

gila gram

EASTERN ARIZONA COLLEGE

EAC Men's Basketball Team Visits Chinle

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EAC Men's Basketball Team Visits Chinle

To kick off the 2022/23 season, the EAC Men's Basketball team traveled to the Wildcat Den in Chinle, Arizona, to "host" the College of Southern Nevada. Billed primarily as a recruiting visit, the day-long event additionally offered EAC President Todd Haynie and other College dignitaries an opportunity to acknowledge the proud tradition of Navajo Nation students attending Eastern Arizona College as well as recognize the many alumni in attendance at the game.



Adding to the festivities was the unexpected visit by Dr. Buu Nygren, who made his first official appearance as the newly elected president of the Navajo Nation at halftime, where he delivered an inspirational message to the crowd that focused on education and the need for improved infrastructure in their communities.

"We are honored that President Nygren chose EAC's basketball game as his first official appearance," said President Haynie. "Our team received such a warm and enthusiastic welcome during their visit and we look forward to working with President Nygren and area schools for many years to come."

The night of basketball opened with Chinle High School boys and girls playing intra-team games. The Gila Monsters then hit the floor to take on the College of Southern Nevada, which turned into a nail biter that EAC ultimately won, 81-80.

"It was an amazing opportunity to play in front of this crowd in such a high-quality arena," said Cameron Turner, EAC head men's basketball coach. "With 10 seconds to go, the habits we created in practice pulled us through to the end."



The game was announced by local sports celebrity, L.A. Williams, who is the voice of the Phoenix Suns on the Navajo Nation.

During their visit to Chinle, the team toured elementary schools in Many Farms and Tsaile to talk about bullying and the importance of staying in school. The young students cheered and held welcome signs for the Monsters as they entered the gymnasiums. At one assembly, the students rushed the court in their excitement to meet the team. Later in the day, an assembly was held with Chinle's junior high and high school students about the importance of getting an education. EAC's cheer team also met with students trying out to cheer for winter sports.

The Gila Monster basketball team – comprised of athletes from several states and countries, including Australia and the Netherlands – also learned about Navajo history and culture while touring Canyon de Chelly National Monument the day following the game.

"This was an experience our athletes will never forget," said Haynie. "They were privileged to learn first-hand about the Navajo's sacred beliefs and the extraordinary importance of the canyons. The young students at the local schools truly touched our athletes' hearts and will help them become better role models for the rest of their lives."



EAC Homecoming Welcomes

Volleyball Alumni



EAC Homecoming lived up to its name in 2022 as all volleyball alumni who played for coaches Jerry Hekeia and Shari Kay were invited back for a weekend reunion that saw over 100 participants return for the fun and festivities.

A Homecoming parade that began at Mark Allen Hall and continued down Stadium Avenue to John Mickelson Stadium kicked off events on the morning of October 29. A hamburger cookout followed that afternoon outside of Guitteau Gymnasium as a prelude to the volleyball game against Arizona Western. Reunion attendees filled an entire section of the stands as they cheered on the 2022 Lady Monsters. Following the game, alumni then had their own chance to get in on the action as the gym was opened up to any who wanted to play pickup matches with other attendees while both Coach Kay and Coach Hekeia looked on.



That evening, a special dinner was held in honor of both coaches as well as all of the returning alumni. Both coaches' families were also in attendance. Coach Hekeia spoke to the group first, followed by Coach Kay, and then the floor opened up for any and all who wanted to share fun or touching memories. A great deal of laughter was accompanied by a few tears as person after person rose to speak. Following the dinner, attendees were invited to attend the EAC Fall Sing presentation that evening as a continuation of the Homecoming calendar of events.



MONSTER

Alicia Lechtenberger '94, recently received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Nevada Las Vegas, on Dec. 19, 2022. Dr. Lechtenberger was awarded her degree during the Fall 2022 commencement ceremony held at the Thomas and Mack Arena on the UNLV campus. Lechtenberger's original research covered the topic of sales competencies, and the impact competencies have on customer satisfaction and account profitability. Her research was conducted in the William F. Harrah College of Hospitality as part of the requirements for the degree. Currently, Dr. Lechtenberger lives in Las Vegas with her two sons, Jordan and Peyton. She is also



Alicia Lechtenberger '94

employed full-time at International Gaming Technology (IGT) in Las Vegas, Nevada, where she manages corporate casino accounts. IGT contributed to her tuition and assisted by providing a customer database for surveys needed to complete the research. Dr. Lechtenberger plans to expand her research into gender studies and is currently teaching part-time at her new alma mater, the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

Following his graduation from Eastern Arizona College, **Derrick Maultsby '14** attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff to continue his football career. However, following an injury he medically retired from football and ultimately received his bachelor's degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated magna cum laude. Derrick then received his law degree from Duquesne University School of Law. As a practicing attorney in the Pittsburgh office of Frost Brown Todd LLP, Derrick has been named to Pittsburgh's 30 under 30, the Legal Intelligencer's Lawyers on the



Derrick Maultsby '14

Fast Track, and a Trailblazer in the Law by American Lawyer Magazine. Recently Derrick received the Young Alumni Award from Indiana University of Pennsylvania for his professional and community efforts. Derrick and Indiana University of Pennsylvania recently launched the Maultsby Diversity in the Law Scholarship with the goal of increasing the number of black attorneys in the United States.

Dr. Kaleb Valdez, '10 is grateful for the values he learned from his grandfather, former EAC instructor and Dean of Instruction, Ron Keith,

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615 N. Stadium Ave.
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or by e-mail at: alumni@eac.edu

ALUMNOTES

especially the value of seeking an education. It was this core belief that initially led him to attend Eastern Arizona College.

During his time at EAC, Kaleb earned two degrees: one in foreign languages and the other in business administration. He then went on to complete his bachelor's degree at BYU-Hawaii, and at the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. His time spent in Jerusalem laid the foundation for his lifelong interest in Middle Eastern culture. He also has had the opportunity to participate in archaeological excavations around the world, including the Temple Mount at Jerusalem.

In 2018, Kaleb completed his doctorate in chiropractic with an interest primarily in pregnancy and pediatric neurology. Armed with his education and experience, he launched a clinic in Dallas/Ft. Worth that functioned as a teaching program for other chiropractors. He also had the opportunity to



Dr. Kaleb Valdez

teach seminars internationally for a number of years.

In 2020, Kaleb returned to Thatcher to serve as the Gila Valley's "baby chiropractor." He was also inspired to write a book on the national infant formula crisis, birth interventions, and their effects on breastfeeding and postpartum outcomes. The book became a best-seller in six categories, including pregnancy, infant parenting, and breastfeeding. He is now a speaker and consultant

on what he calls "connected birth," and in supporting mothers in their choice regarding birthing and feeding their babies.

Dr. Valdez currently sits on the board of directors for two non-profit organizations: Bridle Up Hope, an equine therapy group he helped to organize in 2012, and Reach Out Cambodia, which supports children's homes and education initiatives in Southeast Asia. He has worked with farmers in Western Africa to end child labor in the Ivory Coast, rescuing 900 children from the cacao plantations through an organization called WellAfrica, and empowering Congolese entrepreneurs with his efforts in Congo Entraide. He also helped found The Tuvalu Project, an education and healthcare initiative to help the sinking island nation in the South Pacific. He recently relocated to South Jordan, Utah, where he resides with his best friend and their dog, Alta.



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 Dale P. Earven, '71 – July 31, 2022
 John S. Beamon, '79 – August 2, 2022
 Cherita J. Williams, '12 – August 9, 2022
 David P. Shaw, '85 – August 10, 2022
 Edward M. Claridge, '56 – August 10, 2022
 Edward "Ed" B. Maloy, '73 – August 12, 2022
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Pictured: Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and EAC President Todd Haynie in the Chinle Wildcat Den