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### Sheridan Coliseum: Newsletter, Memories of Sheridan

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## MEMORIES OF SHERIDAN

The basketball teams that roamed the hardwoods of Sheridan Coliseum over the years provided many memorable moments for fans--some joyous, some disheartening. That is expected on a basketball court. But there were other performers who provided moments to remember. Some were well-known and showed their true stature by performing without comment under less-than-ideal conditions. Others became nationally known after playing on the Fort Hays Campus.

There was the opportunity to watch the skilled flying fingers of Jose Iturbi the evening he and his sister filled the building to listen to their piano magic. Van Cliburn was another well-known pianist who filled the room with pleasant music and absentmindedly replayed part of a number. On a December 7th afternoon, a Japanese band played the Star Spangled Banner and followed it with their own national anthem and an excellent concert. One forgot Julie Harris was a middle-aged woman the night she played "Hamlet" on the Sheridan stage.

There were times the sound system did not function properly. Baritone William Warfield did not need one. Another embarrassing moment was when a ballet company arose from the undusted stage with their beautiful costumes filthy. A good crowd went to see Marge and Gower Champion, but a then little known singer, Harry Belafonte, stole the show and the hearts of the audience. He remembered the situation, too, and returned later as a well-known performer to fill the seats to the rafters and to the edge of the stage, which was set up in the middle of the court. Trumpet player Al Hirt and his company played in a like setting.

Hal Holbrook, on a cross-country tour, brought Mark Twain to life. He went on to play Twain on the New York stage and on television. James Whitmore strolled onto the stage, made some introductory remarks, slouched down for two hours became Will Rogers. Al Capp proved he was funnier on stage than in his comic strip. Franklin P. A. Adams was drunk and not funny.

There were politicians, too. Barry Goldwater and George McGovern expressed their views, Goldwater after he ran for President and McGovern before. John Kennedy spoke in the Union during his quest for the nomination for the presidency. Carlos Romulo recalled he had replied he "felt like a dime among nickles" when a tall Texan asked how he felt among tall men. George Lincoln Rockwell, the American Nazi, could not understand a crowd making no response to his haranguing speech.

Thaine Clark

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