WHAT LIES AHEAD

A relocated and revamped main entrance to the Finneran Pavilion will provide a gathering space for the Villanova community.

Home-Court Advantage
It’s game time for an impressive transformation of the Pavilion

By Marian Butcher

THE PAVILION IS best known as the place where the Nova Nation—in all its loyal, boisterous glory—has united for more than 30 years to cheer the Men’s and Women’s Basketball teams to victory over and over again.

It’s also where prospective students have been introduced to Villanova and inspired to find their place here. It is where new students and their families have been welcomed into the Villanova community during Orientation. It is where volunteers have gathered before being dispatched to serve during the Special Olympics Fall Festival and the St. Thomas of Villanova Day of Service. It is where graduates have come together for Commencement to celebrate all they have achieved.

As a place for community and competition, celebration and commemoration, the Pavilion has been well-loved, and the wear and tear shows. Now, a massive renovation project is getting under way to ensure that the energy of the facility itself matches the energy of the people and events it hosts.

A LANDMARK MAKEOVER

When it reopens, the Pavilion will have more amenities, expanded gathering spaces, new seating, enhanced technology and a revamped main entrance that will serve as the front doorstep for Villanova’s basketball programs and signature events.

It will also have a new name—Finneran Pavilion, in honor of William B. Finneran ’63 VSB, whose $22.6 million leadership gift in spring 2016 was the largest ever to Villanova Athletics and kicked off a funding effort to raise a total of $60 million for the project.

“As Villanova’s national prominence continues to rise, it is time for the Pavilion to undergo a significant renovation that, when finished, will more closely represent the tradition of excellence of Villanova Athletics and the high caliber of the University as a whole,” says the Rev. Peter M. Donohue, OSA, PhD, ’75 CLAS, Villanova’s president. “It is perfectly fitting for the Pavilion to bear Bill’s name since he was integral to making its transformation possible.”

Construction is scheduled to begin this spring and be completed in fall 2018. During the 2017-18 basketball season, the Men’s Basketball team will play its home games on campus in the Wells Fargo Center, while the Women’s Basketball team will play its home games on campus in the Wells Fargo Center.

CROWD-PLEASING UPGRADES

In the renovated Finneran Pavilion, the fan experience will be paramount. A concourse will wrap around the arena, offering concessions and merchandise stands, and a new Hall of Fame exhibit will connect modern-day fans to the long, proud history of Villanova Athletics. A new hospitality area, the Court One Club, will allow fans to literally walk where Villanova basketball stars have trod, as it will feature the actual hardwood court from the 2016 Men’s Basketball national championship game in Houston.

Although the seating capacity will not be increased, the seating areas will be made more comfortable. And the student section—the heart of game-day excitement—will be situated along both baselines and shifted closer to the court.

“The new Finneran Pavilion will provide an even stronger home-court advantage, enhance our ability to recruit and train the nation’s best and brightest student-athletes, help support all of our 24 varsity programs, and deliver a first-class, game-day atmosphere for the best fans in college sports,” says Director of Athletics Mark Jackson.

New seating will be installed throughout the arena, and student sections will be repositioned along both baselines.

Right, top: A new Hall of Fame exhibit will showcase the proud legacy of Villanova Athletics.

Right: An aerial view of the new Pavilion entrance.

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Construction is scheduled to begin this spring and be completed in fall 2018. During the 2017-18 basketball season, the Men’s Basketball team will play most of its home games in Philadelphia at the Wells Fargo Center, while the Women’s Basketball right: An aerial view of the new Pavilion entrance.

A relocated and revamped main entrance to the Finneran Pavilion will provide a gathering space for the Villanova community.
The team added to the program’s legacy with a 32-4 record, a No. 1 national ranking for eight weeks, and Big East regular season and tournament championships.

Exceptional team play has always defined the Wildcats’ greatness, and this year’s seniors continued that tradition. Josh Hart, Kris Jenkins and Darryl Reynolds will graduate as the winningest class in Villanova Basketball history.

Throughout four seasons with the program, the teams to which this trio belonged notched 129 victories and never lost two games in a row. The Wildcats also stood tall in individual recognition. Hart was named Big East Player of the Year, won the Julius Irving Award as the nation’s top small forward and was a finalist for other national player-of-the-year awards. Sophomore Mikal Bridges and Hart shared Big East Defensive Player of the Year honors. Sophomore Jalen Brunson and Hart were also first team all-Big East selections.

There were many moments to celebrate throughout the season: Head Coach Jay Wright’s 500th career win, the final game played in the Pavilion before its full-scale renovation, and the remarkable achievements and winning records of graduating senior players. Wright, his returning players and fans around the country are already looking ahead to building on the program’s incredible momentum in seasons to come.

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