

National Champion Team: 'Basketball Will Be Forever'

I don't think it hits you that fast, but it does later. You get it in flashes.
— Charles Grigsby

The import of what had just happened didn't hit Charles Grigsby all at once.

The year was 1939, Charles was 19, and the Southwestern College Moundbuilders had just won the national basketball championship. And Charles had become one of only 10 players in SC basketball history able to say they were on a national championship team.

So for almost seven decades, Charles has been asked about how it felt on that March night in Kansas City when the



1939 National Champions. Charles Grigsby is on the front row, far left.

basketball championship team:

Bratches, whose team leadership foretold a 32-year Navy career. Russell "Sticker" Briar, the final forward recruited by Coach George Gardner to round out this dream team. Price Fugit, a Wichita East graduate who joined four Winfield and one Ark City players on the roster. Team captain Eddie Hinshaw and Lloyd Tucker, who with Bratches were all-conference and all-tournament at the national championships.

"Those three really were all-Americans," Grigsby recalls. "There have been some ballplayers here all along who could play with these three, but in '39, all three were on one team."

The result was a stunning run of success. Southwestern, with less than 500 students

enrolled, defeated teams from universities many times larger. Kansas State.

Colorado State. Wichita University. Hays State. Oklahoma City University.

The wins, Charles says, stemmed from the quiet determination of their coach, George Gardner, and dogged defensive prowess—the *Moundbuilder* called it the "point a minute team." Certainly the sheer size of the players was not a dominating factor; at 6'1", Grigsby didn't play against a taller player

until the state tournament of his senior year in high school.

Of course, the Winfield influence was strong—tradition has it that when a child was born here back in those days, the parents laid a basketball in one side of the crib and a violin in the other side. And, Anne Grigsby says, the wins came from the character of the players involved.

"They were such solid citizens, but they were lots of fun," she says fondly. "No one was cocky or mouthed off."

When the fabled year had ended after only two defeats, life returned to normal for the national champions. Folks knew something wonderful had happened on campus, Anne recalls (she was a freshman the fall after the championship run), but within a few years World War II had intervened and for a time men's basketball was canceled.

But as the years went on, team members continued to be connected to SC. Anne (who had been married to '39 team member Carle Dix) and Charles both were widowed, and married in 1987. Anne, a counselor at Winfield High School for 28 years, moved to the farm where Charles has farmed for so many decades. She returned to Winfield often and served as a trustee of the college, as well as part of its Athletic Hall of Fame steering committee.

And as often as they can at age 87 and 84, they make the 2½-hour trip back to Winfield to watch the Builders play.

They're proud of the academic offerings of the college—they point to the nursing program, natural sciences achievements, and business and performing arts excellence.



Anne and Charles Grigsby hold special jerseys presented them by the current team members and Coach Doug Hall on Nov. 12. Anne's jersey honors her late husband, Carle Dix.

They appreciate the opportunities their gifts to the Builders of Excellence campaign and to the college's athletic scholarship funds have given to Southwestern students.

But every time they step into Stewart Field House, they hear cheering.

"We have a lot of memories in that building," Anne says softly. "You feel like basketball will be forever."

Family Legacy: SC for the Morgans

Bob and Ann Morgan weren't sure what to expect when they brought their oldest daughter to Southwestern College for a visit a few years ago.

Even though her parents had graduated from SC (in '80 and '82), Lindsay had made it clear she wasn't very interested in such a small school. After all, Goddard High School and the Wichita metro area were significantly larger than SC and Winfield.

But then Lindsay visited campus. She was challenged by her admission counselor: "You're going to be asked to grow and do a lot of new things," Rodney Worsham said. "If you're not ready for that, you probably shouldn't be here." She was struck by the welcoming attitude of faculty and other students.

And in the fall of 2003, Lindsay Morgan was a Moundbuilder.

A year or so later Bob and Ann were back on the road to Southwestern, this time with their 17-year-old twins. SC faced tough competition—Blake was considering schools in Alaska and in Colorado as well as the large Kansas state universities.

But in the fall of 2005, Blake and Laura Morgan also were Moundbuilders.

The Morgans have joined the honor roll of families who make attending Southwestern a family tradition. In fact, Bob came here largely because a brother attended Southwestern; Ann's mother, aunt, uncle, and other relatives had been SC students. Still, it wasn't taken for granted that their children would end up in Winfield.

Bob and Ann were confident the relationship-intensive environment on campus would be intact ("Our lifetime friends are from here," Ann says) but would SC be able to compete educationally? Because they are teachers, this consideration was foremost.

"The face of education is changing constantly," Bob says. "It's so much broader than it used to be. But Southwestern has kept up with the change."

Facilities are strikingly improved; as a science major, Bob sees his children in the state-of-the-art Beech Science Center rather than what he experienced in Mossman Hall. Ann is astounded at the high comfort level of residence hall life compared to the less-posh living situation she had.

The most important changes Bob and Ann see, though, have to do with teaching methods, and service learning opportunities (all three of the siblings are on the leadership team), and college-organized extracurricular activities.

Lindsay, Laura, and Blake have risen to the challenge of doing new things and trying new experiences. Lindsay, for example, plays on the soccer team, sang with the choir in Carnegie Hall, performed in a drama production, learned how to write for the newspaper, spoke at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes conference—her list of activities seems endless. Blake is a soccer player, and Laura (according to her siblings) "pranks" the residence hall with regularity.

Our lifetime friends are from Southwestern College.
~ Ann Morgan

So how do two parents on schoolteachers' incomes manage to keep three children in a private college simultaneously? It's a walk of faith, they say, aided by Southwestern's determination to keep its costs competitive with state institutions.

All three of the students work during the summer (although not during the school year, to keep their focus on their college experience), and their good grades during high school have led to academic assistance including the premier Beech scholarship for Lindsay.

Activity scholarships add to the mix and they're helped by low-interest student loans. Grandparents also have helped

out—"Education is a high priority to them, so they're our safety net," Ann explains.

"Paying for college," Bob says, "comes down to 'How bad do you want it?'"

And the college experience has been priceless, the Morgans say. After only a few months Blake has noticed a difference in himself.

"My personal growth has been tremendous," he says. "Relationships are more important to me now, and how I deal with them. People are important."

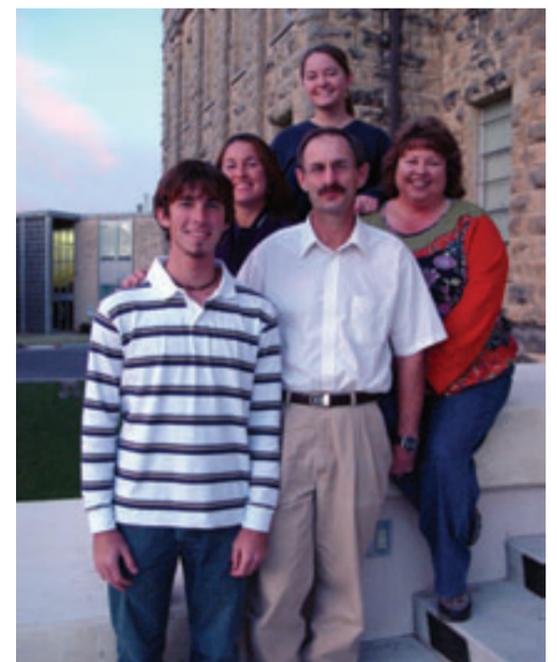
"I was worried about the friends I had at home, and I thought it would take a long time to find new friends," Laura adds. "But after only three or four months, I have deep, deep friendships that I know will last for the rest of my life."

They're the kind of friendships Bob and Ann are turning to now, as they adapt to their newly-quiet home. When the kids are in Goddard for a weekend, they return to Winfield in a car packed so full of Ann's goodies there's barely room for passengers.

(Lindsay accuses her parents of being old in the pantry now—high-fiber, low-fat options have replaced sugared cereals and cookies in the Morgan kitchen.)

But the empty nest is less painful because Bob and Ann know their three children are at the perfect place for them.

"The kids who come together here are serious about education," Bob says simply. "That's what we wanted."



A legacy of Moundbuilding Morgans (from center) Bob '80, Blake '09, Lindsay '07, Laura '09, and Ann '82.