campus. That is one that is looking to the future instead of just staying where they are now."

As far as future projects go, the university is planning on constructing a new facilities building in Midtown, creating a new academic building for music majors and doing infrastructure projects on main campus.



CARRIE BAILEY | THE ROTUNDA



New ASIA club makes presence known at Longwood

by Victoria Thompson | Features Staff | @longwoodrotunda

President and founder Gloria Kim discussed how important it was for her to create ASIA at Longwood since there was a need for an Asian-based community.

Longwood University is well known for being a college that encourages students to join in and participate in extracurricular activities. With the wide variety of clubs and organizations for students to get involved in, inclusion continues to be a contributing factor that leads to new clubs being formed.

One of the most recent additions to Longwood's expansive amount of organizations is the Asian Student Involvement Association, also primarily known as ASIA. This new organization on Longwood's campus that serves the much-needed purpose of giving a prominent voice to the population of Asian students.

The club first arrived in mid-September in the fall semester of 2019. The current spring semester of 2020 will be the second semester that ASIA has been on campus at Longwood.

Forming a club like ASIA takes a definite amount of dedication and preparation from its founding members in order to start off on the right foot. The president of ASIA, Gloria Kim mentioned, "There was actually a premade constitution because there was a student in that process [of forming the organization], but they ended up not completing it so having to repeat that process was very stressful."

Kim also explained the motivation behind forming this new group: "It got started because when students are coming to Longwood, there's not really a representative group for

Asian students, so I thought that it would be cool to have that here."

It is important to keep in mind that some Longwood students are from larger, urban areas such as Northern Virginia, Richmond and Virginia Beach. Therefore, smaller, rural areas like Farmville tend not to have the same kind of diversity that some students are familiar with.

Since ASIA is in the early stages as an organization, there are many factors to consider in terms of building and planning for the future of ASIA. The club's vice president, Destiny Brown, stated, "I think just a goal for us is setting a direct path. Like we're ASIA figuring out what we want to do in meetings and stuff. Just to have a direct path set for us would be a goal."

When asked what the biggest goal for this organization is, the historian of ASIA, Liezl Villanueva, listed, "Cultural awareness, advocacy, and making people more aware of the Asian population here." With the clear goal of making people more aware of Asian culture, ASIA has the potential to inspire others to not only learn about but fully recognize the Asian culture and population of Asian students present at Longwood.

At the first interest meeting there were 50 people total in attendance, and ASIA currently has approximately 15-20 active members. Considering these numbers come from just a semester's worth of activity alone, the club's presence on campus can no longer be ignored,

giving an official voice as a group that can influence and be influenced by every other group.

Being well informed of various traditions is vital when approaching a specific culture, so naturally research is another component when it comes to addressing diversity and giving proper inclusion. Kim further said, "For games, I already knew more about common Asian cultures like Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Korean too. I had a lot of friends back home that knew about this."

Diversity and inclusion are both popular topics of discussion when it comes to societal issues nowadays. For a long time, the matter of providing more improved diversity has only been discussed and not acted upon, so the fact that different Longwood students from is a small yet important change to the university overall.

When asked about the importance of taking action about diversity and inclusion, Brown also said, "I think for us here at Longwood, without having an actual organization, we had diversity but not inclusion. Diversity is inclusion, so having this organization takes this a step further. It is important for people to know that they are special."

ASIA seems to be headed in a positive direction for success this semester, and its members will continue to spread awareness about being more inclusive when it comes to diversity at Longwood for years to come.

Stomping to the beat of tradition

by Taiya Jarrett | Assistant Opinions Editor | @ohsoootay



JESSICA PAQUETTE | THE ROTUNDA

The audience watches a video about a well known stomp and shake team to gain a better understanding of the organization.

Emerging into the 29 days of Black History Month, erupts the embodiment of a well-known collegiate sport and an African American cultural tradition onto the university's Clubs & Organizations list, making history of its own.

Integrating into the campus community just this past week under the premise of a rhythmic style of cheerleading infused with a deep-rooted culture is the new active organization, True Blue: Stomp and Shake Team. Initiated by the likes of Senior and Co-founder of the organization, Maya Young, Senior and Vice President/Co-Captain, Melissa Harris, Junior, and Secretary Iyana Cary, as well as by Adviser and Director of Residential Programs, Moe Bates have collectively created a space that embraces culture one stomp at a time.

Engulfed with the perception of solely being attached to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), this 1970 cultural strain of cheerleading is comprised of various ranges of cheering, stomping, and shaking all in one. While capturing a historical essence behind it, the objective of True Blue: Stomp and Shake are to be valuable to every student on campus, but in particular to every African American student on campus.

Vice President Harris stated, "It's not just HBCU culture, it's culture from African Americans."

Priding upon this concept, the True Blue Stomp, and Shake is foreseen to bring the campus community more together than it already has, especially by its efforts to include a realm of individuals into an aspect within their culture, to not only respect but appreciate.

Contrary to popular belief, this stomp and shake team denounces the image of traditional cheerleading which holds the narrative of solely being accessible

to skinny individuals, President Young proudly clarified, "With stomp and shake it comes from an African American background which was created for women and men who may not have that certain figure."

Now, in terms of having prior experience, that is not necessarily a requirement for the organization, "This is a welcome for all organization, but we will be having tryouts, so I'm looking forward to seeing who comes out. Even though this is my senior year, I'm looking forward to helping build people."

With a \$65 membership that includes the uniform, two shirts (one for practice/one to wear regularly), and travel expenses, the organization is expected to recruit 20 individuals tryouts will be held at 6:00 p.m. on February 4 (practice day) and February 7 (tryout day) at the Sunchase Clubhouse. Shortly after the organization will meet every Tuesday and Thursday and every other Friday at the prior time and location and stated.

Infused with cheer and dance, the organization will do as such in a performative manner at the university's basketball games to expanding their presence. Harris stated, "Of course we are starting from the ground but I believe we have so many people backing us, as we've spoken to the Athletics Department and they're super excited to seeing something brought to the basketball games."

Although the University already has a recognized dance team, the Blue Heat Dance Team, represented at their basketball games, True Blue: Stomp and Shake are certainly bringing something they don't have.

"My main goal is to bring energy to the court," Young stated. Harping on her athletic background, Young is very participative at our university's basketball games, yet, as an attendee,

she notices change could be had on the court. Young recounts a time last year when the University's basketball team played against Hampton University, "When Hampton cheerleaders would cheer it's like our cheerleaders would stare at them—it's like they were amazed at what they do."

Concurrently meant to provide a sense of energy and expression, the True Blue: Stomp and Shake is representative of that in every which way, in which they plan to further in the future.

In doing so, the organization has been met with a few upcoming projects, "A couple of organizations have already reached out to us such as NPHC for their step show in the spring, Lancer production's- Step Africa, and Longwood's Got Talent," said President Young.

With the intention to access beyond the whole campus community President Young continued, "Aside from basketball games, I know that Prince Edward County schools, in particular, have a Stomp and Shake team so I'm looking forward to doing a workshop with them."

Priding the organization upon being accessible to the community, President Young revisited an inspiration message from a friend, "No matter what, make sure you stand your ground, you might have people who don't approve it because of where you are, but in the end, you'll have a great outcome".

With its first meeting of 16 individuals, True Blue: Stomp and Shake is a growing chapter that is indefinitely creating a lasting outcome through a cultural tradition. For Contact purposes please feel free to reach out to President Young at Maya.Young@live.longwood.edu

We need to recognize featurism and its effects

by Davina Applewhite | Opinions Staff | @longwoodrotunda

Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

It has become easy to sit behind a computer and type negative comments to those who you may never encounter in real life. Unfortunately, this becomes a breeding ground for destructive comments and the people who post them.

Singer Ari Lennox was a recent victim of some of the Internet's hateful words this January. She was repeatedly bullied on Twitter, specifically about her nose. Various Twitter users likened the artist to a dog and called Lennox dehumanizing names.

Seeing their comments, Lennox took to Instagram Live to express her feelings towards the issue. Lennox talked vehemently about the underlying self-hatred within the black community and the negative comments she's received. It even brought her to tears.

This entire situation sparked a discussion about an underlying form of racism, recently identified as featurism.

Featurism is a budding social term that essentially means societal preferences over certain features and the discrimination from which it arises.

Lennox isn't the only celebrity who has been attacked online for her features. In 2017, Serena Williams received an extensive amount of hateful comments in regards to her build and facial features. Williams was called "a gorilla," among other awfully demoralizing

names. Serena, however, did not speak out about these comments.

Unfortunately, featurism isn't just happening to adults, like Williams and Lennox. Beyonce Knowles-Carter's daughter, Blue Ivy, has been under criticism from many due to her strong features that resemble her father's, ever since she appeared to the public. Similar to Ari Lennox, Blue Ivy was criticized for the size of her nose.

"Microaggressions are closely associated with racism, as well. Therefore, the issue of featurism can easily and eventually grow to the same severity as racism."

Just recently, Vanity Fair film critic K. Austin Collins tweeted about Blue Ivy, unrightfully critiquing the child's facial features. Violet Lucca, a web editor for Harper Magazine, responded to this

tweet, supporting his sentiments.

This is especially disheartening to know because Blue Ivy is only eight-years-old and has been experiencing featurism for such a long time and will, most likely, continue to face it as she grows older.

Even more to the point, featurism is something that doesn't just occur in Hollywood with celebrities, but it also occurs in everyday situations and especially on social media.

Featurism and the comments that come along with them are a form of microaggressions. Microaggressions are actions or words devised to underhandedly insult or put down minorities.

Microaggressions are closely associated with racism, as well. Therefore, the issue of featurism can easily and eventually grow to the same severity as racism.

Knowing about featurism can help to further prevent the microaggressions that come along with it. Furthermore, featurism should be addressed when recognized. If we refuse to hold people accountable for their inappropriate comments on other's natural, unalterable features, we perpetuate the growth of featurism, and in turn, we perpetuate racism.



Mac Miller continues his legacy with "Circles"

by LeDaniel Jackson | A&E Staff | @xidjoker500



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARNER RECORDS.

Mac Miller is one of the most peculiar rappers in the hip-hop genre. He has always switched his style when it comes to his mixtapes and albums. Unfortunately, he passed away before he could showcase more of his talent in the hip-hop genre.

However, before he passed Miller was in the process of making an album called "Circles," which recently released posthumously not only to pay homage to the deceased rapper but to also credit his singing and rapping skills.

The title song "Circles" begins the album with soft guitar playing in the background while Miller sings about his life having no direction. His performance is really impressive on this track with his soft vocals. It's a great intro and it leads perfectly into the next track.

"Complicated" lightens the mood with a slow and soulful alternative beat. Miller talks about his life and the complications that comes with it. He does a good job of conveying this message with vocals matching the energy of the beat.

Mac Miller showcases his rapping skills with "Blue World." He discusses the tribulations throughout his life.

The rapping feels a little out of place since Miller sings well throughout the first two tracks. While his rapping is impressive, he would have been better off continuing his amazing singing performance.

"Good News," the first single from the album, finds Miller talking about how his friends always want to himself positively. However, Miller finds this hard with negative emotions continually surrounding him. The production of the song is very soulful with piano playing lightly in the background. Miller's tone matches really with the production and the topic he's trying to convey.

"I Can See" brings in a psychedelic atmosphere with Miller discussing how his peers can finally see the pain he is goes through. Production-wise, the song combines elements of alternative and R&B to create one of the best sounding songs on the album.

"Everybody" begins with a beautiful solo while paying homage to the 1972 classic "Everybody's Gotta Live" by Arthur Lee. Throughout the song, the instrumental builds up to a classic R&B type beat. The only downfall on this track would be the vocal performance by Miller. Unlike his previous songs,

his singing doesn't mesh together with the beat at all. At some points, he even sounds out of tune which is disappointing since this song sounds amazing.

"Woods" describes Miller's previous relationship and how it's beyond fixing. Similar to "Everybody," the production includes heavy influences of old R&B. Miller does a better job with meshing well with beat and subject matter. The only issue with this song is it does drag, as the production can sometimes become repetitive.

"Hands" is an interesting track since it's the most hip-hop influenced on this album. Miller discusses how he questions his own behavior. His flow on this track is very impressive and it meshes well with the beat. Unlike "Blue World," Miller seems more comfortable with rapping on the track and it shows he can still put together a good rap performance.

Overall "Circles" is a great send-off for Mac Miller. The emotions he displays are impressive and do a good job with storytelling as well. Vocally, Miller has some missteps but they're minimal.

★★★★☆ 4.5/5

BOJACK HORSEMAN

PHOTO COURTESY OF TORNANTE TELEVISION, BOXER VS. RAPTOR, SHADOWMACHINE, AND NETFLIX.



"Don't Stop Dancing 'til the Curtain..."



by Jacob DiLandro | A&E Editor | @spongejay1

It had to end this way. Partly unfulfilling, but what finale isn't? There's that dread of knowing you'll never be able to spend another moment with these characters again. Sure, you could relive the stuff from before, start the whole series over again, but it won't be the same. Like the best shows before it, "Bojack Horseman" knows this.

Despite the massive feeling of dread that most fans might have going into this season, things haven't been rushed at all. Each character continues on their journeys in ways that make sense and are true to the spirit of the show. Some of them are more comedic than others, but it never feels inconsistent or fake. Every silly moment of animal word puns that directly follow an earth-shattering emotional revelation feel like something only this show could do.

Without spoiling anything, suffice it to say that the darkest moments of the series lie here. It's a testament to the skill and raw talent of the voice cast that none of their performances ever waver. Will Arnett ("The LEGO Movie," "Arrested Development"), Alison Brie ("Community," "GLOW"), Amy Sedaris ("Strangers With Candy," "The Mandalorian"), Paul F. Tompkins ("Mr. Show with Bob and David," "There Will Be Blood") and Aaron Paul ("Breaking Bad," "The Path") never falter for even a moment in their delivery.

However, it's the smaller roles that pop up for one of two episodes that are pure excellence. Arnett's double role as Secretariat and Bojack's father is simply astonishing, as is Kristen Schaal ("Gravity Falls," "Bob's Burgers"), delivering one more run as Sarah Lynn in what is easily the finest performance of her lucrative voice acting career. Stanely Tucci ("The Lovely Bones," "Spotlight") also makes a long overdue return, showcasing yet again why he

was one of the best things about the first season.

If things are coming to a close, it's important to address the dangling threads. However, Raphael Bob-Waksberg and his crew of insanely talented writers know that addressing these darker moments, both currently happening to these characters and that have happened before, isn't enough. Just because someone's sins have been addressed doesn't mean they've been put to rest. Addressing them is not the same as atoning for them. It's painful to watch, but it's what needs to happen.

That's what makes "Bojack Horseman" end so gracefully. It uses so many different and complex emotional layers to get at one specific point. In between all the exposes, the interviews, and the hundreds of Frito pies, there's this sense that nothing will be able to recapture those moments again. In order to succeed, these characters must move beyond who they used to be.

Hell, there are multiple conversations where the characters themselves seem to address that their relationships could never go back to where they used to be. It won't be the same. Yet, there are also just as many moments of unknowing. One of the biggest emotional breaking points of this season is something that likely won't ever be revealed, to anyone. And that lack of closure is essential here as well.

In the penultimate episode of this final season, the show's creative team puts Bojack through one of the most creative and tumultuous events of the entire series. It's a roadmap of the show and himself, bullet pointed with song and speech and big fat salty tears. Its virtually impossible to see how someone could escape from something this searing and traumatic.

One character, in the show's finale, says it best, "Maybe its everybody's job

to save each other." Despite its deft and cynical view of celebrity, Hollywood, accountability, trauma, and a whole bunch of other terrible things, the legacy of "Bojack Horseman," the animated show about a horse-man who was in a 90s sitcom, living in a world of humans and animals, will be one of redemption.

Back in the 90s, Bojack was in a very famous TV show. But now that cliché, the joke of "I'm Bojack...Horseman, obviously you knew that," is the last thing on the show's mind. There's so much to resolve in the lives of these characters that it is sometimes jarring. It's natural that some of the subjects addressed are less crucial than others, leading to a bit of tonal inconsistency when flipping in between plots. But it never feels forced, more like a respite. A safe haven away from the depression.

None of this matters. Yet, it all matters. "Bojack Horseman" is one of those shows so excellent that it makes me question the point of even reviewing it. The state of bizarrely hopeful melancholy it left me in as credits rolled on the 16th episode of season 6 are unlike anything I've experienced before. "Bojack Horseman" is a show that legitimately changed me and how I approached my own life.

Yet, some people will never see it because it's that animated adult show on Netflix with the talking horse. As Bojack himself might say, don't worry about it. "Life's a bitch and then you die." That might be true, but I won't let this sleeping horse lie. I won't stop dancing; I won't stop shouting this show's merits from the rooftops. Because, quite simply "Bojack Horseman" is the greatest television show of the 21st century.

Longwood Basketball programs mourn loss of Kobe Bryant

by Nick Robinson | Sports Staff | @longwoodrotunda

As the men's basketball team prepared for practice before their game against Radford, senior guard Shabooty Philips entered the court wearing a pair of Kobe Bryant sneakers with the words "R.I.P. Mamba" written on them in marker. If that is not a statement about the impact that Bryant had on young basketball players and the basketball world in general, then I don't know what is.

The sports world was shaken to its core last Sunday when a helicopter carrying Bryant, his daughter Giana, and seven others crashed in Calabasas, California, killing everyone on board. The impact of that crash was felt all around the world, including right here in Farmville.

Phillips said when he heard the news, he thought it was fake at first. "I couldn't believe it, he was gone soon." Philips said that Bryant was his favorite player growing up and that he always appreciated the "mamba mentality" that Bryant was famous for.

Another Longwood player who felt the impact of Bryant's death was junior forward Jordan Cintron. Cintron said, "Kobe Bryant, in my household, was the epitome of basketball. Growing up with only brothers, I came to know that name at a young age. That was a name that was well-known whether you knew basketball or not."

Bryant's death sent ripples through

the basketball world that have still not settled.

Cintron said, "For the basketball world, it's huge because he changed the game. He set the tone for out-working your opponent and out-thinking your opponent. He was the ultimate competitor and that's something he took outside the court as well."

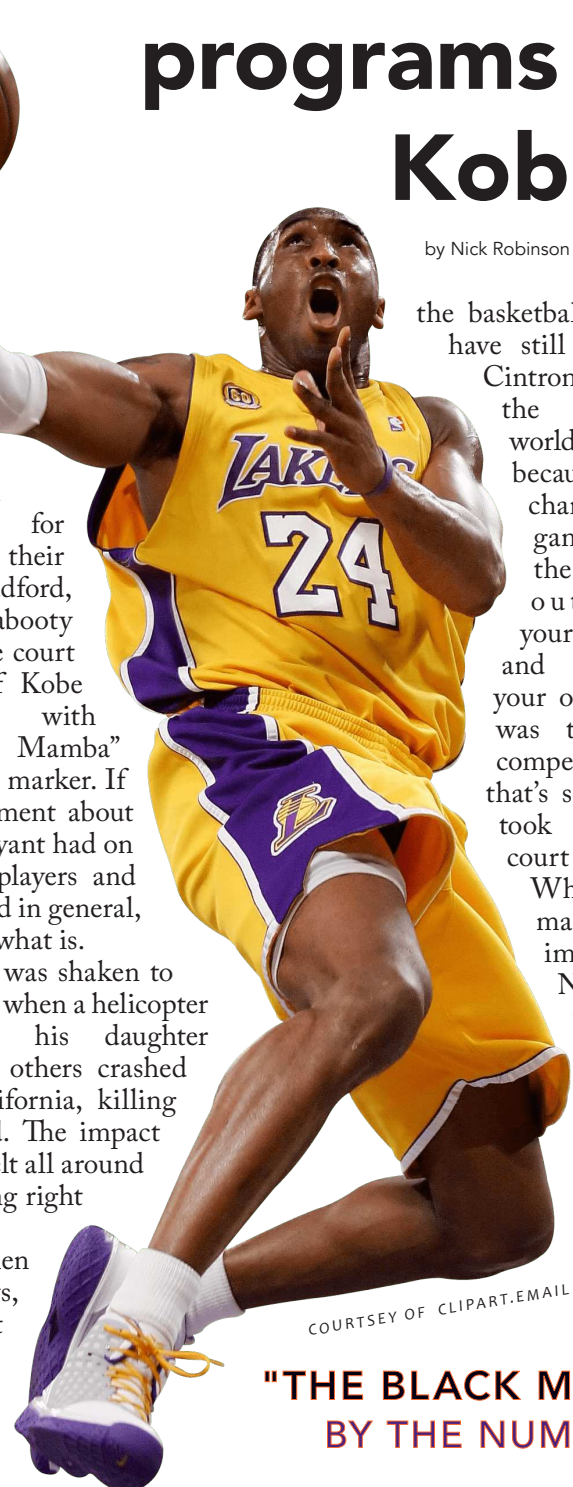
While Bryant made an impact on the NBA and young boys

everywhere, he also made an impact on the WNBA and young girls everywhere. He was an outspoken proponent of women's basketball and attended many WNBA and women's college basketball games and his late daughter, Giana, had aspirations of playing in the WNBA.

One young woman who is a fan of Bryant's impact on the women's game was senior forward Dayna Rouse. Rouse said, "I respect him so much for trying to popularize women's basketball. He did a lot to try to bring attention to and elevate women's basketball in general and that's such a reason to respect him." Rouse said that she was in great shock and disbelief at the news of Bryant's death and said that she was looking forward to seeing what he had to offer in his post-retirement life.

One thing Philips, Cintron and Rouse mentioned was the legacy that Bryant is leaving behind. Philips said, "Kobe let it be known that whatever you do, work hard." Cintron said, "I will remember Kobe as one of the greats. We use the reference G.O.A.T. (Greatest of all-time) a lot but I think he made us realize that we need to stop comparing and appreciate all of the great players that come through the sport of basketball." Rouse said, "He will always be someone to look up to. People can look to his mamba mentality whenever they want to work harder and push themselves further."

Bryant was loved by so many, and he will be missed by many more, but one thing that he will never be, is forgotten, whether by Longwood basketball players, or just people who throw a piece of paper into the trash and shout his name. Taken from us at only forty-one years of age, Bryant's memory lives on in the hearts of everyone who's life he impacted.



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"THE BLACK MAMBA" BY THE NUMBERS

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25.0 CAREER POINT AVERAGE

ONE HISTORIC LIFE

How a follow-up question can help turn the tide of a program

Kyla McMakin currently sits second in Big South Conference in scoring

by Kurt Martin | Sports Editor | @IamKurt14

In her career at Ocean Lakes High School in Virginia Beach, Kyla McMakin scored nearly 2,000 points (1,990 to be exact) and grabbed over 1,000 rebounds, but there was only one problem, it was starting to get late in the recruiting process and she had yet to commit to a school to continue her playing career.

"I thought of going closer near home, like ODU (Old Dominion University). I had one from JMU (James Madison University), like that..." said McMakin.

Now enter Longwood and second year head coach Rebecca Tillett, who, alongside her coaching staff and returning players, were looking to rebuild a struggling program and find players who fit the mold of what the new regime expected to form a championship-winning culture.

Tillett tells the story of how the two became connected with a smile on her face to this very day, because, simply, fate is a crazy thing.

"She (Associate Head Coach and Recruiting Coordinator, Tiffany Sardin) was calling about other players. She wasn't calling about Kyla McMakin. And great recruiters ask the question to coaches of 'is there anyone else I should know about?', and that coach said 'there's this kid at Ocean Lakes, Kyla McMakin, (I'm) really not sure why she's not signed yet,'" said Tillett.

After the outside recommendation, an assistant coach was sent to see one of McMakin's games, adding to the team's interest. Impressed by the information relayed, Tillett made the decision to drive up to Virginia Beach to see the star player in action.

It was McMakin's senior night, and after the festivities, it only took six minutes of game time for Tillett to ask nearly the same question which the recommender had asked, "How is Kyla McMakin still available this late in the season?"

She mentioned calling Sardin after nearly eight minutes of the game to say she would be offering that night, over the phone and that she felt McMakin could do "great things" at Longwood.

The feeling was mutual for Kyla, and she said she was attracted to Longwood from the first visit, coupled with the "empowering" demeanor from Tillett.

"When she talked to me, she didn't talk to me scared to say 'championship' or stuff like that," said McMakin. "She talked to me with so much confidence, and everyone

had so much confidence."

McMakin felt the program was moving toward a championship mindset, due to the pieces who had been recruited newly to the team, along with the players already in place inside of the program, and therefore decided to join the team.

After she moved to Farmville in the summer time, the real work began for the freshman. She said playing pickup games with her teammates outside of practice was the first real indicator of the change of skill level in Division I.

"In high school you come from being 'you can take this whole team on by yourself' to 'you need to watch everyone, because anyone will take you to the basket', so that's when I was like 'Wow, this is Division I basketball', it felt good and I loved playing with other great players," said McMakin.

One of those players whom she joined in this journey, and met over the summer is junior transfer point guard Tra'Dayja Smith, who was also new to the team. Smith said those summer days were crucial to the development of team chemistry.

"We spent so many days in the gym just getting up shots and then practicing," said Smith. "I just knew she was good because she had 1,000 rebounds and almost 2,000 points in high school. So I knew she was an elite scorer for us and I want to give her the ball at any time."

McMakin said while she is on the court, there is an all-business approach and exchanging pleasantries can come after the game. She added that she in-part modeled her basketball mindset after the late Kobe Bryant, who recently passed away in a tragic helicopter crash.

"When we're on the court, you're my enemy. Afterwards I'll shake your hand and tell you 'good game, you played a great game', but on the court we're about near ready to fight," said McMakin.

But at the end of the day, practice repetitions are not game repetitions, and it was finally time for McMakin to show off her skills for all to see in the team's opening contest against a daunting James Madison (JMU) team, all the way back in November 2019.

When receiving the Dukes' scouting report beforehand, McMakin admitted there were butterflies.

"I look at it and I see senior, senior senior {sic} and I was so scared and nervous," she said. "And I was like 'who am I?' as a freshman to go out and guard a top kid

senior."

Now looking back, she said she can barely remember the game due to the fast nature of play, but despite this, she led the team in scoring with 17 points.

Fast forward to today, it's no longer a surprise to hear the freshman leading the team in scoring in a particular game, as she's accomplished the feat in seven of the team's 19 games to this point. For greater measure, she currently is second in the Big South Conference in points per game, averaging 17.1.

This statistic, along with McMakin being near the top of the league in many other areas has led to her being named Big South Freshman of the Week on five different occasions.

A stellar feat which is almost becoming commonplace each time the award recipient is announced.

Tillett appreciates the constant effort given for the accomplishments and said it's "incredible" that McMakin is able to maintain the play to receive the recognition. However, she knows the freshman has bigger plans for the team as a whole.

"She would way rather win a game than get a Player of the Week honor, and when you're around people like that, they are going to help elevate everybody around them because they care so much about the team," said Tillett.

Moving throughout the rest of the season, McMakin still said she has room for growth in a few areas to make herself a more well-rounded player.

"Probably defensively and internally. I've sort of been able to bounce back after a poor performance shooting, but I want to be able to bounce back after getting shot on, or bounce back after (asking) 'why didn't I get a foul call?' and I still struggle with that," said McMakin. "Defensively, just moving (and) being faster. One of my biggest things that I want to be is an all-around player. I want to be able to score on one end and then come down and get a stop on the other. That's a big deal for me."

Tillett said she feels McMakin will have a professional career one day if she wants one, but knows the freshman is 100 percent focused on the here and now and, along with her teammates, is chasing the goal of a Big South Conference championship.

The next contest for Kyla and the Lancers will come on February 4, as they travel to Asheville, North Carolina to take the Bulldogs from UNC Asheville.

Men's basketball finishes week on high note at Gardner-Webb

Lancers look to build off Saturday road win
by Patrick Sanderson | Sports Staff | @psanderson20



KC MCALLISTER | THE ROTUNDA

Sophomore forward Christian Wilson releases a free throw in the Lancers' recent 67-55 home loss to the Radford Highlanders.

Following an impressive double-digit win over Tubby Smith's High Point Panthers on Jan. 25, Longwood was unable to replicate the same hot shooting performance this past Thursday night against Radford, falling to the Big South preseason favorite, 67-55.

Backed by a 21-point performance by preseason All-Conference selection senior guard Travis Fields Jr., Radford held the Lancers to 31.6 percent shooting, with 41 of their 57 shots coming from beyond the arc. Fourteen of Longwood's 18 made field goals were three-pointers.

The bulk of Longwood's three-point attempts came in the second half, most coming in the final 13 minutes of the game when Radford began building a lead, causing Longwood to become excited from long range. They took 17 threes in this time frame, which frustrated head coach Griff Aldrich who insisted the team needed to be more relaxed offensively, especially in the second period.

"You got to be composed and we need some guys to step up and calm us down on the court. We didn't get that tonight unfortunately," Aldrich said, referring to the pace of play down the stretch.

He continued, "We didn't run our offense in the second half."

The first half was a back-and-forth battle between the two, as the lead changed six times, but the Highlanders eventually

would hop into the driver's seat, as they kept their 30-22 halftime lead for the rest of the game, en-route to the victory. Though only scoring 22 points in the first half, Aldrich was pleased with the effort offensively to move and find open looks.

"I thought for probably the first five or ten minutes [of the game] we did a really nice job," Aldrich said. "The ball was moving, there was good pace, we were getting some really good open looks and then we stopped cutting."

The Lancers were led with 17 points from redshirt sophomore guard Juan Munoz, with senior forward JaShaun Smith following closely behind with 15 of his own.

The loss saw Longwood fall to 7-15 on the year and 2-7 in Big South conference play with nine games remaining on the regular season schedule. Aldrich said the key to consistent success on the court the rest of the way is being the aggressor in each contest.

The team got off to a good start on that trend this past Saturday as they travelled to Boiling Springs, North Carolina to take on the defending Big South Champion Gardner-Webb Bulldogs.

Just like the game before, the first half was a back and forth affair, but the Lancers would, this time, take a 38-35 lead into the halftime break. The same trend would follow suit in the second half, but Gardner-

Webb would respond to tie the game at 68 on a deep three pointer from Jose Perez with only 14 seconds to go.

Senior guard Shabooty Phillips nearly won the game in regulation, but his shot rimmed out as time expired, sending the game into overtime.

In the extra period, there were four lead changes in the first three and a half minutes, but the Lancers would get the last laugh on a massive three pointer from sophomore transfer guard DeShaun Wade to give Longwood the lead, one they would not sacrifice en-route to a 84-81 victory.

After the game, in an interview with Longwood athletics, Aldrich said, "We played hard. We played connected, for the most part. I didn't like how we started the game; we were a little tentative out of the gate, and that wasn't what we wanted. But I do think we came back and for the most part were the aggressor throughout the game. Even when they did come back, I thought they had to make some big, heroic plays. We didn't get into the bonus until overtime. This was just a different game."

As the Big South Tournament inches closer and closer, the team will need to continue to build on performances like these to raise their standing. They will have their next opportunity to do that on Thursday evening, as they will play host to the Bucs from Charleston Southern with a 7 p.m. tip.



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