

Entry 03

Subject: Messner Gymnasium, Napa High School

When I leave Napa next year to attend a university, there are many places I will miss from this special community. However, one place stands apart as I actually call it 'my second home'. It is a place where I spent countless hours, from birth until recently. It is where I learned many life lessons and grew as an athlete and a young man; that place is Messner Gymnasium at Napa High School. This building, which actually turned 80 this year, is the place in Napa that has had the biggest impact on my life.

My mother is a long-time teacher at Napa High School, and so my first time in Messner Gym was for a Napa High Girls Basketball game when I was only two months old. Over the years, my mom took us to countless volleyball and basketball games, as she loved cheering on her students while teaching us about sports and being a good fan. I spent many evenings having a hot dog from the concession stand, cheering on NHS teams, and spending quality time with my mom.

Eventually, I grew up and became a Napa High Basketball player. This gym is the place where I learned about hard work and patience. It is where I realized what a supportive family I have, as I had a big cheering section at every single game. It is where I learned about being a good teammate and how to work with others in tough situations. I saw many wins and also many losses, but I always came home thankful for the opportunity to play here.

It came as no surprise to me that this place where I have spent so much of my time would also be the location of my first job. I was able to be a Youth Coach for 707 Premier for two years, as I coached Kindergarten and 2nd graders on Sunday afternoons. I was able to get job experience while teaching kids the fundamentals and sharing my love of the game. I learned life skills like time management and the importance of effective communication on the courts as a coach.

Messner Gym has seen so much over the years. It is crazy to think about the history it holds: all of the student rallies, homecoming dances, and athletic events it has seen over the past 80 years. I love to think about how many others like me think of this gym as a home, and a place where they really grew up. And it makes me even happier to think that my little brother Levi will surely break some records and win lots of games on that same court in about 9 years.

It is a little overwhelming to think about my next stage in life in a town other than Napa. But I count myself so fortunate to have grown up in a town that has a place like Messner Gym, and that has a community made up of amazing people that have filled the roles of fans, coaches, and players in this place. Messner gym is an important part of the Napa community, and a foundational part of my life.