

## PGAA 2016 VOLUNTEER OF EXCELLENCE

### HARRY "OG" BOWSER



In August 2016, Harry "OG" Bowser was selected to receive the prestigious Volunteer Excellence Award from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg Alumni Association.

Coach Bowser's dedication to all of his players and all associated with the Men's Basketball Program at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg has spanned the decades from his serving as an assistant coach for the 1973-1974 Pitt-Greensburg basketball team to his service as an assistant basketball coach and character coach for the 2015-2016 championship team.

The members of the Pitt-Greensburg Men's Basketball Alumni Club send their heartfelt congratulations to our teammate and coach, his wife Karon and the entire Bowser family for this well-deserved honor.

## IN MEMORIAM

### MICHAEL S. NOVOTNY

Mike Novotny graduated from Greensburg Central Catholic High School in 1970. He attended the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, was a standout on the 1970-1971 and 1971-1972 Pitt-Greensburg Basketball teams and was known as a tenacious defender and a great teammate. As an undergraduate, Mike joined the R.O.T.C. and graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1974.

After graduation, Mike enlisted in the United States Marines. He completed Marine Flight Training in Pensacola, Florida, and attained the rank of Captain. Mike tragically lost his life in November 1978 in Dare County, North Carolina, as a result of the injuries he sustained in the crash of his A6E Intruder Aircraft during night flights over North Carolina. At the time of his passing, Mike was survived by his wife, Lucille, and his son, Michael.

Mike's former teammates and the members of the Pitt-Greensburg Men's Alumni Basketball Club salute his memory.

## SPECIAL THANK YOU TO

### SHEILA T. KUDRICK

The Men's Basketball Alumni Club wishes to express our sincere thanks to Sheila T. Kudrick, Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Relations Coordinator, for her guidance and tireless efforts in helping to establish the Men's Basketball Alumni Club. We wish to further thank her for her efforts concerning the articles highlighting the Men's Basketball Alumni Club which appeared in the *Blue and Gold* Magazine and the on-line Alumni Spotlight.



441 LINDEN STREET, ALLENTOWN, PA 18102

## FALL 2016 NEWSLETTER

### HISTORY – MEN'S BASKETBALL PROGRAM

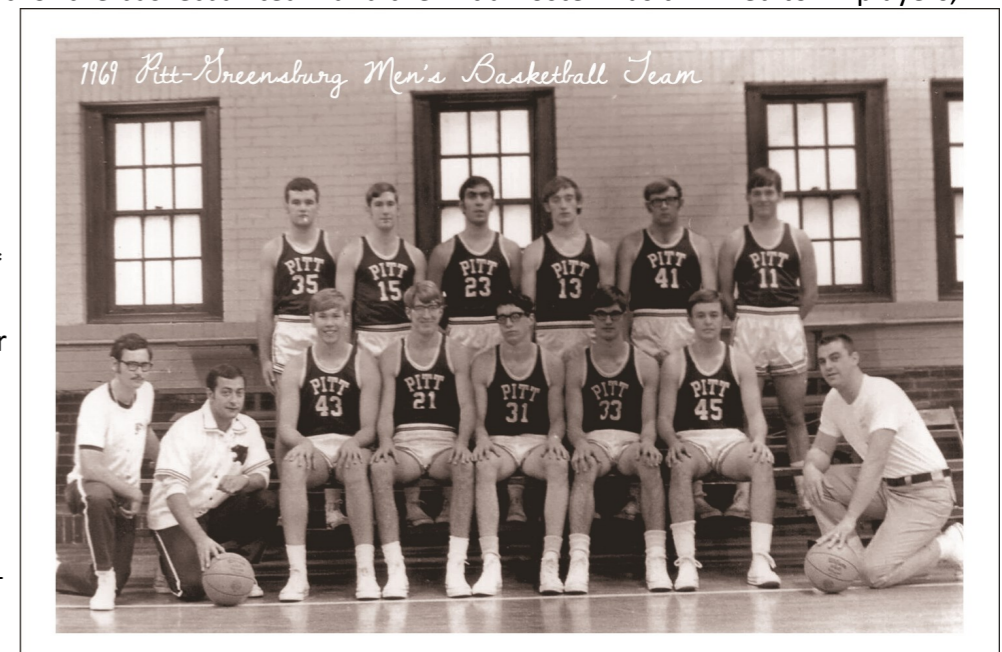
An informal, exploratory basketball program at the University of Pittsburgh's Greensburg Campus was initiated during the winter of 1968-1969. The initial program was the result of a collaboration between Pitt-Greensburg Campus President Albert G. Smith and its Physical Education Instructor John C. Hunter. The purpose of the initial basketball program was to serve as a "test balloon" to determine the interest in and viability of an official, sanctioned basketball program at Pitt-Greensburg. Home and away games against the University of Pittsburgh's Titusville Campus and the Pennsylvania State University's Fayette Campus comprised the initial, four-game "experimental" schedule. Open tryouts were subsequently conducted before Coach Hunter and the initial roster included players Fred Charles, Steve Frick, Tom Jollie and Mike Noppe, who went on to play for Pitt-Greensburg's first official basketball team. The initial program was met with such enthusiasm by the faculty and students at Pitt-Greensburg, that the fourth game against Pitt-Titusville had to be moved to the Greensburg-Salem High School gymnasium in order to accommodate the student and community interest. The success of the initial, unofficial basketball program resulted in the establishment of the first, official basketball program at Pitt-Greensburg, which officially commenced in November 1969.

### FIRST OFFICIAL BASKETBALL PROGRAM

#### PITT-GREENSBURG

Tryouts for the first official basketball team at Pitt-Greensburg were conducted in fall of 1969. Approximately 22 students tried out for the basketball team and the initial roster was trimmed to 12 players, including: Harry Bowser (41), Fred Charles (23), Bernie Cobetto (45), Dan Cottrell\*, Steve Frick (31), Rich Hardway (11), John Jamison (21), Tom Jollie (43), Tom Kristan (35), Alan Pearson (15), Paul Salley (13) and Al Skrabski (33). Dave Chesser\* and Mike Noppe\* joined the team in January 1970. John C. Hunter (far right) served as Head Coach, Gus Corso (second in front) served as Assistant Coach, Dr. Bernard Cobetto\* served as a medical consultant and Bob Gleghorn (first in front) served as Equipment Manager for the first basketball team.

\*Not pictured





## FIRST BASKETBALL GAME IN THE HISTORY

On Saturday, November 15, 1969, the first official basketball game in the history of the Pitt-Greensburg campus took place in Titusville, Pennsylvania. Pitt-Greensburg faced the University of Pittsburgh's Titusville Campus, a game won by Pitt-Greensburg 87-54. The result of Pitt-Greensburg's first, official victory was reported in the Sports Section of the Greensburg Tribune Review as follows:

### GREENSBURG IN FIRST VICTORY

***The first varsity basketball team in the history of the Greensburg Campus of the University of Pittsburgh made an auspicious debut Saturday night by dumping Titusville, 87 - 54 at the Titusville Campus. Fred Charles of Allentown led Greensburg with 22 points, 15 of them in the first period, while Al Skrabsky, the teams pivot-man from nearby Yukon, dumped in 17 more. Greensburg led by only 12 points at the half, but a 10 - point surge early in the second half put the game out of reach. Tom Jollie and Bernie Cobetto chipped in 13 - points a piece to back the winners' attack while Pat Riley was high for Titusville with 15. Greensburg was razor sharp at the foul line, hitting 17 of 22. Greensburg will try to make it two straight Wednesday night at Penn State Campus at Uniontown."***

(Reported - Greensburg Tribune Review, Monday, November 17, 1969)

## 2015-2016 THAT CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON

For the Men's Basketball Team at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, 2015-2016 was a truly unforgettable season. The team's eight graduating seniors, known as the "Elite Eight," and Coach Sean Strickland earned the Bobcats their first ever trip to the NCAA Division III National Tournament. The Bobcats finished in third place in the 10-team Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference. Their regular season record of 13-5 resulted in entry to the conference playoffs.



In the first round, Pitt-Greensburg defeated Medaille College of Buffalo, advancing to the semi-final round vs. Penn State-Behrend. Then, the fun began, with just 3.5 seconds remaining in the game against Behrend, and trailing by two points, Bobcat senior Jerelle Figueroa made two foul shots to tie and send the game to overtime. The Bobcats won in OT, and advanced to the league championship game against Hilbert

College of Hamburg, N.Y.

In the title game, with a bid to the NCAA Tournament at stake, the Bobcats found themselves trailing 74-73 with only 24 seconds left in the game. In yet another fantastic finish, Clutch Go-To Guy Mike Connelly drained a 3-pointer to give the Bobcats the 76-74 win and the title.

Congratulations to Coach Strickland and all connected to the Men's Basketball program at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg. A special note to the Elite Eight, congratulations on your academic accomplishments and graduation, and certainly on "that champion season."

## ALUMNI FEATURE HARRY "OG" BOWSER MEN'S BASKETBALL ASSISTANT COACH

On a cold night in December 1969, Harry Bowser's teammates watched as he approached the foul line and took the basketball from the referee. Trailing rival Penn State-New Kensington by two points with just three seconds left in the game, the first year Pitt-Greensburg Basketball Team was desperate to force overtime and win their first ever home game. With this backdrop, Harry stepped to the line...\*\*\*

After graduating from the University of Pittsburgh in 1972, Harry embarked on a 35-year career in secondary education at Southmoreland High School. He raised a family with his wife Karon. The couple boasts a son Adam, who also played basketball for Pitt-Greensburg, a son Ryan and his wife Lynn and two beautiful granddaughters.

Harry continued his career in the game of basketball and served as an assistant coach for Pitt-Greensburg from 1972 - 1974 and as Head Basketball Coach at Southmoreland High School for thirteen years. Harry returned to Pitt-Greensburg as an assistant basketball coach and character coach - Fellowship of Christian Athletes, a position he currently holds under Head Coach Sean Strickland. Harry's players have fondly named him Coach "OG" (Original Greensburg).



Karon and Harry Bowser

\*\*\*... About those foul shots against Penn State New Kensington in December 1969, Harry coolly sunk both foul shots and Pitt-Greensburg won its first ever home game, in overtime. Harry's heroics were reported in the sports page of the Greensburg Tribune Review as follows:

***In regulation, the faster ball-hawking visitors held a five point lead with just 1:24 remaining...The lead crumbled for good when Harry Bowser of Alverton...stepped to the foul line and swished two free throws with :03 left to send the game into overtime.***

(Reported - Greensburg Tribune Review, Friday, December 5, 1969).

## CONGRATULATIONS TO "THE ELITE EIGHT"

The Men's Basketball Alumni Club congratulates Nick Anderson, Mike Connelly, Rocco Constristano, Tyler DeWitt, Jerell Figueroa, Jarrett Shannon, Marcus Thomas and Doug Wilson upon their successful completion of their studies and their graduation from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg. By virtue of their accomplishments in the classroom and on the hardwood, these student-athletes have truly earned their title "The Elite Eight."