

## National Champion, Wall of Famer Hall Credits Mom, Campbell Family for Early Success



### *What are the odds? ....*

... that out of 4,530 Division 2 basketball players that donned a uniform during the 2011-2012 season only 15 could claim that they won a national championship (for those of you who love math, that's .003 percent!)? The way it turned out for Campbell Wall of Famer Brittany Hall from the class of 2007 and

Clayton State, being included in that statistic was one that could not be imagined when she began to play basketball as a youngster in Smyrna.

### *How it happened.*

“My family got me interested in playing basketball,” said Brittany. “I have a family full of athletes. Just being around it all the time with my family and friends, we played all the time and I just picked it up from there. I began playing organized basketball at an early age. I started when I was 6 playing in the SAA league. I played every year and enjoyed it. My mom supported me. She came to every practice, every game. If it wasn’t for her I would not have played basketball. Someone had to take me and pick me up. A lot of kids do not have a parent who would stay and support them during practices and games. She did all of that.”

Yes she did. Brittany’s mother did the same thing for her older brother Brandon, who is now an Athletic Director in the Washington, D.C. area, but played under Coach Gwyn with great success. From Campbell, he moved on to play at Corning Community College and then graduated from Towson University. Brittany also has cousins Monica and Tenea Mann who played alongside her in the program that she is still very close to.

“Coach Tony (Dunning), Coach Lowette (Swinton) and Coach Sherry (Spooney) all coached me throughout middle school,” said Brittany. “One thing that I learned from playing under Coach Tony was how to play hard. His yelling pushed me to play harder and make the hustle plays. I didn’t want to get yelled at but I also wanted to be a good player, one of the best players. I got that work ethic from him and Coach McClure --- work hard all the time. I grew up in a run and gun pressing system in middle school, high school and in college. Because I started early I got used to it. Later on it became second nature to work hard and do my best.

“I have had great experiences with the Campbell coaches when I played in middle school. They sincerely care about you and want to help you grow as a player.”

“Brittany was an athlete that was hungry and that was mentally tough,” said Coach Dunning. “She had a great work ethic and I would like to say that I helped instill that but she came with that and she took that throughout her career to the point where she became a part of a national championship team. Those are the types of values that we like to instill, the Brittany Hall type of values. I have coached people who were more talented, but were not willing to give 100 percent to dominate.”

## *Moving Up and Higher, Yes Higher.*

When Brittany moved into high school she was a natural for the defense first style of longtime Coach Randy McClure. That style led to numerous region and state accolades and successes. But when the time for the next level came, her future was cloudy.



“I didn’t have many (college) choices coming out of high school,” said Brittany. “I got a chance to visit Johnson C. Smith, Southern Poly was interested in me, and of course Clayton State. Not many schools were interested in me even though I had a lot of accolades my junior and senior years. It could have been numerous reasons to why I was not highly recruited. But I am blessed to have received a full athletic scholarship and I will never regret the day that I signed with Clayton State.

“I graduated with a degree in Psychology and Human Services,” said Brittany. “When I first started college I wasn’t sure what exactly I wanted to major in. I tried a bunch of different courses to figure out which major would interest me the most, and it was psychology. I was really intrigued with how people’s minds functioned, why we react certain ways and do the things that we do. I also chose to major in psychology because in many ways it correlates with being a coach. Coaching is what I love to do but if I wasn’t coaching I would have probably would have gotten into school guidance counseling. I enjoy working with the youth and assisting with their development.

“I’ve had a very successful basketball career by being at that school. The program has been so good to me and I wouldn’t trade that for the world. How many people can say that they won a national championship? I really feel that it was meant for me to go to Clayton State. Even though I wasn’t highly recruited, I was at the place that God wanted me to be at. I am glad no one recruited me because if they did, I may not have won a national championship. We went to their summer camps every year (in high school) and the coach watched me every summer. He showed interest towards my junior year. I was just like any other high school student --- if it is a D2 school, you don’t really pay that



much attention. I got a couple letters from a few D1's but no real interest. It wasn't until my senior year that I woke up and decided to go out there on a visit and talked with the coaches about me joining the team."

The rest is history and these numbers speak for themselves. If you were fortunate enough to watch



those playoffs on national TV, you could see the intensity with which Brittany played as she put the team on her back defensively with relentless defensive pressure, round after round until the task was complete. The trip back to Clayton State with the trophy in hand finished with uncharacteristic joy as the normally stoic trophy clutching Hall and Clayton State attained the ultimate champion's dream!

### *The Future Is Now And Meaningful.*

Brittany has recently completed her first year as an assistant coach at Chowan University. The head coach there was good friends with one of her old coaches and was looking for an assistant after Brittany graduated.

"Networking is a key to your success and how far you can go. I thank God all the time. Not too many people can get a full time assistant position right after they graduate school.

"Coaching is not as easy as I thought it was going to be. There are a lot of things that go on behind the scenes. There are a lot of personalities and you have to adjust to how you interact with each one. Some players don't react the same as others so you have to approach each player differently. I have a long way to go with everything , but the kids get along with me pretty well.

And Her Strongest Message To The Players That She Coaches?

"(Passing along and teaching) My work ethic. When you coach, you want players to play exactly how you would play. That is just not possible sometimes. Everyone has their different style of play. As coaches, we can only enhance their abilities that they have now and not change them. But the one thing that I

would want them to change is how hard they work on the court each night. I am not perfect and I wasn't a perfect player but I worked my butt off almost every single night that I stepped on the floor. That is what I want them to take from me. Even when I go out there and workout with them I go hard at them because I want to push them to play harder. The hours and hard work that you put in are only going to go towards a positive outcome. Our group struggled with that at the beginning of the season but they are starting to get it. That is why I am looking forward to this upcoming season. I'm ready to get in the gym and started. I want them to know what success feels like. Being the best is a wonderful feeling but it takes a lot of hard work and dedication."

"I never knew how strongly I loved basketball until I got this job. If you don't love it you cannot put up with half of the things you put up with! I couldn't see myself doing anything else but coaching women's basketball."



### *What The Symbol Means.*

Now others have the privilege to reach back and grab memories of what they missed or can recall of Brittany's career as they take the time to marvel at the encased Jersey hanging above the concession stand at Wills gym. Brittany understands the feelings and the rationale behind this special accolade.

"It is kind of an unbelievable feeling. When I was in high school I always wanted to have my jersey retired. My uncle, Edward Hall's jersey is up there and I used to go and look at it all the time. I thought about the some of the great players that were there before me, such as Christy Lautsch, who went on to play a couple of years at Florida State. She was an amazing player. I used to think about some of the great players who hadn't gotten their jersey retired and that made me doubt if I would be able to achieve that accomplishment. I had second thoughts about myself ... 'Am I a good enough player for my jersey to be hung up there?'

"When it did happen it was actually an unbelievable feeling for me. A very humbling feeling. I didn't think it was going to happen and I didn't believe it when it was happening and he announced it to everyone. But when I look back at all the hard work that me and (Coach) Crystal (Davis) put in throughout the years, I guess you can say that it is well deserved. I applauded myself at the same time."

Did Brittany's quiet demeanor and team first philosophy work in her favor in high school and contribute to immortality at Campbell?

"I wasn't a perfect child but I tried not to get into any trouble. I wanted to set an example for those under me, especially since we were doing the Big Sister Little Sister program, I knew they were watching me at all times. I didn't want to leave a bad impression on them nor disappoint my mom or my family at the same time. Neither Crystal or myself never gave Coach McClure any problems about anything, so that could have been a bit of a deciding factor in the decision."

Good Job Brittany ... YOU beat the odds

