

THE SHORT RISE AND FALL OF ALBANY LAW INTERCOLLEGIATE BASKETBALL

In their brief heyday they beat teams like Manhattan College, Tufts University, Fordham Law and Boston University (21-20). In their first and greatest year, they won 10 and lost four, trouncing St. John's College 41-21, and defeating University of Vermont 23-19.

The season was 1921-1922, when law schools, as an undergraduate program, had the usual undergraduate frills of frats, dances and intercollegiate sports. Albany Law's opening season earned a large enough reputation to draw power teams the following year like University of Detroit and the UConn "Aggies," finishing that second season with eight wins and seven losses.

During these early seasons a freshman team competed with area high schools and served as a feeder system for the senior "Law" men.

The team collapsed for the next two seasons, finishing 5 wins-18 losses and 3 wins-9 losses. While the line-up suffered the typical losses of a college team—primarily loss of graduates and academic ineligibility—the real problem came when the city of Albany's school board voted to close its



1921-22 LAW Men

gym to the "Lawyers" halfway through the '22-'23 season. The team moved to the National Guard Armory.

Things went from bad to worst when the team could not practice in the Armory unless it agreed to recruit students for the National Guard. Declining, the team drilled and scrimmaged on a tiny court in the YMCA. These cramped conditions prepared the players poorly for the Armory's big court, leading to even bigger losses. Springfield, Queens, Hamilton and Union College (who Albany Law never seemed to beat) all crushed Albany Law by at least a 10-point spread in each 40-minute game (equivalent to at least a 20-point spread in today's terms). After a six-year break, the anticipation of the new 1928 building with a full gym revived excitement for a basketball program. A season

resumed before the building was finished, using Albany College of Pharmacy's court. That year the "Law" men won one of 10 games, beating, ironically, only ACP.

The next year, with a gym of its very own, Albany Law went 6-3, winning the last five in a row, including beating RPI at the end after losing to them in the season opener. The year ended with a game against a collection of Albany Law alumni players, the older squad losing 43-31.

Before the start of the 1930-31 season, the school's athletic council moved to end the basketball



Coach Martin
"Marty" Barry, '22

season, but the student body voted to keep the season. This turned into the school's final year, ending with a 4-4 record.

Coach Barry remembered

Under coach Martin "Marty" Barry '22 Albany Law beat St. John's College, Fordham Law, Manhattan College and Tufts during the 1920-1921 season.

Barry coached the Albany Lawyers for the first two seasons, putting the school on the national basketball map for the first and only time. Unable to play because of his career with the State Teacher's College, the Troy High School star gave his time every night to build the winning team from "material well nigh raw."

The Albany Law Cheer

While women attended Albany Law in 1921, cheerleading was strictly a man's game. The standard cheer at the time, led by Ely Koplovitz—voted "one of the best liked men" in the class of 1921—went like this:

**ALBANY LAW!
ALBANY LAW!
RAH RAH RAH RAH
A-L-B-A-N-Y
ALBANY LAW!
ALBANY LAW!
TEAM-TEAM-TEAM!**