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The Corbin-Furman connection

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The Corbin-Furman connection

FRANK SELVY ’54 (above, left) is the most storied name in Furman basketball history. Jerry Smith ’63 is not far behind.

But other than their accomplishments on the hardwood, their memberships in the Furman Athletic Hall of Fame and their retired jerseys that hang in the rafters of Timmons Arena, what do they have in common? At least two more things: Both are from Corbin, Ky. And both are featured in a new book, The Boys from Corbin: America’s Greatest Little Sports Town (Acclaim Press), which recounts the stories of a host of athletic stars who came from the little town in the Kentucky hills. “It’s not just a sports book,” author Gary West has said. “It’s about a community and how families banded together.”

The Corbin-Furman connection plays a prominent role in the book. The story of the Selvy clan starts with Frank, the only player to score 100 points in an NCAA Division I basketball game and, in West’s view, “the man who put Corbin on the map.” The university’s all-time leading scorer with an average of 32.5 points per game, Selvy went on to play in the National Basketball Association for nine years, then returned to Furman to succeed Lyles Alley as basketball coach. Several of his brothers would follow him to Furman, either as players (David ’65 and Curly ’71) or as a coach (Marvin).

Smith arrived at Furman almost a decade after Selvy and made his mark as a three-time all-Southern Conference player who averaged 23.3 points per game for his career. He is the school’s fifth all-time leading scorer and was drafted by the Detroit Pistons of the NBA.

Smith and the Selvy boys are featured in photographs on the book’s back cover. West, a freelance writer and former newspaper reporter, lives in Bowling Green, Ky., and has written seven books about various aspects of life in his home state.

The book was released April 13 with a well-attended signing and other events in Corbin.

Smith and much of the Selvy family were on hand for the unveiling.