TAKING STOCK: BASKETBALL HALL-OF-FAMER IS ALL ABOUT OTHERS

Social media lit up when the West Coast Conference announced Gonzaga’s John Stockton would be part of the ninth class inducted into the WCC’s Hall of Honor, March 4, in Las Vegas.

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“What took the league so long?”

Truth be told, Stockton probably delayed this as long as he could, as he is much more comfortable in the stands than under the spotlight. He played basketball for the love of the game, and his desire to compete, which was honed on the family’s driveway against big brother Steve. Stockton earned WCAC Player of the Year honors in 1984, two Olympic gold medals (1991, 1996) and a permanent place in the National Basketball Hall of Fame (2000).

His drive to compete at his highest level has not diminished.

“I remain amazed at the skill level John demonstrates,” says Shann Forch, Gonzaga professor of leadership studies and a man who plays with and against Stockton and other Sunday warriors. “He could help some NBA teams in the playoffs right now. But beyond the excellence, John loves his family. He lives humbly, and with great respect for truth and compassion. He is a man of powerful conviction and faith. He inspires me to be a better man.”

Today, Stockton is a family man first. He served Montana State last season as assistant coach so he could watch his senior daughter Lindsay compete in her last year of college basketball. And he most always found a way back to the Kennel or wherever the Bulldogs were playing to see his then-freshman daughter Laura play for the Zags. He hardly ever missed a game son David played for Gonzaga (2010-14).

“Here’s another sign of his character. “When his agent was renegotiating a contract for him with the Utah Jazz, talked down, John wanted no part of the stress between he and the Jazz. So he agreed to terms with (owner) Larry Miller,” Nada says. “John’s No. 12 Jazz jersey was retired a year after he stopped playing. The Jazz, still the most ever played for one team in NBA history.”

But beyond the excellence, what makes Stockton a Hall of Famer is the man behind the scenes. 

“John is consistent in every aspect of his life,” says Cindy Stockton, the wife of 32 years. “And he’s loyal. You always know what you have in John. That’s a blessing in this crazy mixed-up world. You can always count on him.”

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Coach Jerry Sloan, choking up, talked about a friend whose 14-year-old son was dying of cancer, and the joy on the lad’s face when John made a lengthy bedside visit, about which there was never any publicity. “The boy died the next day. But John never broke his stride.”

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A DAY IN THE LIFE
Menard spans the globe

Often before the crack of dawn, Richard Menard checks the morning’s news feeds to see what’s going on around the globe. As director of Gonzaga’s Study Abroad program he keeps a watchful eye on the world around the students he has sent abroad.

“In fall 2015, we witnessed the attacks in Paris, and shortly thereafter in Brussels. We located every student, and had to decide whether to evacuate, and determine how we could get them out of the country. We had students in countries such as China, New Zealand and Italy. Just because students aren’t physically here doesn’t mean they’re not part of our Gonzaga community, and we’re there for them in the same way.”

Needless to say, Menard has had some restless nights.

“Now we’re looking at Stonep, Turkey. That country is still in a state of emergency following last year’s attempted coup. We are working with our risk management team to determine whether or not it’s a place suitable to send students on an educational tour or summer program.”

But all is not shrouded in doom. “We have 700 students studying around the world,” says Menard, who has been at Gonzaga in 2012, met his future here, and couldn’t be happier. "I love that I wake up every morning and think about what’s happening in the world at that moment. It’s exciting to me to think about what my students might be doing in Rio de Janeiro, New Zealand and Italy—and wondering if they’re safe.”

Menard’s program is very popular. Nearly 470 of the students studied abroad in completion of their senior years. That ranks No. 2 nationally for schools our size.

Senior Caleb Dawson went to Chile for a semester to study Spanish. He was there for a month, but found there was a big difference between traditional Spanish and slang. He saw dancers freestyling in the streets, and asked if he could join in. “I couldn’t speak slang at first, but we communicated through dance. I learned there’s more to language than words.”

Rachel Noyes ("Noyes") (v) recalls working alongside者 named Naomi, at the Spokane Salish School. “We brought in Madagascar to raise cockroaches for the students to observe and apply what they know about insects. All of the students could hold a cockroach if they wanted. Naomi was simultaneously terrified and thrilled. When I set the cockroach in her hand, her eyes lit up, she smiled and immediately started asking questions.”

The excitement of cockroach sale; Noyes’ favorite experiment involves teaching the fight or flight, a crime of a kidnapped dog. Fido, Students use chromatography (separating the colors in ink) to identify which marker was used to write a ransom note, and thus, who was the guilty party. “I love this because it shows students that science applies to much more than just the classroom—it’s used in real life,” she says.

Noyes is part of Science in Action, an outreach program developed by Gonzaga’s Chemistry and Biochemistry departments, which brings elementary school classrooms hands-on experiments demonstrate just how fun scientific discovery can be. Activities range from altering the density of salt water to make an egg float, to student-directed investigations on factors contributing to mold growth on a bread mixture. Most activities not only emphasize the scientific content being taught in the classroom, but also the process of science itself.

“When college students enter our classroom, they share a drive to pursue higher education. My students hear what college is like, and that personal exchange is critical to motivate them to insist on a quality education. I’m proud of the work we’re doing.”

Rohan Kundargi is GU’s outreach coordinator for Science in Action!

WASHINGTON
Pam Amos may be most comfortable in Melbourne, Australia today. She wears her Red Hot Mamas costumes to work here as a communications officer in the Public Safety and Campus Security.”

But she can’t help but exude delight in talking about her group’s invitation to perform in the November Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City.

“I became an empty nester recently, and I was invited,” she says, only partly tongue in cheek. “I had always loved ‘I Love Lucy’ and ‘The Carol Burnett Show,’ so I saw an ad for tryouts for the Red Hot Mamas, and I knew I had to try.”

The group’s founder and longtime director, Micki Stevens, watched the women perform. She quickly sorted out those with the right and those with two left feet. Those gifted with coordination danced and those without became the characters. Amos is adept at both. Last April she became a Red Hot Mama, a nationally renowned group of parade and event entertainers, brightly costumed in red outfits, hats and lipstick. “And the chance to perform in the Macy’s parade was just the carrot I needed,” Amos says.

Obviously, her job on the dispatch desk in lower Welch Hall is a quiet contrast to her schtick on the streets of NYC.

I don’t mind being by myself, sometimes or 11 hours at a time. Just the other day, this one dark colored car was seen driving in circles in the McCarran parking lot, stopping and pausing as I watched them on our cameras (500 of them positioned across campus). They were following each other. I dispatched officers to check them out. They were playing Pokemon Go,” Amos says.

On weekends, the communications officer answers the University’s switchboard. “One regular gal, Babs from New Jersey, calls two or three times on game nights, with comments like ‘It’s no longer,’ and ‘I’m so proud of the boys.’” Amos says. “We all look forward to her calls.”

For 13 years before GU, Amos served the Spokane Police Department, most recently as dispatch supervisor. “One of the last calls I received was a man at the NorthPark Mall shot near NorthPine. I was also working when the MLK day parade bomb device was found. Now I enjoy running into SPD officers who work for GU on weekend nights,” Amos says.

This is a woman who can’t sit still beyond her shift. She volunteers for Northwest Honor Flight, Meals on Wheels and teaches Bible Study Fellowship. But mostly, “I’ve always loved being goofy.”

One Year Down: Medical School Partnership Thriving

It was just one year ago the University of Washington School of Medicine formed a regional health partnership with Gonzaga University, spanning two ranked schools to expand access to medical education in Spokane, leverage expertise and innovation to educate future health care professionals in Northern Idaho, and to create collaborative solutions with the community to grow eastern Washington’s economy.

The report card looks good. A strong medical education foundation has been established. Enrollment of first-year medical students has increased from 40 to 65 per year, and pending legislation would raise that number to 70. Gonzaga Medical students are pleased with campus support services at GU, they report. Five Gonzaga faculty members are teaching medical students. Dan McCann, David Thorp, Kevin Measor, Nancy Staub and Allan Scruggs, in areas ranging from Molecular and Cellular Basis of Disease, to Mind and Brain for Behavioral Science, and from program coordination and teaching and research faculty on the GU campus, as well as interdisciplinary research projects. "Community Law was hired to manage GU’s role in the partnership, and advance shared research projects."

In February, Dr. Darrell K. Potyik was named chief of Medical Education for the University of Washington School of Medicine-Gonzaga University Regional Health Partnership, and is senior director for Eastern Washington University’s School of Medicine. He has served a UW faculty member and physician in Spokane since 1994.
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Needless to say, Menard has had some restless nights.

“There’s now a woke spirit in Spokane, the country is still in a state of emergency following last year’s attempted coup. We are working with our risk team to determine whether or not it’s a place suitable to send students on an exchange program.”

But all is not shrouded in doom. “We’ve had 700 students studying around the world,” says Menard, whose 12 years at Gonzaga in 2012, met his future wife Pasqualina. “We’ve always been there to support."
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Here’s another sign of his character. “When his agent was renegotiating a contract for him with the Utah Jazz, talk broke down. John wanted no part of the stress between he and the Jazz. So he respectfully told his agent he’d take care of it, and with a handshake agreed to terms with (owner) Larry Miller,” Nada says.

John’s other love is his community. He has lent a hand to more people and projects beyond the scenes than anyone will ever know. … and that’s the only way this extremely unpretentious and caring man will have it. His loyalty was evident, playing 19 seasons and 1,542 games for the Jazz, still the most ever played for one team in NBA history. John’s No. 12 Jazz jersey was retired in January 2009, the first jersey retired in the NBA in 19 years. John is much more comfortable in the stands than under the spotlight. He is a bad basketball player. Jazz teammate Karl Malone talked about his mom’s illness, and the daily calls he’d receive from John asking how she was doing. When she died, John showed up at the funeral unannounced, in the backcountry bayou where Malone grew up. Malone recalled, tears running down his face.

Coach Jerry Sloan, choking up, talked about a friend whose 14-year-old son was dying of cancer, and the joy on the lad’s face when John made a lengthy bedside visit, about which there was never any publicity. The boy died the next day, perhaps content. When Gonzaga employee Cindy Perry’s son Josh broke his arm during a high school baseball game, John reportedly contacted and arranged for his orthopedic doctor to tend to this young man. “We knew each other only through our connection to the basketball team, yet he went out of his way to make sure our son was seen by the best,” Cindy said.

So the fact that John Houston Stockton is inducted into the WCC Hall of Honor for his basketball prowess, it is his human qualities that make him a hall-of-famer in minds of friends and family members alike.