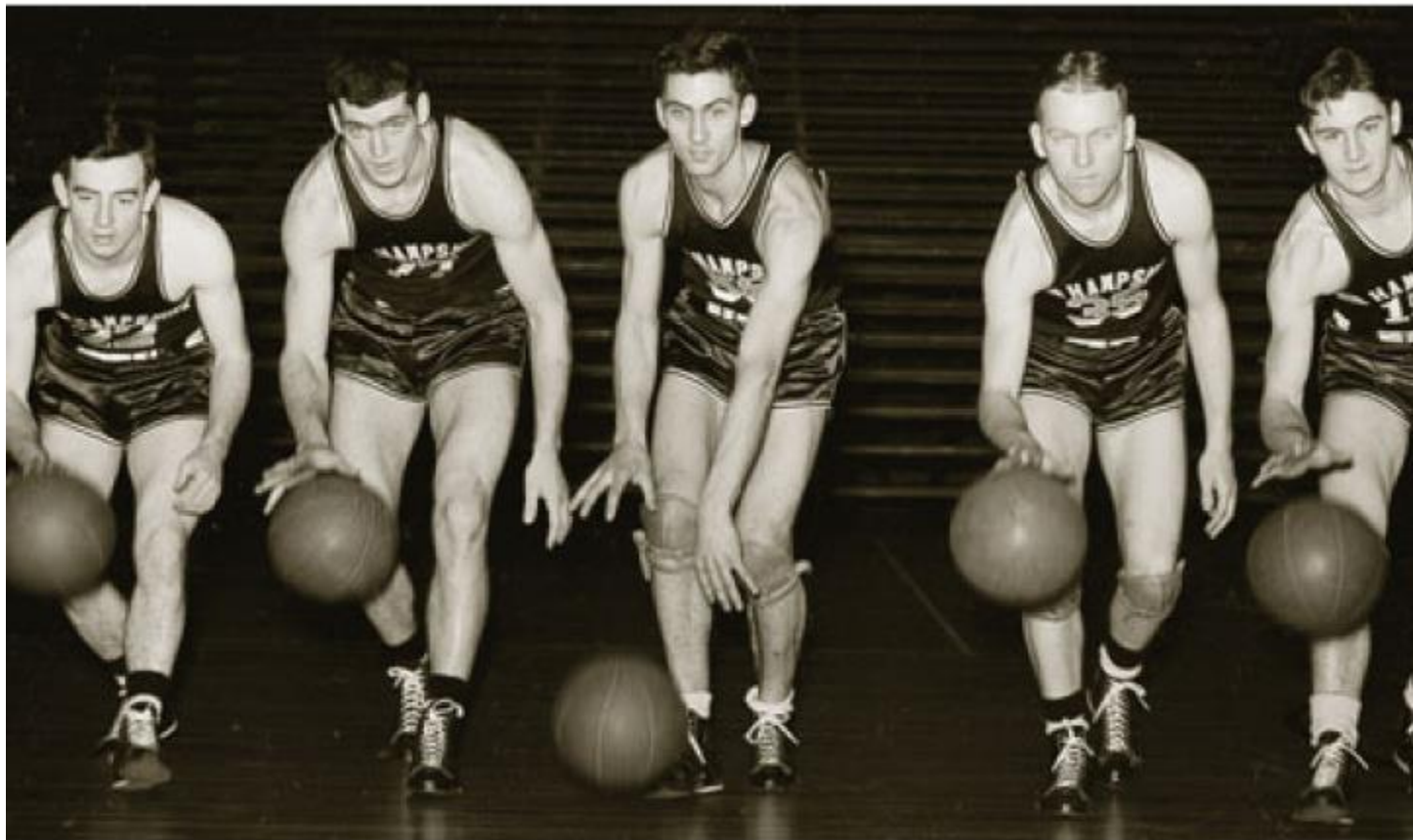


A Key Assist

Thursday, February 7, 2013

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Above, second from right: Alder T. "Jim" Hatch '40. Photo courtesy of UNH Archives.

As a UNH undergraduate before the era of instant communications, Phil Blum '70 often felt far away from his Omaha, Nebraska, family. But the four-year basketball letter winner found a second family in Manchester residents Alder T. "Jim" '40 and Julie Hatch, who encouraged Blum to attend UNH, provided the Midwesterner with a home

away from home, and cheered courtside at nearly every game he played in the Wildcat blue and white.

“My father and Jim Hatch worked for the same company in different locations, and from New Hampshire Jim heard all about my Nebraska high school basketball career,” Blum explains. A former UNH basketball standout, Hatch was always on the lookout for potential players, and when Blum flew east to visit UNH, Hatch was the one who picked him up at Logan Airport. “He and Julie became like second parents to me while I was at UNH,” says Blum. “They were both such an important part of my college experience.”

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SCOTT MORRIS '15 FIRST HATCH SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT. PHOTO BY GIL TALBOT. medical director of a thriving outpatient surgical clinic in Jackson, Wyoming, Blum looks back on his UNH playing days, and particularly his relationship with the Hatches, with tremendous fondness. After graduation, he and Jim stayed close, and he brought his sons out to meet the Hatches when he was inducted into the UNH Athletics Hall of Fame in 1998. When Jim died six years later at the age of 87, it seemed only natural to Blum to honor his “UNH parents” with an endowed basketball fund. Scott Morris '14, a guard from Walkersville, Maryland, was named the first recipient of the Jim and Julie Hatch Endowed Basketball Scholarship Fund in October 2012.

Morris, a UNH Honors Program student majoring in business administration and management information systems, says it means a lot to be the first recipient of a scholarship established by one accomplished UNH alum in honor of another.

Hatch was captain of the men's basketball team in 1939–40 and was also the 1940 class president. He maintained close ties with his alma mater after graduation, serving as president for the UNH 100 Club (the earliest incarnation of the current Wildcat Fund) and the Alumni Association board of directors, and was also a member of the University's board of trustees. Like his mentor, Blum served as co-captain of the basketball team, and oversaw the Wildcats' 1969–70 campaign—their first winning season in 18 years. While he also played tennis for two seasons, Blum readily identifies basketball as his first love, continuing to track the 'Cats from his Wyoming home today.

“How could I have not stayed interested?” he asks. “We’ve had some wins and near wins that get me thinking UNH is close to reaching the next level, now as much as ever.” Blum is delighted that the first Jim and Julie Hatch scholarship recipient has been named, but downplays his generosity in creating the endowment. “Any contribution to UNH I have made pales in comparison to the daily support the Hatches gave to the University for so many years,” he says. “I’m blessed to have had them be part of my life.”

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