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Coach Randy Bennett and team after his 500th win at Saint Mary's.

Photos SMC Athletics/Tod Fierner

SMC celebrates Randy Bennett's 500th win and big Gonzaga victory

By Jon Kingdon

Saint Mary's and Coach Randy Bennett had a very successful week, starting Feb. 2 when the Gaels defeated the University of San Francisco for Coach Bennett's 500th career victory at Saint Mary's. Two days later, Saint Mary's defeated the 12th ranked Gonzaga Bulldogs 78-70 in overtime for his 501st win in front of a deafeningly loud sellout crowd at University Credit Union Pavilion.

After the Gonzaga game, Bennett was asked which victory he would remember the longest. Bennett didn't hesitate. "501 for sure," Bennett said. "We've won a lot of big games, but I don't know if I've been a part of a game that was more special than tonight with the atmosphere, the environment and quality of

the two teams. It was fun to be part of."

Bennett, while reflecting on the Gonzaga win, then took the long-term perspective in ranking this win. "It's up there at the top because of the magnitude of the game. Gonzaga's having a great year and we are having a really good year and when you put that crowd on top of that, it was just an incredible basketball game because Gonzaga is Gonzaga."

This was a far from an easy victory for the Gaels, who trailed for almost the entire game. Saint Mary's was fortunate to be only trailing 32-24 at the half having connected on only 34% (11-32) of their shots, while Gonzaga was hitting 48% (12-25) of their shots.

At one point in the second half, Saint Mary's starting guards Logan Johnson (2-12) and Aidan Mahaney (1-10) shot a combined 3 for 32. Johnson would

eventually finish with 12 points before fouling out with 4:51 left in the second half. After scoring only two points in the first half, Mahaney finished the game with 18 points and late in the game he was responsible for 19 of Saint Mary's 21 points, either scoring or being credited with assists.

Despite the lack of offensive output in the first half, Bennett credited the other strengths of the team in keeping the score manageable. "We were bad offensively in the first half," Bennett said. "Our defense and rebounding kept us in the game. We rarely turned the ball over and did a good job in not allowing them to transition from defense to offense."

It's a style that Bennett uses all the time, not just against Gonzaga. "It's just how we play," Bennett said.

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LPIE launches transformational \$12M endowment campaign



Danielle Silvani Gallagher on stage with Bret and Karen Taylor and Tom and Karen Mulvaney Photo Jeff Heyman

By Jennifer Wake

Lafayette Partners in Education (LPIE) – which for more than four decades has provided critical funding to Lafayette's six public schools – welcomed students,

family, friends and dignitaries Feb. 10 to Lafayette Plaza Park for a celebration that included food trucks, live music, games and activities and featured a special announcement regarding its groundbreaking endowment campaign, which seeks

to invest in a stable, secure, and self-sustaining source of funding that will benefit generations of students.

LPIE's Executive Director Elizabeth Horpedahl said, "Our public schools need a long-term solution to the incon-

sistent funding provided by the state. The endowment will serve as a permanent fund to enhance and stabilize the long-term growth of LPIE's annual contribution to the Lafayette School District and Acalanes High School. This is our generation's chance to make a lasting impact and to be an example of innovation and sustainability for community education foundations."

"This is a historic moment for Lafayette," said Lafayette School District Superintendent Brent Stephens. "A transformational endowment ensures that LPIE's impact continues to allow us to nurture every student, in all grades and in all stages of their educational experiences."

Through tremendous early philanthropic support, LPIE has secured \$8.7 million toward its \$12 million goal. LPIE thanked the more than 40 donor families representing current parents, alumni families, community members, future parents, and individuals across generations who have laid this inspiring foundation, with special thanks to Bret and

Karen Taylor and Tom and Karen Mulvaney, who have committed extraordinary cornerstone gifts of \$5 million and \$1 million, respectively, demonstrating their belief in public education and local schools. "Karen and I are so excited to support this endowment and close the funding gap to get students the education they deserve," Bret Taylor said.

Citing no true safety net, with the unreliability and inconsistency of state funding, Tom Mulvaney said there needs to be a more permanent solution.

Thanking all the generous donors, Danielle Silvani Gallagher, current parent, alumni, and Campaign Co-Chair with Tom Mulvaney, said, "There is still much to be done and we hope others will be inspired to join the effort. This is about more than the dollars raised, it is about coming together to put our names behind this lasting legacy!"

To learn more about LPIE and the endowment, email Horpedahl at elizabeth@lpie.org or (925) 299-1644 or visit LPIE.org/endowment.

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