

# M-CLUB MESSENGER

By Sharon Ocker

## WAKE UP THE ECHOES

**A**fter the sparkling renovations that took place this summer at Allee Gym, it seems like a good time to “wake up the echoes,” to use Notre Dame’s famous phrase. Where have Morningsiders played hoops over the years? In some very interesting places. . .

As near as can be determined, the first “gymnasium” was located in the southeast corner of the basement of Lewis Hall in 1900. It was a 32 foot-by-43 foot room, 15 feet tall from floor to ceiling, and a stairway led to the bath and dressing rooms. The former gymnasium was in the same area of the Lewis Hall basement that was home to Morningside’s print shop for many years but was remodeled this summer for use by the nursing department.

Morningside’s first collegiate victory was over Yankton College in 1902, but it was at the Sioux City YMCA. Apparently no games were ever hosted in the Lewis Hall gym.

In 1914 construction was completed on the new \$80,000 Alumni Gymnasium. The main activity area was 60 feet by 120 feet, with two basketball courts; a cork track in the balcony - 18 laps to the mile; facilities for tennis, volleyball, and indoor baseball; and a basement complete with men’s and women’s locker rooms and showers. There was also space for a swimming pool, but it was never finished, due, no doubt, to a shortage of funding.

Because of World War I, no collegiate games were played in the Alumni Gymnasium until the 1917-18 school year. Seating was very limited; people sat in the balcony, on the sides, and on the ends of the court.

**Dwight Hauff 1926** recalled that space was at a premium for big games. When the University of South Dakota came to Morningside, fraternities would send their pledges to the game early to save seats for the regular members.

Of course, when Allee Gym was completed, the Alumni Gym became the college library. Now echoes reside in the midst of books.

George M. Allee Gym was initiated on Dec. 17, 1949, when Morningside lost 56-43 against River Falls Teachers College of Wisconsin. At a cost of \$524,000, this facility featured two east-west basketball floors, spectator balconies, a 30 foot-by-75 foot swimming pool, locker rooms, classrooms, offices, training and equipment rooms, an M-Club room, a superintendent’s apartment, and more than a mile of wooden, folding bleachers that were said to seat 5,000 people. The \$32,000 naming grant was given by George M. Allee, a Harvard graduate and a farmer from Newell, Iowa. This gym was widely acclaimed for being state of the art.

Allee Gym underwent a \$2 million remodeling project in 1991, which included

a new floor and new bleachers. The seating capacity is now listed at about 2,400. There is great doubt as to whether Allee was ever able to hold 5,000 people as originally advertised, but the crowds for the playoff contests in 1983-84 were huge - perhaps as many as 4,000.

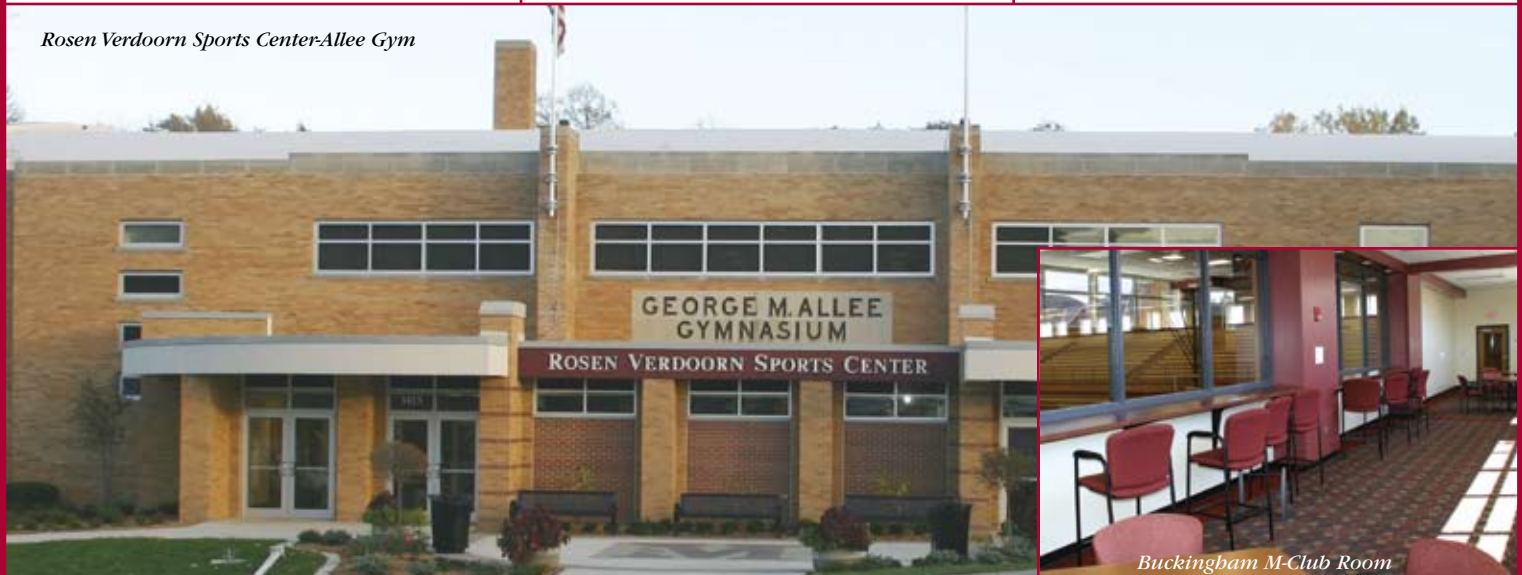
Ah, yes, the echoes. Arenas are often remembered because of heroic deeds that happened there. It is impossible to list all of the thrilling moments, but a couple come especially to mind:

There was the quadruple overtime game against Wisconsin-Eau Claire on Nov. 11, 1980, when Morningside won 104-102 behind **Mark Faber 1981**, who scored 29 points and raked in 16 rebounds. Coach Dan Callahan knelt down in front of the bench so many times that the next day his legs were so stiff he could barely stand.

Another memorable moment was the fabulous dunk by **David Krantz 1984** against North Dakota State in a playoff game. It was his only bucket of the night and came off an alley-oop pass from **Rick Egli 1984** that was much too high. Somehow, David jumped high enough to reach it with one hand and send it down through the basket. The roof of Allee almost came off when the crowd erupted in a giant roar.

*For more echoes of Morningside athletics, visit the college Web site, [www.morningside.edu](http://www.morningside.edu).*

*Rosen Verdoorn Sports Center-Allee Gym*



*Buckingham M-Club Room*