

Lisa Nelson Court

How the court dedication to Lisa Nelson happened and what it meant to some of the people closest to her.

Jack Aulsen

jack.auslen@rvhsnews.com | Sports Reporter

There have been bigger games on the volleyball schedule, but there has not been a bigger event than the court dedication held to honor former volleyball coach, Mrs. Lisa Nelson this past Aug. 29.

It was an emotional event that touched the hearts of many family members, friends, players, and Ralston Valley students and staff deeply. And it was an event that will forever have Nelson's name attached to the hardwood court in the Ralston Valley gymnasium.

The ceremony began with both Mr. Jim Hynes and Mr. Jim Ellis giving beautiful and elaborate speeches describing coach Nelson's impact on the lives of so many of her players, students, co-workers, and everyone else that came into her life.

They described how Coach Nelson was a one of a kind person who instantly impacted the lives of those she came in contact.

After Hynes and Ellis described Nelson's impact on the world surrounding her, they described the reason for the court dedication to her.

They described the extent and severity of what her illness was, and how dedicating the court to in Nelson's honor was a way of recognizing such an amazing woman, and a way of helping her legacy live.

Hynes and Ellis stated that Nelson's

legacy will live on through those people that she influenced. They stated how the only real way Nelson will be remembered is through our memories of her and through our words.

Additionally, in 30 years, when kids ask why the court is named for Lisa Nelson, the staff still remaining at the school will be able to describe her amazing spirit and her remarkable character.

Hynes and Ellis finished their wonderfully put together speeches and then Coach Nelson's daughter, Whitney Nelson, her husband, Paul Nelson, and the rest of her family that was present at the varsity game against Thunder Ridge. Once they were on the court there were several hugs given and several pictures taken. After all of this occurred Coach Nelson's husband was able to say some words about how he felt and how much this meant to his entire family.

Once this was over, Mr. Ellis exclaimed, "This court has officially dedicated to Coach Lisa Nelson!" It was an emotional time for those who were on the court, knowing that Coach Nelson's legacy was going to live on throughout the school and through everyone that will visit that court.

After Paul Nelson gave his touching remarks about the school and the court and what it has all meant to his family of the years, and Mr. Ellis officially

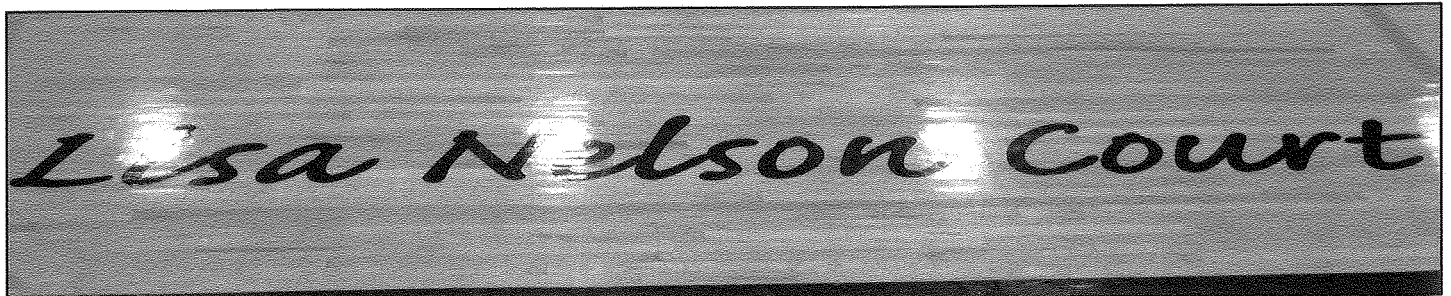
dedicated the court as Lisa Nelson Court, the crowd respectfully clapped. It seemed as though the fans as a whole were still processing the words that had just been spoken and they truly meant.

Even though the visiting fans had never met coach Nelson, they too applauded, as though they had also lost a dear friend.

"It felt incredible knowing her memory will live on, once that I will cherish forever." Paul Nelson stated.

The Varsity players then began to walk over one-by-one, handing Whitney Nelson, Coach Nelson's daughter, roses, to show their support for the Nelson family but also their feelings about their former coach, that she wasn't just a coach; she was also a great mentor and friend. As the players walked back to the place they were standing, I noticed a few wiping tears from their eyes, knowing that this court will always represent something much bigger than volleyball, it will represent Coach Lisa Nelson.

When Paul Nelson was asked how he believes that Lisa Nelson will be remembered he said, "She will always be remembered for the type of person she was. She was someone who was extremely happy and someone who always gave herself freely. She treated people with respect. She loved life, her family, her students, her athletes and her colleagues. She was an incredible lady." ❧



After her passing, the school inscribed Coach Nelson's name into the volleyball court. The court was dedicated to her memory prior to a game this season. *Photo by Lexi Hempelman*