

Building and Place Name Evaluation

GILL COLISEUM BUILDING EVALUATION WORKSHOP

October 19, 2017

MU Ballroom Room



Oregon State
University

Welcome and Introductions

- Who are we?
- What are our roles?
- Who else is in the room?

Roadmap

- Intentions and expectations for today's workshop
- Criteria for evaluation
- Historical information on building and namesake
- Table discussions on building and namesake

Intentions and Expectations

- What is the intent of today's workshop?
- What can you expect from this process?
- What we expect from our community during this process?

What happens next?

- Weeks 1-5:
 - Historical reports on the buildings and namesakes
 - Community engagement workshops to discuss the process and the four building names under review – Arnold Dining Center, Avery Lodge, Benton Hall and Annex, Gill Coliseum
 - Meetings with community stakeholder groups
- Weeks 6-9: Deliberation by workgroup, Architectural Naming Committee and President Ray
- Week 10: President Ray announces decision
- Full timeline available at <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/building-and-place-names>

What happens next?

- What happens if we decide to rename a building?
 - OSU will engage in a process to select a new name for the building
 - The university will create permanent educational information so that current and future community members will be able to learn about the building's previous name and namesake, how and why the decision to change the building's name was made, and why the new name was chosen.
 - Permanent education could be in the form of a plaque, exhibit, website or other mediums.

What happens next?

- What happens if we decide not to rename a building?
 - The name of the building will remain
 - The university will create and place permanent educational information so that current and future community members will be able to learn about the building's name and history of its namesake, why the name was evaluated, and why a decision was made to leave the name.
 - This permanent education could be in the form of a plaque, exhibit, website or other mediums.

How did we get here?

- National context
 - Conversations about race, exclusion, history, and reconciliation
 - Conversations about memorials, statues, buildings and names
 - States, cities, universities and colleges

How did we get here?

- Oregon State
 - Pre-2000s - Examining building and place names; renaming buildings
 - Articles exploring the origin of OSU building names
 - Buildings named for a variety of reasons – function, donors, alumni, students, faculty/staff
 - Long history of renaming buildings at Oregon State for a variety of reasons, including buildings under evaluation
 - 2000s – Concern regarding whether names reflect Oregon State’s values
 - 2015 – Committee to establish criteria for examination of building names
 - 2017 – Student demonstration regarding building names
 - 2017 – Process announced to evaluate the names of four buildings on Corvallis campus

How did we get here?

- Why examine the names of buildings? Why now?
 - The names of buildings speak to our core values as a public, land grant university serving the well being of the citizens of Oregon
- OSU's core values:
 - **Accountability**
 - **Diversity**
 - **Integrity**
 - **Respect**
 - **Social responsibility**

Building and Place Name Evaluation Criteria

- Should a building be renamed because the “context” of an individual’s life and legacy is inconsistent with OSU’s contemporary mission and values?
- “Context” is evaluated by the following criteria:
 - Actions taken by an individual vs. viewpoints held by an individual
 - The individual's public vs. private persona
 - The progression of an individual’s viewpoints and life as a whole
 - Whether and how an individual’s actions and viewpoints aligned with OSU’s mission and OSU’s and society’s values at the time
 - How the current OSU community engages with the “context” of an individual’s life

Historical Review

- Conducted by a team of five scholars
 - Four historians, three from OSU and an emeritus professor from Lewis & Clark College; one sociologist from OSU
- Purpose
 - Gather and analyze historical evidence to explore, reveal, and contextualize the lives and viewpoints of the namesakes, and the histories of the buildings.
 - Not answering the question of whether to rename; providing history and context
- Process
 - Research in archives and our primary sources
 - Extensive documentation of sources
 - Oral histories, where available

Roadmap

- The Research Process
- About Gill Coliseum
- The Career of Amory T. “Slats” Gill
- Racial Integration in College Basketball
- The 1963 Controversy over the Lack of Integration of the OSU Men’s Basketball Team
- Summary

The Research Process

- Interviews (12) with, and letters received from, former players, coaches, and community members [mid-September through mid-October 2017]
- Review of additional interviews done previously, housed at the Special Collections and Archives Research Center (SCARC)
- Content analysis of university records in SCARC
 - Intercollegiate Athletics Records
 - Gill's personnel file
 - Media sports guides and OSU yearbooks
 - Newspaper coverage in the *Barometer*, *Oregonian*, other newspapers, and OSU alumni magazine
- Literature review of relevant historical and sociological scholarship

About Gill Coliseum

- Construction began in 1948, made possible by bond funding authorized by the State Board of Higher Education.
- Officially referred to as “the Pavilion,” but informally called “Gill Coliseum” as early as 1950.
- After Amory T. “Slats” Gill’s death in 1966, the State Board of Higher Education officially named the building “Gill Coliseum.”



Photo: Gill Coliseum, circa 1955 (HC1254), Harriet's Photograph Collection



Photo: Gill Coliseum, photo by Zbigniew Sikora, Orange Media Network

The Career of Amory T. “Slats” Gill (1901-1966)

- Born in Salem and attended Oregon State where he played basketball and was an All-American in 1924.
- Was Oregon State’s basketball coach, 1928-1964 and athletic director, 1964-1966.
- In 36 seasons as basketball coach, compiled a 599-393 record.
- Served as president of the National Basketball Coaches Association and won the Hayward Award honoring a leading Oregon sports figure. The Corvallis Chamber of Commerce named him “first citizen of Corvallis” in 1963.



*Photo: Amory T. Gill, 1949 (HC236),
Harriet's Photograph Collection*

Racial Integration in College Basketball

- 1930s - nationally, few basketball teams had black players pre-WWII.
- 1940s-1950s
 - Some teams began limited recruitment of black players.
 - Universities outside the South began to reject the so-called “gentleman’s agreement,” under which they had kept their black players off the court when playing Southern all-white teams.
 - Southern universities took longer to integrate their teams.
- 1960s
 - More teams began integrating.
 - 1966 - Texas Western College broke a tradition of limiting the number of black starters; its all-black team beat the all-white University of Kentucky team for the NCAA championship.
- 1970s - recruitment of black players nationwide began in earnest.

The 1963 Charge of Segregation against the OSU Basketball Team

- Oregon state representative Berkeley Lent, a Portland Democrat, introduced a bill prohibiting OSU and UO athletic teams from competing against the University of Mississippi.
- However, Lent asked the House Education Committee to table his bill, stating that it had “come to [his] attention that we have situations in our own backyard that need correction before we can tell the University of Mississippi what to do.”
- Lent’s only specific charge was that “the Oregon State University basketball team never has had a Negro member of the varsity team in all the time the present coach has been there.”

OSU's Response to the Charge of Segregation

- Gill - denied the charge of racial discrimination and claimed to have sought out numerous black players.
- OSU Administrators - denied the charge of racism against Gill.
- The State Board of Higher Education – no evidence was found that the Board took any action.

Recruitment Practices, 1950s

- Limited Recruitment Beyond Oregon - that OSU's basketball team remained all white may have been a reflection of Oregon's small black population. However, some recruitment occurred in California.
- Few Staff Dedicated to Recruitment – staff relied primarily on recommendations from high school coaches and OSU alumni for leads on new recruits.
- Jimmy Anderson, who played for Gill and then served as freshman coach and later assistant coach, stated that “Gill did not really like to go outside the State of Oregon to recruit new players.” Anderson also went on to note that during the 1950s there was no such thing as “professional scouts.”

Recruitment Practices, 1960s

- Basketball scouting developed into a profession in the early 1960s.
- OSU administrators in the 1960s cited numerous efforts to recruit black players. Athletic news director Johnny Eggers pointed to several recruiting targets “over the last decade.” This included, but was not limited to:
 - Paul Lowe, who played on the freshman team in 1955 before dropping “at his own choice.”
 - Glenn Moore, who went to the University of Oregon.
- While we were unable to locate records of OSU’s recruiting efforts in this period and could therefore not confirm Eggers’s claims, several players and assistant coaches who worked with Gill recalled numerous efforts to recruit black players.
- Jimmy Anderson recalled Gill’s effort to recruit several black athletes. He also remembered Gill responding positively to Anderson’s ideas about how to reach a broader talent pool, including subscribing to local California newspapers, in an effort to reach black players.

OSU's First Black Players on the Men's Basketball Team and Gill's Successor

- Norm Monroe, an OSU track and field star, and the first black walk-on player during the 1960-1961 season; he only played a few games early in the season.
- Charlie White, first black player recruited on scholarship and later assistant to the freshman coach to Paul Valenti, 1964-1967.
- Paul Valenti, played for Gill as an OSU undergrad, was Freshman Basketball Coach, 1948-1964, and OSU Basketball Head Coach, 1964-1970.

Why did black basketball players not want to come to OSU?

- What was the racial climate in Corvallis and OSU during the 1960s?
- Would black basketball players have been treated fairly?
- What was the recruitment experience like for black players?

What was the racial climate in Corvallis and OSU during the 1960s?

- Dr. Donald Megale, who coached high school basketball in Klamath Falls in the 1960s, recalled Gill's substantial effort to recruit a star player, Glenn Moore, and attributed Moore's decision to attend the University of Oregon to "an influential black Duck alum from Eugene" who "convinced Moore that he would be happier in a larger town with a black population."
- Both Charlie White and Norm Monroe described feeling isolated and facing consistent racism and hostility at OSU and in Corvallis.
- As Megale's statement suggests, and as Monroe and White described, black players may have been hesitant to attend OSU because they would be one of very few black students and because Corvallis lacked a substantial black population.

Would black players have been treated fairly?

- Interviews with Charlie White and Paul Valenti suggested that rumors about Gill being a racist circulated among coaches and players, and Valenti mentioned Gill having “a reputation of being a racist,” which Valenti called “unfair.”
- Second-hand accounts both support and deny rumors that Gill held exclusionary views.
- When Gill’s team lost to University of San Francisco in the 1955 NCAA championships, Gill praised the team and singled out Bill Russell, the team’s star player, who was black, as the “key difference between the two teams.” Gill went on to highly praise Russell's style of offensive play and the positive ways he rallied his team to defeat the Beavers.

What was the recruitment experience like for black players?

- Charlie White's recollections about Gill were not positive, but it is unclear if that uneasiness related specifically to race.
- White remembers Gill's recruitment meeting, but chose not to attend and play for OSU while Gill was coach; White attributes his decision to attend OSU due to Valenti's new role as head coach and Valenti's commitment to his academic success.
- Numerous other players and colleagues have reported that Gill was not a warm person. Former players report that he was quite strict and demanded a great deal from his players both on and off the court.

Gill's Departure from Coaching and Appointment as Athletic Director in 1964

- February 1963 - Lent's accusation
- January 1964 - OSU president James Jensen announced that Gill would become Athletic Director beginning July 1, 1964. At the same time, Gill announced he would step down as basketball coach at the end of the season.
- It is impossible to determine whether Gill's retirement from coaching was voluntary due to his deteriorating health, or whether administrators encouraged it as a convenient way to move Gill out of coaching.

Summary

- There is no direct evidence that Amory T. “Slats” Gill deliberately kept OSU’s basketball team segregated.
- There is no direct evidence that Gill made derogatory statements about black players on the OSU basketball team.
- Second-hand accounts both support and deny rumors that Gill held exclusionary views.
- The OSU basketball team began integrating under Paul Valenti’s leadership as head coach.

What happens next?

- Workshop plan
 - Intentions of RESPECT
 - Table introductions
 - Facilitated table conversations and gathering input

Intentions of RESPECT

- Intentions of RESPECT
 - Recognize your communication style
 - Examine your own perceptions and assumptions
 - Speak from your own experiences
 - Participate honestly / Pass openly
 - Engage in the learning process
 - Consider confidentiality, seek curiosity
 - Take responsibility for your actions

Table introductions

- Introduce yourself and why you came to this workshop today
- Note your community affiliation on sign-in sheet for purposes of evaluation only

Dialogue Session

- Facilitators at your tables will lead you in a dialogue
- Remaining time is allotted for dialogue
- You can also provide input on comments cards

Closing

- Note-takers will summarize input and it will be considered in evaluation
- More information and full schedule available at:
 - <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/building-and-place-names>