

Spring 2021 Newsletter

MBAC's Odd Couple: Jerry & Jerrell

Our odd couple is different than the pairing of Oscar Madison and Felix Unger seen in the movie and TV series. The odd thing about this couple is how they got together and how much they have in common. As they get to know each other, Jerry Fedele '75 and Jerrell Figueroa '16, are discovering that they have more things in common than they have differences.

Jerry attended Pitt-Greensburg from 1971 to 1973 when it was a two-year school. He received a scholarship to play basketball during those two years. Transferring to the Oakland campus, he graduated with a degree in mathematics. Jerrell Figueroa spent four years on campus and graduated with a BS in management. Although 40 years separate their college experiences, they have found common ground.

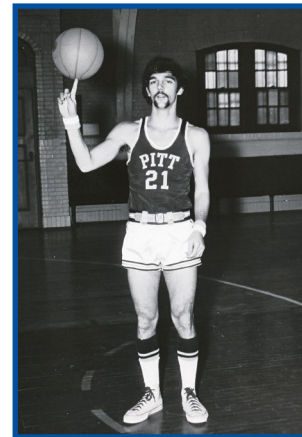
Jerry is working in retirement; Jerrell is working towards retirement. At opposite ends of their careers, Jerry sees many things in Jerrell that he looks for when hiring, and Jerrell admires Jerry's many accomplishments.

Reading like a volume of *Who's Who in America*, Jerry's resume includes Duquesne University Law School and Katz Graduate School of Business, where he received his MBA. As one of his accomplishments, he proudly lists "Regional Campus JV Basketball Scholarship Player." Jerry's work credits include the Dravo and Bayer Corporations, West Penn Allegheny Health System, Boca Raton Regional Hospital, and Blue Sea Capital. Although he already has an impressive resume, Jerrell is only beginning his career. He currently works for Century Support Services as a sales rep. He recently accepted a part-time position with USA Select, which is a company that is an international mentoring group for students who are either looking to play collegiate and professional basketball in the United States or wanting to connect with overseas teams.

Despite the differences in their ages and work experiences, they have many things in common. Both men had humble beginnings; Jerry's home was in Westmoreland County, and Jerrell's home was in York, PA. When each came to the University, they did not know how much of an impact Pitt-Greensburg would have on their lives.

Of the school's impact, Jerrell explains, "Pitt-Greensburg allowed me to become a student and get serious about learning. I appreciated the small size classes and the professors who took the time to help me learn. Being on the basketball team showed me the

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Top:
Jerrell
Figueroa &
Jerry Fedele
Middle:
Jerry Fedele
shows off his
skills.
Bottom:
Jerrell holds a
piece of net.



MBAC ODD COUPLE CONT.

the importance of teamwork, the importance of setting goals, and the importance of developing the work ethics to make your dreams come true.”

Jerry's sentiments about Pitt-Greensburg's impact on his life are similar to Jerrell's. Jerry boldly claims, "I think it was everything! Education has changed my life. I now serve on the boards of various scholarship committees, hoping I can give back what I received. I was given an opportunity to get an education and play the game I loved. I learned teamwork. I learned how to be part of something bigger than myself. I learned the importance of having a good work ethic. Over the years I have learned that you do not have to be the brightest person in the race, but you can be the winner if you are willing to out work the others in the race.”

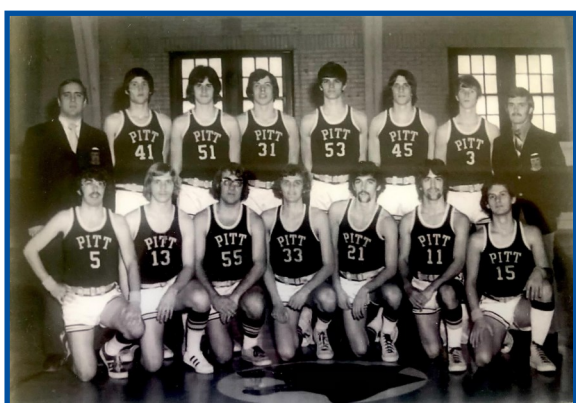


Jerrell in action.

As students, they played for the men's basketball team and are a part of the campus' athletics history. Jerry was part of the men's basketball team during the two-year era. Jerrell played point guard on the 2016 AMCC championship team, which was the first men's basketball team in Pitt-Greensburg history to qualify for the NCAA Division III Championship Tournament. As a player, Jerrell out worked his opponents and was dedicated to being the best player he could be.

Both men moved to Florida for better business opportunities. They both currently work in financial investment.

Jerry was joined in Florida by his wife Terry, whom he met while attending law school. Terry, a nurse, had a successful career too. The Fedeles now help with civic and educational fundraisers in Boca Raton. They have three children and celebrated their 40th anniversary in November 2020. Jerrell recently became engaged to Jordan Brody. They met in Pennsylvania, but are now living in Florida. Fortunately, his new job kept him close to Jordan and her family. Jerrell is enjoying the new climate, and he took advantage of it when he proposed to Jordan on the beach in front of their families.



Jerry (bottom row, fifth from left) and teammates.

When fellow MBAC member Harry Bowser learned Jerrell was moving to Boca Raton, he connected him with Jerry. They planned to meet in March 2020, but the meeting was delayed until December 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At first, Jerrell was nervous about meeting Jerry as he was

familiar with Jerry's successes. Jerry quickly put Jerrell at ease, and in no time they were conversing about their experiences at Pitt-Greensburg. They also discovered some other connections. Jerrell's fiancée's father Dr. Michael Brody had worked in the Boca Raton Health System with Jerry. Dr. Brody and his wife Susan are not only professional acquaintances, but personal friends of the Fedeles. Jerrell's fiancé is employed by the Lynn Cancer Institute, a non-profit organization, which is also part of the Boca Raton Health System.

"Jerry is just an average guy like us. He really liked Pitt-Greensburg as much as we did," Jerrell says of his meeting with Jerry.

"That is one of the nicest compliments that anyone could have given me. All during my career I have tried to show all people around me they are important to me, no matter what occupation they held," Jerry adds in reply to Jerrell.

On paper, Jerry and Jerrell's differences in age and experience may make them an odd couple, but in reality, their differences did not matter once they came together and found out how much they had in common besides Pitt-Greensburg. Their experience highlights the MBAC's main goal, which is to bring basketball alumni together to share their common experiences and show their pride in Pitt-Greensburg. This odd couple does that quite well and makes us proud.

MEET THE NEW PLAYERS

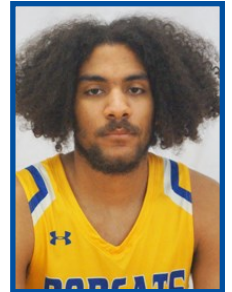


Freshman Will Butler hails from Euclid, Ohio, where he played for Villa Angela St. Joseph High School in nearby Cleveland. He led his high school team to the state championship twice, was his high school team's captain, was selected First Team All-Conference, and was chosen second team All-State Tournament.

Believing Pitt-Greensburg will give him the tools for success, he plans to major in management and pursue a business career. He would also like to coach. Will hopes to win while he is at Pitt-Greensburg. His size, shooting ability, and ability to see the whole court and pass to the open man will help the team. Will's goal is to graduate and build positive relationships with those that he meets on campus.

Jeremiah Crockett comes to Pitt-Greensburg from Altoona Area High School in Altoona, PA. During his senior year, Jeremiah's high school won the District VI Championship for the first time in six years.

Jeremiah chose Pitt-Greensburg, in part, because he was impressed with Coach Brody Jackson's ability to create a family atmosphere for his players. Jeremiah is known for his tremendous work ethic and non-stop energy. An accounting major, he is preparing for a career as a certified public accountant. With his strong work ethic and positive attitude, he hopes to serve as a role model on campus for the other students and athletes.

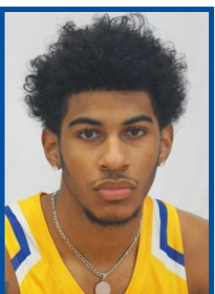


Freshman Mike Gaffney attended Hempfield High School in Greensburg. He was a three-year letter winner for the Spartans. A class officer and honor roll student, he was elected "Mr. Hempfield." His fondest memory was defeating his high-school rival twice in one season.

Playing basketball since third grade, he chose Pitt-Greensburg because Coach Brody Jackson made him feel like he was part of the Bobcat family. Mike hopes his time on campus will allow him to grow and develop the skills and knowledge to give back to his community after graduation. Off the court, he aspires to go into business and sales. On the court, he wants to see his team win a championship ring.

Octavius Hardy comes to us from Euclid, Ohio, where he split his high-school career between St. Edwards and Euclid High School. His high-school career culminated in a district championship.

Having taken a short break from basketball, he sees playing for Pitt-Greensburg as an opportunity to start over. His best asset is being a team player and working toward the team's goals. He is quick to point out all of the support he has received on campus with the many issues that can come with transitioning from high school to college. He is looking forward to having a regular-season schedule and working with his teammates and coaches.



Micha Jones is a forward, who comes to Pitt-Greensburg from the Washington, D.C. area where he played at McKinley Tech. During his senior year, his team compiled a record of 25-6, and he was named his team's Most Improved Player.

Micha immediately bonded with Coach Brody Jackson and is looking forward to being the best player and teammate that he can be. Micha's goals are to be equally successful in the classroom and on the court. He loves interacting with young people. During his senior year of high school, he started a mentorship program, in which he counseled younger students and athletes. In addition to his love for basketball, he has an interest in fashion and has started his own clothing brand.

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MEET THE NEW PLAYERS CONT.



Lukas Swartz is from Mogadore High School in Ohio where he was a four-year letterman, an honor roll student, and a three-time Portage Trail Conference (PTC) League Player of the Year. During this time, he was part of team which won three league titles and a district championship. He comes from a long family tradition of athletes at Mogadore; his uncles and father played there, and his father was a coach.

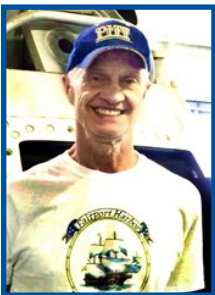
Leaving all of that support and familiarity behind to come to Pitt-Greensburg admittedly took a bit of adjustment, but Lukas has settled in nicely. His academic strengths are English and history. Although undecided, he is leaning towards a communications degree. Practicing is important to him because he hopes to replicate some of the success he earned and enjoyed in high school.

Jaylen Williams has taken a round about route to get to Pitt-Greensburg. The freshman comes to us by way of Minnesota, Denver, Colorado, and Florida. Despite only playing one year at Stanley Lake High School in Colorado, he opened a few eyes with his athletic ability and was rewarded with the "Most Improved Player Award."

It was Coach Brody Jackson who developed Jaylen's interest in Pitt-Greensburg. Jaylen who instantly felt that the University was a good fit for him, was impressed with Coach Jackson's respect for people and his positive family values. He will be studying criminal justice, and he plans to work in the legal field after graduation. He brings with him a quickness, a special jumping ability, and a never-ending supply of energy.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW: AL SKRABSKI '73



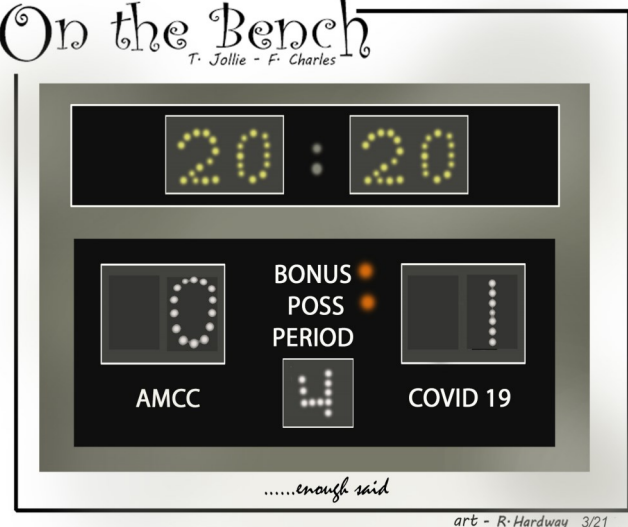
Anyone who knows the history of Pitt-Greensburg Basketball will know Al "Scrapper" Skrabski. The '69 South Huntingdon Eagle star was a member of the Panthers, Pitt-Greensburg's first official team from 1966-1970. He was a force to be reckoned with at 6'4" and 200 lbs. A team captain, he played pivot and played it very well at both ends of the court averaging 20 points with a game high of 33 points, and 19 rebounds with a game high of 35. He was a complete ball player, a living highlight reel.

Al won more than basketball honors at the campus; he also won the heart of Cindy Short '73, who was studying to be a physical therapist. After graduation, the couple married. They welcomed their son Alex into the world in 1993.

He transferred to the Oakland campus and graduated with a BS in chemical engineering in 1973. He later earned an MBA from John Carroll University. His career included time with DuPont Corp. in Indiana and West Virginia as well as time with the Ferro Corporation in northern Ohio, where he worked as a production manager. Now retired, he and Cindy reside in Mentor, Ohio, and are doing well.

On the Bench

T. Jollie - F. Charles



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED
WITH OR OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
MBAC,

PLEASE CONTACT HARRY BOWSER

AT HARRYB@ZOOMINTERNET.NET.

COACH'S CORNER



The Bobcats are playing in March!

We got to play basketball again against our rivals, Penn State Behrend, on March 6, 2021. It was 372 days since we last played against them in the AMCC tournament. There are different faces and a lot of different circumstances, but we are excited for the opportunity.

We will have seven players that have never played a game for Pitt-Greensburg before. They have potential to be very special. I have no idea how they will play. This season will not result in any championships for us, but will serve as a strong foundation to the future success in this program. It will be fun to watch us grow over the next few weeks.

This season will help us with the opportunity to play deep in March next year.

We continue to appreciate all of your support. It will be different not having you at games this year. It will even be weird not to hear my father on the live broadcast yell at me and the officials. We still hope you guys can catch some of our action this year. Go Bobcats!

All games will be broadcast live, but will all be subject to change during this crazy time. Check out the Bobcats play:

- **Mt. Aloysius**, Wednesday, March 17 at 7 p.m.
- **Carnegie Mellon**, Saturday, March 20 at 4:30 p.m.
- **Carnegie Mellon**, Sunday, March 21 at 2 p.m.

THE VIEW FROM UP HERE: A REFLECTION OF THE '20-'21 SEASON

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last March, normalcy has been a bit of a rare commodity. Even now, I am writing this while cooped up in my apartment, the place where I spend most of my time these days. Despite these challenging times, one thing that all of us can be happy about has started — a basketball season. Although shortened, the season is underway at Pitt-Greensburg. And while the team may look a little different than it did a year ago, this year's Bobcats won't be making excuses.

The Pitt-Greensburg men's basketball team will play a shortened, six-game season, which started on March 6 against Penn State Behrend. Despite the season only lasting through March 21, there is certainly no lack of motivation from the team. I spoke with senior guard Cam Seigfried about playing a condensed season.

"The short season does not affect our mentality. The goal was and is to win. We've started to build a winning culture here, and we plan on expanding on that this year and into the future," Seigfried explained about the team's attitude toward the changes to the season.

It isn't just the schedule that will look much different for Pitt-Greensburg this year either. The roster has seen a big turnover with just five players returning from last season and eight newcomers joining the mix. Seigfried also shared insight into the roster change.

"This year has been difficult for the new guys to get into a routine. College is all about meeting people, socializing and networking, and all of that can be difficult with COVID. However, I think the new guys have handled it well." Seigfried tells me.

At the end of the day, the wins and losses might not feel quite as crucial this year as they have in the past, but that doesn't mean that the approach will be any different for this year's team. Those wins and losses also won't be the only thing this team takes away from this season, at least not for Seigfried.

"I think the past year has really taught us all to not take anything for granted. This season I will especially cherish the time that I get to spend with my teammates playing the game we love. That is what I look forward to the most," Seigfried concludes.

