

Repeat After Me
The Joe Cavaleri Story by Joe Cavaleri
edited by Cory Parella

For my family

*Button Salmon told them to 'Bear Down'.
The Ooh Aah Man showed them how.
First Edition February 2014
This edition January 2024*

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A Note About Parkinson's Disease

A progressive nervous disease occurring most often after the age of 50, associated with the destruction of brain cells that produce dopamine and characterized by muscular tremor, slowing of movement, partial facial paralysis, peculiarity of gait and posture, and weakness.

I first met Joe Cavaleri sometime in 1981, when my dad took me to Sancet Field where the Wildcats hosted ASU in a league series right after graduating national champion players including future Boston Red Sox 2-time World Series Manager Terry Francona. I was 8. He also managed the Cleveland Indians in 2016, when the

Tribe lost to the long-suffering Chicago Cubs.

As an adolescent, I witnessed events comparable to the events described in this book, and in 2011 I found him on Facebook, while researching the novel *The Faithful*.

Joe Cavaleri was diagnosed with this illness in 2010. By 2013, his lack of mobility forced him to retire the role of *The Ooh Aah Man*. It's been suggested that the Ooh Aah character Joe invented be made a recurring role, but that idea lingers like a phantom of the sports opera, in the corridors of McKale Center, where the spirits of Wildcats-past live forever.

Right around the time Eddie Smith's breakthrough autobiography *The Cornerstone of Arizona Basketball: The Eddie Smith Story* was first reviewed, (May 2012), Joe asked me if I'd publish his story.

Truth be told, at the time I discouraged the idea, citing a complex marketing battle every writer faces. In fact, the very day his high-publicized retirement ceremony was to be held, I may have been the last person he exchanged messages with on Facebook, discussing the idea.

I was unaware of just how fast Parkinson's Disease was claiming Joe. I was also unaware of previous campaigns to offer financial support for him as the illness prevented him from working anymore, in tandem with near- fatal injuries dating back to a 1985 car accident.

During the summer of 2013, he humbly posted a request on Facebook asking if his friends would bid on his house at auction. Few of his so- called friends posted any responses that were remotely helpful, and at that, I realized I must postpone whatever projects we were working on and take action. Wildcat Nation needed to know what was going on. The fact is that educators like Lute Olson, Larry Smith, Jerry Kindall, Andy Lopez, Dick Tomey and more had helped many Wildcat alumni become very successful - and financially stable. I couldn't afford to buy the man's house, but I knew some of them could.

Within a week, our social media campaign to save his home from Chase Mortgage Servicing had gained local TV attention and eventually landed on a show distributed by Fox. Chase Bank tried to avoid being branded as the villain under the legal pressure brought by the TV campaign, selling the house note in late 2013, and life would go on for the Cavaleri family one way or another.

Furthermore, at some point, Parkinson's Disease will claim Joe Cavaleri. There is no cure. His house's foreclosure notwithstanding, this book came to represent more than just telling the story of a 6'4" Italian male cheerleader sanctioned by a state agency. It's the story of us all, battling obstacles we have no control over.

Parkinson's Disease is a merciless destroyer of people's bodies. This book came to represent the legacy of us all, what we leave behind.

As I was researching another famous historical figure whose statue welcomes visitors to McKale Center, the story of Button Salmon really struck me as one with parallels to Joe's. Both were men who fell in love with the University of Arizona, and both suffered fates neither expected, nor asked for, and both are considered UA icons.

Button Salmon never graduated from the UA, and the car accident that claimed his life was his fault; a kid far from home speeding through the unpaved Arizona desert, enjoying his youth - without a seat belt.

When I read period-news articles chronicling Salmon's fatal accident, I learned that history has spun his enshrined plea to the team from an expression of embarrassment for having let the team down, into a war cry of a fallen soldier. Nonetheless, his words became the motto for a global family of Wildcats that lives on as the most noblest of phrases, echoing Jesus words, in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this: To lay down one's life for one's friends," paraphrased into two words, "Bear Down."

I realized God's timing here to scribe this biography was a gift.

I could write this history *correctly*, and it is arguable that Joe's story is even more astonishing than Button's. For years I gazed at the sports writers of the now defunct *Arizona Daily Star* and previously defunct-*Tucson Citizen* with a mix of desire and disgust, as non-family judged and chronicled my family, spinning any given story to the benefit of paper sales, regardless of the heart of whatever story was really there to be told.

This was an opportunity to write it as it really happened, and focus on what God was doing in this man's life.

Joe is not a choir boy by any means, despite the Bible verses cited herein. He is all too human; he drank, he was admittedly grouchy to his wife, and even incited a near-riot in the 1980 college baseball playoffs versus Fresno State.

Yet the shock value of seeing a grown man dressed like a low-budget super hero getting a crowd riled up more so than the formally-trained cheerleading team assigned to do that very task, such that he became the athletic basis on which Wilber and Wilma were crafted, is on par with mythology.

My mind went to Moses and this Bible verse came to mind.

The Lord said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.” - Exodus 4:11-12

God used Joe Cavaleri to remind us that community means participation. I use a phrase to inspire my contract authors, “Prophet, open thy mouth and speak.”

A 1981 news story published by the *Tucson Citizen* described Tucson sports fans as being so passive that visiting teams considered Arizona’s facilities to be neutral sites. In sports, home field advantage is nullified by apathy.

I loved that Joe Cavaleri had the courage to do this when all other social etiquette might have suggested otherwise.

At the time, Tucson really needed someone to step up and show generations how to praise, and whether they were ready to allocate their praise to God or not, it was a start. In this case, for 30 years it was about cheering on kids wearing the UA uniforms, as they became adults who would go on to change the world. Their names are scattered throughout this book as they are scattered throughout history.

If one were to ask Joe if he thought he was courageous, like most men of his generation, he would decline using those words to describe himself, so, I will.

Thank you for the display of courage and passion, Joe. And to future generations who put on a Wildcat uniform, hat, T shirt, or social media message, if you want to learn what it means to show *the fight of Wildcats*, just read this book.

Joe Cavaleri died in 2023. His house survived the foreclosure process and his family has carried on with their lives. Joe's mark on this world, on the University of Arizona and on me, was worth every key stroke used to put this story together. I wrap this edition 10 years after its digital debut.

Starnet refugees Anthony Gimino and Javier Morales continue to quote this book without quoting its source, but I'll leave that up to future readers to call them to

account. Plagiarizing bastards. Joe's story is ripe for the big screen.

We'll see.

Readers, thank you for reading this and to quote a better writer than I, "*remember what you see here.*" (Kevin Jarre, *Glory (1989 TriStar)*)

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1. Hoop Dreams

The following was transcribed from email exchanges with Joe Cavaleri through February 2014. Parkinson's Disease limited his writing, requiring the editing of his own words in some parts. All the events stated are true and the stories come from him.

I was born Joseph Augustino Cavaleri on March 2, 1952 in Mount Kisco, New York.

There wasn't a hospital in the town of Pawling, New York, which is where I grew up.

My dad Augustino is still alive and living here in Arizona. He will be 95 years old in September 2014. My dad still likes to be very active, and he bowls twice a week, plays horseshoes, and is quite the ladies man!

My mom Muriel died when I was 13 years old. That was very traumatic for me as well as for my dad and my sister Terry. She was born on April 23rd 1954.

My dad raised us the best he could, but it was hard for him, being a single parent. He finally remarried a woman named Rita who just died in 2004. She was a wonderful woman who he had two more children with, my sister Teena and my brother Patrick.

I have family spread out all over the west. My brother lives in Portland with his wife Angela. My sister Teena lives in Tucson with her husband, James and their son, my nephew, Vincent.

Growing up in Pawling was hard for me, especially after my mom died. I was a momma's boy, and I loved her very much. It was a good thing I had sports at school. I

played basketball and baseball in high school but basketball was my favorite sport. I remember playing in a game where I scored 31 points. Most of the time, however, I was in the doghouse with the coach. Whenever I would make a mistake he would take me out of the game. I soon had the nickname "one mistake" and the crowd would cheer "we want one mistake" for me to go back into the game.

We made the playoffs in my senior year and we were going to go play in the Westchester County Community Center which was a dream of mine that sadly never came true. A few days before the tournament started, I was walking down the hall with my friends and we were horsing around. I got shoved toward a locker and put my hands up to stop myself from crashing into the locker, but when I did my pinky finger went into the vent in the locker and when I pulled it out, it cut the tip of my finger off. So, needless to say, I couldn't play in the tournament and even worse I couldn't even travel with the team to the game because the tip of my finger was put back on and I couldn't move around with it like that or it wouldn't heal. So I never got to fulfill my dream of playing in the tournament in the county community center.

What I wanted to do was play basketball in college, and when I graduated from high school in 1970, I had narrowed it down to a couple of schools.

I really wanted to play basketball for Dean Smith at North Carolina (this was ten years before Michael Jordan), but I couldn't get into the school so I stuck to the state of New York, and chose Niagara University, the home of NBA Hall of Famer Calvin Murphy (*1970 San Diego Rockets*).

When I got to school, I was in for a big shock. In high school, I played center and forward because I was 6'4" and one of the tallest kids in my school. In college, I was tiny compared to other players and would have to play against. I couldn't handle the ball like a guard, and I got scared, so I dropped out of school. My family couldn't afford the tuition anyhow. I came back home to Pawling to attend Dutchess Community College in the spring of 1971. As much as I loved the sport of basketball, I never played basketball for a school again. I graduated from Dutchess in the spring of 1973 and wanted to go to the University of Arizona in the next fall because my sister had moved there and I wanted to be closer to her.

Although I lasted longer than I did at Niagara, I still dropped out of school mid-semester because I was scared. I went back home to Pawling to make enough money to go back and live in Arizona.

I worked in a grocery store for three years until I missed my sister so much I had to go back to Tucson.

When I got back there, my sister had moved to Yuma with a guy she was in love with, and I decided to stay in Tucson.

I had a job with Circle-K, which then left and got hired to work at a Seven-Eleven. There I got to manage my own store on Tucson Boulevard and 6th Street.

I was very personable and the people who came into the store loved me. I had the store in the black for the first time in months. This lasted for about a year until I went on vacation back to New York for three weeks. At the time, you never think about how little things like that can change our lives. In my absence, a lot of things went wrong.

When I got back I was summoned into the office for a security interview. I was asked why my store was missing inventory for this month and where was it. I explained to them that I was on vacation but according to them, that was not a good excuse, so I got mad and walked out of the interview.

The next day my boss came into the store and asked me why I walked out of the security interview. I told him I didn't like being accused of stealing stuff when I wasn't even here for three weeks.

He started yelling at me.

After a heated exchange, I finally asked him if he always walked around with his head up his backside or did he pull it out once in a while to see where he was going. He fired me on the spot, and the customers were so mad that they boycotted the store. As a result, it was closed in two months for lack of business. Tucson commerce was like that in the 1970s.

At the time I always wanted to be a bartender, so, I saw it as an opportunity. I went to the Bum Steer and got a job as a doorman with the understanding that I would be trained to be a bartender when a position opened up.

A position did open up very soon after, and that is how I started tending bar.

I was now a bartender at the world famous Bum Steer. Western tourism is big business, and there's nothing more novel than walking into a bar in Tucson, home of the rodeo, and being waited on by a smiling New Yorker. A 6'4" smiling New

Yorker. I made every tourist feel at home, and apparently some stayed. We called 'em Snow Birds.

It was a blast working there. I worked days until about 6 p.m. I got paid a little more because I fixed all the stuff for the night bartenders and I got to wait on a couple of tables for lunch.

When I got to be the Ooh Aah Man, it was great because people would come in to see me at the bar.

In fact, when we won the College World Series in 1980, the whole baseball team came in one evening to party with me.

Shortly after Tony Mason was fired and Fred Snowden resigned, those who paid my way into games forgot about me and the ambiance of McKale Center changed. So, the Ooh Aah Man retired too. Briefly.

I could not have predicted what was coming to Tucson.

In 1982, I got fired from my job because the manager, who was my friend, had to.

I was partying in the bar one night and we wanted to party for after hours. So the bartender let me behind the bar and I took a couple of bottles of liquor for the party I would return them tomorrow when I came to work. No problem, I did, but I didn't know that the manager had done a full inventory the night before. When he came and asked me about the count for my daily inventory I told him it was right. He looked puzzled, and told me that they weren't there last night when he did his full inventory. So he looked in the cabinet and found all the liquor there and went back into the office.

When the bartender who worked the previous night came in to work the following night, he was called into the office. I didn't want him to get in trouble so I told the manager what I did on my own, and he had to fire me.

Soon after, I went to work for Carlos Murphy's, another iconic Tucson restaurant, as a day bartender. I made great money there, working days and on Friday nights, then their busiest night. I even disc jockeyed during happy hour. Life was good except...I missed being the Ooh Aah Man.

You see, I had stopped being the Ooh Aah Man because it wasn't fun anymore.

The 1982 men's basketball team coach Ben Lindsey made little effort to coach, much less promote the program, and the football team was on probation because of the Tony Mason Scandal. They weren't letting me into the games for free anymore. The Ooh Aah Man didn't know it at the time, but the country was going through a spiritual war. Reagan had been in office for about a year, and the country had not yet gotten over the last ten years of depression since Vietnam ended. What happened next changed my life.

Lindsey had just coached Grand Canyon College to a couple national championships for them. However, one has to distinguish NCAA Division-I from NAIA. It's like comparing high school teams to some pro teams.

Publisher's Note:

On November 26, 1982, the Wildcats hosted Houston, a team that was loaded with future pros. The Cats put up 63 points, which might have been enough to win after taking a 4-0 lead to start the game, but Houston put up 104. The Wildcats did not get a win that season until they played NAU.

The following Spring, Cedric Dempsey went to the Final Four to try to meet with Lute and Bobbi Olson in a desperate attempt to salvage Arizona sports. Morale was low.

Though Lute's Iowa program was expected to make a run at the national title the following season, Dempsey had learned why the Olsons did not accept Kentucky's multiple offers and used that to play his only card: Dempsey pleaded with Bobbi to save Arizona.

In his own recount of these events, Lindsay alleged that rival athletic directors manipulated the hiring of Lindsay for one season to wait out the contract demands to consider Olson. This is about ten-percent true. Olson had himself never planned to accept the Arizona job until, as recorded in his own autobiography, Bobbi committed on their behalf in a moment of passion while sitting in an airplane on their way home from meeting the Arizona boosters for the first time. Later that evening on the phone with a trusted mentor, Olson listened to the question, 'Will you look back at this moment and wonder, What If?' Coach O disliked missing opportunities and in hindsight, he told me that he sensed God was at-work here.

During a visit, the booster of the University of Kentucky had treated Bobbi like an accessory, a trophy wife, not realizing how much she ran the Olson home and his

teams. Risking his own job as the athletic director, Dempsey fired Ben Lindsey, whose alliances with Arizona Congressmen made him a political danger.

Lindsey's political ties to Arizona's Congress in the early 1980s created a tension such that Arizona Congressmen had threatened Dempsey that if he did fire Lindsey, he'd lose his job as the AD.

Dempsey went to meet with the Olsons at the 1983 Final Four anyway and spent several hours pleading with Bobbi that there was a huge need in Tucson.

Lindsey had been late to the blowout loss versus Houston because he was having a sexual affair with a woman in Phoenix. They desperately needed a mom and dad for the program.

After spending a few days in Tucson being wooed by boosters, Bobbi convinced Lute to accept the job, despite just having promised the Iowa Hawkeyes all the things Arizona Basketball would eventually become known for. Olson was a master of promotion, understanding that excited crowds translated into wins, and wins translated into revenue.

His endorsement of the Ooh Aah Man led to Joe being sought out by Dempsey's staff and brought back to half time shows for the next three decades.

2. The Birth of Ooh Aah

My dream had been to play basketball for a college, not be a human mascot. But, thank God, it worked out. As I type this, my son Nick Cavaleri is playing well enough for the Palo Verde High School Panthers of Nevada to pursue the dream I once had.

The Ooh Aah Man started as a prank, and became something I never imagined. It became a rallying cry for a college sports program in search of an identity. It has always been an act. I'm acting. I don't act like this at home. I don't do Spell-Outs randomly. It's a show.

Ooh Aah was born from a friendship I have with Ron Riviezzo dating back to the early 1970s, before I was married. His nick name is Aldo, because he resembled the Aldo Cella Wines' James Manis featured in their TV ads. One time he even dressed up like him for a baseball game. It was hilarious. Everyone chanting *Aldo! Aldo! Aldo!*

I lived in a four bedroom house at on North Stone Avenue in Tucson, which is walking distance to the U of A campus. Aldo lived in a little house right across the driveway of our house. my three roommates and I were real good friends with Aldo. He spent as much time in our house as he did in his own house.

Aldo was a big U of A fan and knowing how much I loved sports he got me hooked on the Wildcats. He always paid my way everywhere we went together. He paid his own way to Omaha to be with me at the College World Series in 1979 and 1980. Aldo was a little crazy so was I for that matter.

He was a gifted salesman. Aldo could schmooze with the best of them. He could talk to anybody about anything without embarrassment.

I loved him for that reason. One baseball game he came late about the fourth inning. He was dressed in a white suit and hat just like Aldo Cella and when we all saw him it was classic everyone on the third baseline started chanting *Aldo! Aldo! Aldo!* just kept walking and acting like the guy in the commercial.

Half of the time we were at the games on the third baseline, we *were* the show, the game seemed secondary.

I don't mean that we didn't care about the game because we did; it was just four hours in a baseball stadium you get a little stir crazy. Baseball is a fundamentally slow-paced game to watch, (playing it is a different matter).

When the UA played in the tournament in 1979, we hosted the regional and the University of Hawaii was there too.

Aldo started schmoozing with their fans. We ended up having to play them in the final game to go to Omaha that year. Aldo showed up to the game with a box full of leis that he had schmoozed from Kon Tiki restaurant. When the seventh inning stretch came for Hawaii, Aldo and I passed out the leis to all the women in the audience for Hawaii and gave them all a kiss.

The following year, Hawaii went to Omaha from a different regional tournament. When Aldo and I got to the hotel in Omaha, their fans were waiting in the lobby to greet us with leis from Hawaii; it made me cry.

The World Series was great, though we lost the first game 6-1 to St. Johns. Frank Viola, the future Minnesota Twins Hall of Fame major league pitcher, pitched the

game against us.

Aldo, of course, being Italian, started to schmooze with the St. Johns players and got me a baseball signed by all the players. One night during the tournament, or should I say early morning, we had luggage rack races in the lobby with some of the St. Johns players.

Of course, this was *after* they were eliminated. We had to play Hawaii twice to win the whole thing and we did. We won the first game 6-4 in eleven innings. Then we had to play Cal beat them 10-9, then played Hawaii in the final game and won 5-3.

George Kalil and a few of the boosters hosted a party for our players. After awhile, Aldo and I went to see what Hawaii was doing.

They had quite a spread of food flown in from Hawaii; fresh fish, fruits, and vegetables, it was incredible. We were invited to stay at their party as long as we wanted. We stayed long enough to see Aldo doing the hula with the coach of Hawaii, Les Murakami.

On May 9, 1979, I went to a wedding with some friends. After the reception, the guys I was with wanted to go to the stadium to watch the Wildcats play baseball. They were playing the California Golden Bears that day and we got there in the middle of the first inning. We had smuggled in some rum for the game and began drinking rum and Cokes.

We were sitting directly behind the third base dugout where the California team was. I was told that was where all the rowdy fans sat. It turned out the term 'rowdy' was subjective. Tucson fans were known to be so passive, their home fields and court were considered neutral sites by visiting teams.

Enjoying the Arizona weather, during the third inning, I stood up and started prancing back and forth in front of the fans and started doing what would become my "Ooh Aah!" Cheer, complete with lyrics, "Sock it to 'em Wildcats!" (That was catchy in 1979, the era of "groovy", disco, long hair and bell bottoms.)

Everyone started looking at me like I was crazy, (I wonder why), but a few minutes later the Wildcats rallied for 4 runs and I guess you could say the Ooh Aah Man was born right then and there.

As the game progressed more and more people did the cheer along with me.

Back then, the idea of momentum and just how much players feed off of a crowd didn't cross my mind.

Yet, as I cheered, so went the game.

Starting the top of the fifth inning we noticed that the first base coach for California would sprint from his dugout all the way to his coaching box at first base.

So at the top of the sixth inning we started cheering for him to "Slide! Slide! Slide!"

By the seventh inning we had half the stadium chanting for him to slide, and by the top of the ninth it was the whole stadium.

Peer pressure by way of psychological warfare. The chant, "hey, batter batter," was invented the same way. It has become so commonly heard at little league games, most people don't think about it anymore and few batters are actually distracted by those words.

So as I was saying, the guy runs out of the dugout in the ninth inning and when he gets to the first base box he slides head first into the box.

When he got up, he got a standing ovation from the whole stadium. His coach Bob Milano looked at me and just smiled.

By the time the game was over, which seemed to last about five hours later, we had won something like 20-18.

Many fans were asking if I was coming to the next game. Apparently I had made it fun.

So I came back to the next game, and then the next game, and before you knew it we were headed to the college world series in Omaha.

George Kalil, a Tucson businessman, a Pima County Hall of Famer, and longtime UA booster, and a few other fans paid my way to go the series.

So Aldo and I, who was my prop guy, (now I had an entourage), went to the 1979 College World Series. Aldo's real name was Ron Riviezzo. The guy with him is an old roommate of mine, Chip Rock.

Aldo (Ron) was more than just my sidekick. He was my partner in crime, so to speak. It was his pitch to Woody's Sporting Goods that got me my Ooh Aah Man uniform

and props. Woody Cohen made all of my jerseys for me and gave me free sneakers whenever I needed them.

We won the first game and lost the next two and were eliminated from the 1979 tournament.

I figured that was it. My fifteen minutes of fame were over.

Little did I know that when football season rolled around, we went to Arizona Stadium for the first home game, (I was now hooked as a Wildcat fan) and when I walked into section 4 of the stadium the crowd started to chant "Ooh Aah, Ooh Aah". They knew who I was.

So I did all the home football games that year. Then we went to Tempe for the Fiesta bowl that year and we lost to Pitt 10-6.

So, when it came time for basketball season to start that year, I wanted to cheer at basketball games because that was my favorite sport. Basketball had taken a turn for the worse that year, despite the enthusiasm of Coach Fred Snowden.

I loved coach Snowden. He called me into his office sometime in December and asked me about the Ooh Aah Man and what were my plans for the year.

He told me he wanted me at every home game and got me passes for Aldo and I. He also noticed I struggled on the court trying to get sweats off over top of my sneakers, so he gave me a pair of Leon Wood's tear-away pants. That's when I started my cheering routine.

I cheered at every home game. I loved every minute of it because I got to meet some of my favorite basketball players back then like Joe Nehls, Jim Rappis, Bob Elliott, and Herman Harris.

Then it was time for baseball again.

So, I performed at baseball games again, and that year, 1980, we went to Omaha and *won* the College World Series. I was such a fantastic feeling to be a part of that.

In 1980, the UA sports programs went into a slump. Tony Mason's staff stole money from the program and the football team lost bowl eligibility because of it. Fred Snowden's teams failed to win enough games and he resigned after a strong run in the NCAA tournament in the late 1970s. March Madness as we know it didn't exist until

1985.

Ben Lindsey was hired from Grand Canyon College and the program went from bad to worse. I stopped doing the Ooh Aah Man because I wasn't able to get into the games for free anymore. After the basketball team went 4-24 and the football team had mediocre seasons as a result of Mason's scandal.

I was working as a head bartender and DJ at Carlos Murphy's restaurant when Cedric Dempsey sent his assistant athletic director Carl Meyer and the band Director Jack Lee, the man who wrote the melody for "Bear Down Arizona", to find me and ask me to come back.

It was then that I accepted under the stipulations that I would be allowed to do whatever I wanted and Aldo and myself would get into the games for free.

I came back during Lute Olson's second season and we went to the tournament that year in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We lost to Alabama in the first round. It was a hard trip because we rode by bus the day of the game and when we got there went right to a pep rally and then right to the game. We lost the game and got back on the bus early the next morning and headed right back home.

A few years later in 1985, I met a girl named Nancy Jean Webster from Reno, Nevada who would become my wife. We were married on May 9, 1987.

But, few people know the Ooh Aah Man almost died in 1985.

When I first met Nancy, she was working for a business that watered plants in restaurants and offices all over town. She used to come to the place where I worked and she would stand on the bar stools to water the plants that were up high.

I was always afraid she would fall off the stools so I would follow her around the restaurant and stand by the stool right next to her legs.

One day I decided to lick her legs; they were beautiful, she was beautiful, I almost made her fall off the stool. I apologized and told her how much I liked her. She smiled at me, blushing, and left. In hindsight, licking someone's legs while they are working is not a good idea.

Yet I knew her for two years before I asked her to marry me. She is the only woman I ever loved or will ever love. She was the only one.

In 1985, I was in a car accident that I should have died in. It was pretty scary. A friend of mine (not Aldo) and I were driving to Tempe to watch the wildcats play baseball against ASU.

I was the passenger he was driving when the car blew a tire and he lost control of the vehicle. The vehicle spun around and flipped off the highway landing upside down then turned onto my side for a couple of minutes and then came to rest upside down.

He was wearing a seat belt I wasn't. Seat belts in today's cars work differently than the ones we drove in 1985. Keep that in mind as I sat that if I had been wearing a seat belt, I would have been killed.

The roof of the car was dented in the middle and actually separated me from the driver. The radio was blaring *Hungry Like A Wolf* by Duran Duran. To this day I still cannot bring myself to listen to that song.

We were upside down and I was trying to reach the radio to turn it down. There were people who had stopped to help us, telling us not to move, but I smelled gasoline so I climbed out of the car.

I managed to walk up the road and laid down on the shoulder of the highway. A lady who was a nurse had stopped and stood by me asking questions about the accident. My right arm had a gash on it that was burned open by the road, my wrist was cut open, and my back was killing me where the roof of the car hit it when we flipped. (This would play a role in what happened in my life about ten years later.)

If I had been wearing my seat belt the roof of the car would have broken my neck. It was close to Casa Grande so an ambulance came from there to take me to the hospital. My friend was fine, thank God. All he got was a couple of scratches.

When I got to the hospital my back really hurt. A nurse tried to clean the gash on my arm with a wire brush and I screamed; the staff tried to hold me down to do it, but I screamed so loud, they realized something much more serious was wrong, so they stopped.

It turned out that I fractured my back in six places, and bruised some ribs on my rib cage. They couldn't give me any pain medication because they wanted to monitor my heart.

I laid there for two days without pain medication.

It is true your life does flash before you when you think you are going to die. My family and Nancy came to mind I wouldn't ever see them again, until the car hit upside down and then spun to my side of the car. I made every effort to keep my face from hitting the ground. That's how my arm got burned open.

About ten years later, I was working in the Deli-Meat department at Albertson's Supermarket.

It was my job to keep it stocked and make sure everything was up to date. I fell at work lifting a box of something heavy.

My knee gave out and I fell. I went to Concentra, which was Albertson's medical facility. They did therapy on it, but released me too soon. After I limped on it for a couple of months, they decided to get an MRI which showed I tore my meniscus. So they sent me to a specialist who said he would operate on it. After the operation I did therapy for about two months. and then I was released again to go back to work, too soon. I told them I couldn't work because my knee still hurt the corporate offices ordered me to be terminated. In hindsight, I did not know that this decision violated labor laws in doing so, sparking a legal fight that would span six years and affect my marriage.

I couldn't work anymore, not as I had. I was an outgoing person, skilled at hard labor and dealing with people. But my 6'4" frame was giving out. It was discouraging and effected my moods. My only emotional outlet was playing the Ooh Aah Man, and in the back of mind, I would Will the Wildcats to victory. I didn't realize that the crowd truly fed off my passion and the players fed off the crowd.

Still undergoing treatment, I went to the specialist for my last check up on Workman's Compensation. I told him that my knee still hurt and he checked it and did another MRI and found a bigger tear than the last one. So after a whole year of limping on this knee I had another surgery which pretty much took out all of my meniscus so I was bone on bone. I did therapy again for two months and after that I was released to go back to work.

...except I no longer had a job. Whomever fired me was trying to assert the authority of the corporate side of Albertson's and in doing so, violated State laws. You cannot fire someone for being injured in the job. He should have placed me on medical leave,

but he let his pride dictate his actions.

So I called a Tucson lawyer, Pat McNamara, who took my case and also helped me with the Social Security because I had turned down for that as well. On paper, I was an able-bodied worker with treatable injuries and not old enough to qualify for social security benefits. By today's standards, this would not have happened.

Pat appealed for me and got Social Security for me. The first payment was retroactive, which was great because Nancy and I had a lot of bills to pay.

So it has been two years since my fall, and I was still limping on my knee and now the back problems that I had were compounded.

Albertson's legal response was that I was faking it, and hired a private investigator to film me doing things with my kids, like going to the park and playing on the gym equipment, or being the Ooh Aah Man at games or even watering plants in my front yard.

I had no idea I was being followed until they produced the tapes.

When Nancy saw the tapes of the kids she was furious. This went on for a couple of years and Nancy would get madder and madder. She was mad at me because she would come home from work and the house was a mess and I was grouchy. I don't blame her at all. I was a stay at home father of four, grouchy, and in constant pain. The kids were 7, 5, 3, and 1.

Finally she had enough she wanted a divorce. So we were divorced in 2006. The Workman's Compensation case settled soon after the divorce. I received enough to break even. Meanwhile, my home would eventually go into foreclosure.

Nancy and I tried to have kids for years. We even tried fertility drugs, but we could not. We got pregnant in 1990 but lost the baby in 12 weeks.

We finally got pregnant when we weren't trying and had a son Michael Augustino Cavaleri, on January 2nd 1993.

We then had a daughter, Angelina Marie, in July of 1994, another son, Nicholas Joseph, in December of 1996, and another daughter, Olivia Kellie, on my birthday in March of 1999.

Nancy have remained friends over the years. Two of my children live with her in Las

Vegas and two live with me. That's hard for me because my I miss my kids so much.

My oldest daughter Angelina, just had a baby a year and a half ago and I have only got to see her for a few weeks out of that time. My oldest son Michael wants to be a movie maker, and is frustrated by Tucson's lack of opportunity. My youngest daughter is a straight-A student in Tucson's Flowing Wells School District and is a die hard Wildcat fan going to all of the games with me.

3. Steve Kerr

The most fortunate thing about being the Ooh Aah Man is the opportunity to meet and becomes friends with the players of the Olson era. Players of great character wore Wildcat uniforms in every sport, not just football, baseball and basketball. Yet a few players stood out.

One was Steve Kerr. Like me, he was unscouted out of high school, Caucasian in a sport heavily populated by non-whites, and at first-glance did not seem like an exceptional player. But he had heart.

When Tucson fell in love with a team, it wasn't because of their record. It was because of their heart. The team's identity for the remainder of the Olson era really began to take form around a single event that caused them to gel together, and I with them, beyond the antics on the court, as a family.

As the Wildcat went to bed on January 17, 1984, the biggest headline in the news was that the Supreme Court ruled Sony's VHS recorders did not violate Universal Television's copyrights...Owner of a Lonely Heart by Yes was the number-one song in the world.

The next morning, a terrorist assassin would change the lives of Wildcat Nation forever.

On January 16, 1984, the Pentagon confirmed that Dr. Malcolm Kerr, father of 18-year old college student Steve Kerr, had been killed in Lebanon. Kerr remained with the team under the care of the Olsons, and continued to practice with his teammates, including dorm mate Eddie Smith.

On February 25, 1988, ASU students gathered around the court at the facility now known as Wells-Fargo Arena during the pre-game shoot-around, and chanted a taunt about Kerr's father's death that marred the rivalry forever. ASU officials formally

apologized for the incident, and the students who taunted Steve were disciplined, but the damage had been done.

I was not present for that debacle. I did watch the game on television.

Steve Kerr is one of the nicest guys you could ever meet. He was my favorite player then and still is my favorite Wildcat of all time. To hear about that taunting on television brought tears to my eyes.

But Steve took it in stride and went out and played one of his best games as a Wildcat.

No one knows whether the ASU students who taunted Kerr ever finished school.

After graduating from UA, Steve went on to win 5 NBA Titles with 3 different teams and a long career in broadcasting. He also served as the General Manager for the Phoenix Suns. He was later hired by the Golden State Warriors where he set regular season records for wins and won multiple NBA Titles as a coach.

4. 1988

In 1988, we went to the NCAA tournament. I was taken to every venue with the team and the cheerleaders, the band, and the pom squad.

I traveled as part of the 12 cheerleaders and 1 mascot that are officially allowed to be on the floor. Six cheerleaders, 5 poms, myself and Wilbur. That year, Wilbur was a kid named Frank Brodar. I never really met him until we started traveling for the tournament.

He was a funny guy who liked to do things a little different. For instance, he would enter a room walking on his hands.

The Seattle Superdome was the venue for the Sweet Sixteen and the Elite Eight games. We had to play Iowa first. Iowa's mascot is a hawk and the kid who wore the costume was named Frito. (I am telling you this to prepare you for what happened during the game.)

The game started and we were sitting on the floor and I was talking to Wilbur as I always did. We were joking around as usual but he seemed different. He didn't talk to me which wasn't too odd because Wilbur's not suppose to talk. But we would say things to each other during a game and he wasn't talking.

It was a TV-timeout and the Iowa cheerleaders took the floor. Frito was walking on his hands and I said to Wilbur, "Hey! He's pretty good, like you." Wilbur gave me a thumbs down and didn't say anything.

We did our time out on the floor just before halftime and Wilbur helped me get our fans fired up. At halftime, Wilbur disappeared. He came back just before the second half started and kneeled down next to me and asked me, "how was I in the first half?"

I replied, "What do you mean?"

He proceeded to tell me that he and Frito had *changed places during the first half*.

I was shocked and I told him never to do that again without telling me first. He told me the reason he didn't tell anyone was because he didn't want anybody else getting in trouble if he got caught. I told him he was a much better Hawk than Frito was Wildcat. We won the game and moved on to the Elite eight game; one game away from a Final Four.

We were to play the University of North Carolina. Dean Smith was one of my all time favorite coaches. I got to meet him on an elevator in the hotel just before we were to take the bus to the game. I was decked out in my costume for the game and I introduced myself to him.

He was very polite and smiled but I knew he thought I was nuts. After we won the game, it was a great game by the way, we told the North Carolina cheerleaders who were staying in the same hotel as us, that there was going to be a party on the floor of the hotel where our band was staying.

The party was awesome until one the band kids whose room we were in came to me and told me Hotel Security was at the door looking for the responsible party for the room. I went to the door for him to talk to the security guy. I got to the door and the security guy asked me if I was the responsible party for the room and I looked at the guy and I said "Is your name Bob Kutcher?"

He didn't have a name tag on so he looked at me for a couple of moments and then he very inquisitively asked, "Joe, Joe Cavaleri?"

I looked back at him and smiled. It turns out he was my History teacher back in Pawling, New York about 20 years ago. We hugged each other and I asked what the problem was. He told me the people below us were complaining because we were

jumping up and down on the floor.

I asked him that if I got everybody to stop *jumping* up and down could we keep the party going and he said yes. So he came in to the party and sat with me for awhile and then had to go back to work. I had breakfast with him the next morning before we had to leave. It was so great to see him; he remembered me because I was such a clown in his class. So it was on to the Final Four in Kansas City, Missouri.

This was my first Final Four ever so it was awesome being invited my wife Nancy was invited as well. When we got to Kansas City, they gave me two tickets to each game. I asked if I needed a ticket to get into the game and they said no the other ticket was for me in case we lost and Nancy and I wanted to go to the championship game. So I asked them if I could give my sister the ticket if she could fly there.

They told me that would be fine or I could sell the ticket and buy a new sister. (Ha-ha.) So I called my sister who lives here in Tucson and she flew in that night to be there for the game the following day.

We got to go out to dinner that night in the plaza and also got to meet Matt Meuhlbach's family who owned a shop in the plaza. We were 35-3 going into the Final Four. We won the Great Alaska shootout as well as The Fiesta bowl Classic. We also were the Pac-10 champs with a record of 17-1. We won all of our home games this season, 19 of them, starting our famous streak that lasted three years.

Steve Kerr, who was red-shirted the previous season because of an injury, came back with a vengeance and ended setting a school record for three point shots percentage made 57.3%.

That said, we were the favorite going into the game playing Oklahoma. The Sooners were arrogant, cocky, big and talented, and they took it to us big time. It was a ghost that would be exorcized in 1997. (As of 2024, Arizona has never beaten Oklahoma in Men's basketball in March.)

We had a terrible night shooting the ball especially Steve. He was like 2-for-20 from the floor or some gawd-awful number like that. If someone were to bet me that Steve Kerr would have a night like that I would have bet my house that he wouldn't.

It was totally humiliating for all the players to lose like that. We went back to the Hotel and my sister and Nancy and myself sat in the room totally bummed out. We were drinking wine and decided to go out on the balcony to sit for a little while. No

sooner did I get out there when I heard a voice from above asking me if I was going to jump.

I looked up and it was Steve Kerr. I said to him, "I don't know, are you?" He told me after his performance today he was seriously considering it. I told him that he had to remember that, without him, we probably wouldn't even have been there in the first place. So I told him not to feel bad about the game, but if he really wanted to jump I would give him one last *Steeeeeeeeve Keeerrrrrr* over the balcony.

We all laughed and he said thank you to me for making it better. I loved Steve Kerr. He was one of my favorite players to play for the Wildcats. He is the only player to ever join me in the middle of the floor for a spell-out.

In 1987, when he was rehabilitating his knee injury that forced him to red-shirt that season, he came off the bench during a home game, he was dressed for the game even though he wasn't playing, and proceeded to match me taking off clothing item for clothing item with me until we had nothing more to take off.

Then we stood at half court and did an A-r-i-z-o-n-a spell-out twice and it was so loud in McKale Center, it was like we had won the game already. Incredible. It was truly an amazing experience.

I had a lot of favorite players over the years as the Ooh Aah Man. I got to know a lot of them outside of McKale.

I used to play city league basketball with and against people like Jim Rappas, Herman Harris, Len Gordy, and Joe Nehls. Rappas was one of the best streak shooters I ever saw play. He would come over to my house and we would play make em take em to 15 points. He would spot me 10 points and usually beat me by running off ten or twelve baskets in a row.

Joe Nehls was one of the best pure shooters ever to play at the UA. If there was a three point line when he was playing he would have scored 50 points in a couple of games easily.

I got to know players better in my earlier years than I do now. I liked Eddie Smith and Pete Williams from Lute's first teams here. I also liked Anthony Cook, Harvey Mason, Sean Rooks, Sean Elliott, Jason Terry, Richard Jefferson, Gilbert Arenas, and Derrick Williams.

It is not just basketball players. For Tucson, it's football. Each name comes with its own distinctive memories. Chuck Cecil, Glenn Howell, Bill Baker, Scott Baker, and Bill Nettling. Baseball players include such greats as Terry Francona, Wes Clements, Craig Lefferts, Eddie Vosberg, and Clark Crist. Assistant Coaches like Jim Wing, Scott Thompson. Coach's wives included Becki Burmeister, the late great Bobbi Olson, and the woman who really ran the UA sports programs, Rocky LaRose.

These are just a few of my favorites at the U of A. Each year, each season, each sport, I cheered on the crowds at McKale center and Arizona Stadium and anywhere else they'd let me do my act. Some coaches have said my efforts helped win games. Maybe. The fact is, over time, UA coaches have assembled some of the most talented teams in NCAA history.

5. Role Model

1980.

We hosted a regional tournament that year with Fresno State being the team we played first. Of course we still drank before and during the games.

Some of our fans on the third base line would get drunk and be obnoxious to the opposing players and coaches in the dugout. It was nothing really bad just comments about their appearance or their mother. You know the drill. PG. Maybe PG-13.

Well I had a rapport with some of the umpires that would call the games, Bill Rosenberry comes to mind, and he would come over to the stands and pretend to yell at me.

In the middle innings of this one game, monsoon clouds threatened overhead, but the game continued. Then, the umpire missed a call at home plate. It was a horrible call and I let him have it from behind the screen.

When I was finished giving him a piece of my mind (I did not know this umpire, and I made it clear I wasn't fooling around), I turned around to see the crowd behind me doing the same thing I was doing.

It was a mob mentality.

To make matters worse, a fan, who was so drunk that he was thrown out of the stadium, somehow got back in the stadium and was face to face with a Fresno State

coach from the dugout.

This Fresno State coach finally had enough and punched the drunk in the face. The man was carried out of the stadium by the security team, but now everybody was ticked off at the Fresno State coach and the insults got much worse.

Somehow the drunk that was tossed out of the stadium found his way back in again.

His face was covered in blood and his eye was swollen shut, but he was down there again yelling for the coach to come out of the dugout. This time he was arrested by the police and taken away for good, much to the displeasure of all the rowdy fans in the stands.

We went on to score couple of runs late in the game and won it and were on the way to winning the whole World Series that year.

Fresno State was so upset with our fans that they had to leave the stadium with bats in their hands for fear of being attacked after the game.

It was a terrible sight to see and a rude awakening for me.

I had come to realize the hard way how much influence I had over the crowd. I vowed never to drink again during a game.

That incident cost the university the opportunity to have a regional NCAA tournament in Tucson again for the next decade.

The next year, in 1981, Jerry Kindall called me into his office where I apologized to him for what happened and told him I was sorry for getting the fans riled up.

He told me it wasn't my fault and that the fans are always obnoxious on the third base line and that when they drink they get worse. He asked me if I would wear a UA jersey to the games and try and stop all the rowdiness before it gets out of hand.

I told him I would try and that all me cheers would be positive from now on. He thanked me and shook my hand. So I did what he asked and for the most part it helped. The Ooh Aah Man was growing up.

Much to the disappointment of all my drinking buddies, I stopped drinking before all he games as well as during them.

I decided that there were too many kids coming up to me after the games and asking

for my autograph that I realized I was a role model for these kids and I needed to set a better example for them and myself.

My children attended Richardson Elementary School and every year during love of reading week I would go into their classes dressed as the Ooh Aah Man and read to their classes and any other classes or schools that wanted me to read to their classes as a guest speaker.

There was one teacher at Richardson named Diane Weeks, (*Arizona Educational Teacher of The Year Finalist, 2000*) who taught kindergarten there and she had all of my kids in her class. She is a huge Wildcat fan, she had a corner in her class that was devoted to everything Wildcats.

Every year around March Madness, she would put on a basketball game on the school's outside court for all three kindergarten classes called the Red-Blue game, based on the annual game held at McKale Center.

Kids from all of the classes would either play in the game, be cheerleaders, or pretend to be Wilbur, Wilma, or Lute.

I would cheer at half time of all of her games. She retired from teaching in 2012. At the final Richardson Red-Blue Game, Diane actually had Lute Olson and his wife Kelly come to the last role playing game she put on, playing themselves of course, for the entire school to enjoy. The entire school got to watch that one, and at the end, there wasn't a dry-eye among the teachers, all smiles and tears.

It was Diane who presented me with the award I received for playing the Ooh Aah Man, at the ceremony in 2013.

It is really hard for me to believe that it will be thirty-four years (as of May 2013) that I have been the Ooh Aah Man, and that people still want me to be out there cheering and I still sign autographs.

Lute Olson retired in 2008 and went on to be the director of a bank. Bobbi Olson died on New Year's Day, 2001. Lute remarried twice. After three decades of service at UA, Rocky LaRose retired in 2013.

6. Final Fours

Joe was in Indianapolis when the Mens Basketball team defeated the North Carolina

Tar Heels 66-58 and the Kentucky Wildcats 84-79 (OT) to win the 1997 National Championship. That year, Arizona finished in third place, behind 3 teams that tied for 2nd. Many sports analysts agreed that the momentum created by Joe's excessive cheering resulted in rallies that became wins, especially down early versus the Tar Heels.

The University of Arizona had been kind enough to invite me to *all four* Final Fours that the Wildcats have been to.

For the first two in 1988 and 1994, I traveled as part of the cheerleading squad. The cheerleading squad consisted of 12 cheerleaders and one mascot, Wilbur. The cheerleading squad normally consisted of six cheerleaders and six pompom girls. For me to go one of the pompom girls was left home.

I went to Kansas City in 1988 and again to Charlotte in 1994. It was a blast being on the floor with the cheerleaders and Wilbur, but it wasn't fun losing the first game both times and having to spend the weekend there and not be able to cheer. Don't get me wrong, it was beautiful in both cities and I got to spend a couple of wonderful days sight seeing with my wife Nancy who also was invited to all of the Final Fours. However it wasn't the same as winning the first game (meaning, the national semi-final) and having a chance to win the National Championship.

In 1997, the University of Arizona called me and asked if my wife and I wanted to go to Indianapolis. I told them that my wife couldn't come because we had two small children and one on the way and that I would like to go but I didn't want to bump a pompom off the trip this time.

So they called me back and said I could come but I wouldn't be allowed on the floor. I said fine, I would find a way to cheer in the stands. This proved to be critical.

When we got to Indianapolis it was so different for me. I got to travel with the parents and families of the Wildcat players instead of the band and the cheerleaders. I also got to spend more time with Rocky LaRose and Bobbi Olson, my two favorite Wildcat women.

I went there with my full costume in case they wanted me to do something, (and they did.) They wanted me to cheer at a couple of pep rallies before the first game.

When we went to the first game, I dressed in full uniform just in case. It was good that I did because little did I know, it would become a big part of the game. Halfway

through the first half, I turned to the people in my section and did an Arizona spell out. I was about 40 rows behind the band and a small section of students set in one small part of the arena.

The majority of our fans, all the boosters and parents, were on the right side of me, sort of like what became the Zona Zoo. I was 40 rows from the floor. Picture that, as if in McKale Center, (behind the Zona Zoo) and our major section was to the right of the Zona Zoo, our fans packing the arena to about half-court.

When the band and student section heard the 'spell out' they turned around and saw where I was sitting, and we did one more spell out with the help of the booster section as well.

It was pretty loud. Only later did I hear it on TV and realized what a momentum-changer it was. We were down 16-5 when I started up. After that the students would turn around and look at me every time out to see if I was doing anything. The section I was in was *not* all Wildcat fans. (I had a seat on the end of a row.) Next to me were two Kentucky fans and next to them were two North Carolina fans. They were all friends rooting for each others team.

I had three Wildcat fans who I knew behind me. So when I got up the second time to cheer, I tore off my pants and took off one shirt and that got the crowd fired up below me. I did two loud spell-outs -- from my seat. Then I pointed to the band and student section for a *U of A!* cheer then the boosters and parents for a *U of A!* then behind me for a *U of A!*

Then I pointed back at the band and students *U of A!*, the other fans *U of A!*, behind me *U of A!*, and did it again a few more times then I raised my arms and got everybody to cheer *U of A!*

It was fantastic, *it was so loud.*

And so it went, during the game I would get up and cheer, removing one article of clothing each time, much to the dismay of the non-Wildcat fans sitting next to me.

One might argue that the 'Cats got off to a slow start against the tar Heels, but I do believe that after the media pounded our team and repeatedly said they didn't belong at the Final Four, the noise our fans made reminded them they were in fact a team of destiny. Do I claim credit for their rally and win? Of course not. But had our fans

remained silent, I don't know if our team would have played with as much passion.

We won the game by a score of 66-58, shocking the Tar Heel fans and briefly silencing the media critics.

It was great that we won the first game and that we would get to play for the National Championship against Kentucky.

Rocky asked me after the game if I wanted to be on the floor for the next game. I said, "No, I am superstitious and I want to stay right where I am."

When it came time for the game Monday night, I was ready. I got to my seat and everybody was ready to cheer. It was a great game, and went on to be considered a classic.

I did my thing during timeouts and we won the game in overtime by the score of 84-79.

That was it, we were National Champions. It was a great feeling to be National Champions for the first time. Riding back to the hotel on the bus with the parents was incredible. It was one of the most rewarding things I have ever been a part of. Getting to know parents like Eugene Edgeron's mom and Bennett Davison's sisters and dad was truly a fantastic experience for me.

It was surreal to see how that moment in time affected the city overall. I remembered the parade Tucson threw for the 1988 team, but no one expected an even bigger response, one that seemed to last the whole year.

In 2001, we made it back to the Final Four for the last time during the Olson era. This one was special because it was Lute's first tournament without his first wife, Bobbi, who had passed away from ovarian cancer earlier in the year.

It was very sad for my wife Nancy and myself because Bobbi Olson meant a great deal to both of us. We won the first game against Michigan State by a score of 91-80 and had to play against Duke in the final. It was a great game but Duke won by a score of 82-72. It was a heartbreaking loss for us because not only did we lose the game, we lost all of our starters to the NBA, except for Jason Gardner.

7. Retirement

In 2010, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. Since then, my body has deteriorated to the point where I can barely walk without falling. I can't write clearly, can't talk clearly, and I freeze every time I walk.

So, the University of Arizona asked me in Spring 2013 if I would consider retiring as the Ooh Aah Man because of my health.

Although I didn't really want to. I agreed with them. The University of Arizona set up a retirement ceremony for me for the last game of the season against ASU. It was bittersweet because although we won the game 73-58, it was my last official game as the Ooh Aah Man. Since that time, I have been thinking about my legacy and I have come to the conclusion that it is not over yet.

This year for the first time in a long time I have gotten to know most of the players on the basketball team. I would like to think that they are my friends. I have also gotten to meet some of their parents. I feel closer to this team than I did to any team in the past. Just because I am officially retired doesn't mean that I have stopped being the Ooh Aah Man.

Who knows? You may even see me out on the floor once in a while just for the heck of it.

When Sean Miller was hired to take over when Lute Olson left off, he assembled a roster some professional teams would love to have.

I feel closer to the 2013-14 Wildcats team than any other team, even the '88 squad. Nick Johnson, Gabe York, TJ McConnell, Kaleb Tarczewski, Ronde Hollis-Jefferson, Brandon Ashley, Matt Korcheck, Jacob Hazzard and Chris Johnson are all of the players I have met so far and talked to after every game. They are all genuinely nice guys. I want them to win it all this year.

Aldo (Ron) now lives in Atlanta and still cheers for the Wildcats. We did not know it when we first started, but the Ooh Aah Man would take on a modern day persona for young Wildcat fans like Button Salmon did for much of the 20th century. The Cubs had Ernie Banks, Ron Santo and Harry Caray. Dallas has its Cowboys. New York has Babe Ruth and Joe DiMaggio.

Air Jordan. Magic Johnson. Lombardi. They don't just symbolize one team. They

symbolize the greatest residing in all of us.

When I see old photos of myself performing, I've come to realize that the day my hand was severed, changing me from a player to a cheerleader, was God's direction, and it was for the greater good.

Ooh Aah is fearless, whereas I do know some fear. He is a passionate competitor whose energy is so contagious, whereas I am was afraid to compete for a spot on a roster in 1971. *Ooh Aah* has inspired teams to go to bowl games and win national titles by pantomiming two syllables, whereas now I can barely talk.

All I know is, I will always be the *Ooh Aah Man* until the day I die. *As young people ask about how to pursue their happiness and live for*

what they believe in, as a Wildcat, or otherwise, repeat after me.

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.’ Mark 8:27

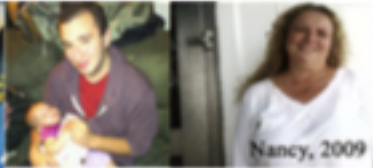
Scenes from Joe's Life



The Cavaleri Family 2013



Joe, his daughter Angelina, dad Augustino (front) nephew, Vincent, and granddaughter Annabella

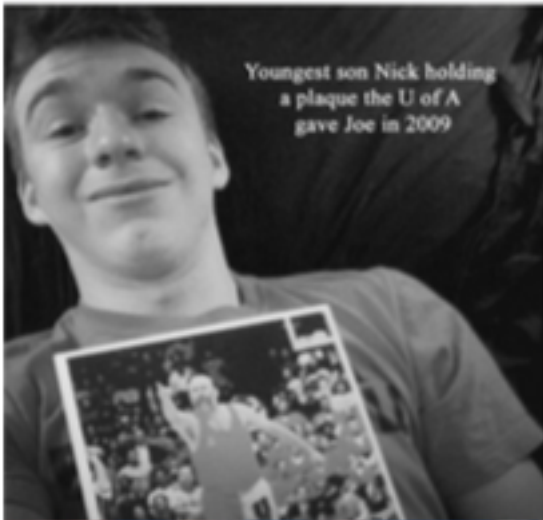


Nancy, 2009

Oldest son Michael and granddaughter Annabella, 2013



Joe & Nancy, 2005



Youngest son Nick holding a plaque the U of A gave Joe in 2009



Olivia and Joe



Daughters Angelina and Olivia, their mother Nancy, and Annabella. Joe, Nick and Angelina.

The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.- Proverbs 16:9



Football home game, Fall 2013



In recognition of your support of Arizona Athletics



Spell-Out 2012



Lute Olson All-Stars 2011



Joe, Steve Kerr, (center), Lute Olson All-Stars Game 2011

Nick Cavalari playing for Palo Verde High School (Las Vegas) 2013



Spell Out, 2012

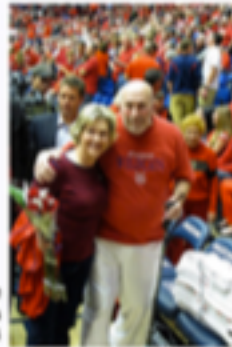


Spell Out 1998



Joe with Sean Rooks, 2013

Joe and Kathleen "Rocky" LaRose UA deputy director of athletics retired in 2013



1986...



Ron Riviezzo with friend Chip Rock. Actor James Mannis (suited, middle 1939 - 2013) as-seen in Aldo Cella Wine TV ads, which inspired Ron's nickname 'Aldo'.

The UA Marching Band Christmas 1986... Joe and Nancy wed in 1987.



Jerry Kindall
(1935-current)
UA baseball
(1973-1996)

"The Oob-Aah Man is the Great Momentum Changer." - Fred Snowden



Fred Snowden
(1937 - 1994)
UA Mens basketball
1972-82)



Larry Smith
(1939 - 2008)
UA assistant &
head coach
(1973-75, 1980-
1986)



Sean Rooks (frame left), and Joe, at the
2010 Lute Olson All-Stars Game

These are some of the coaches who credited Joe Cavalieri for igniting fans en route momentum-changing games and seasons.

Timeline...1979



Joe at 21



Sancet Field, 1980

...1985

1980
World Series
bound...



Halftime
Spell-Out, 1981



Wilbur
and Wilma
are based on
Joe Cavaleri.



1983 football vs UCLA

1980's-90s...the Jerry Kindall - Larry Smith - Lute Olson - Dick Tomey era

Thursday, April 14, 1981

Write or wrong

Don't blame 'Ooh-Aah Man'

Sports editor:

I have just finished reading the April 13 edition of the Citizen's sports page. Contained in it was a letter from Mr. Bob Morrow concerning the disgraceful behavior of a select few UA baseball fans. His letter referred to a recent series with ASU. Blame for this atrocious behavior was placed on the shoulders of Joe Cavaleri, better known as the Ooh-Aah Man. I find this charge to be both unfair and totally erroneous.

Mr. Morrow suggests that the cheerleading be left up to the UA cheerleaders. If this were the case, a night at a UA sports function would be a great place to spend a quiet evening. The UA cheerleaders obviously work very hard at their routines, but on the whole, they are ineffective in arousing the crowd.

It seems Ooh-Aah is the only one who can motivate

the passive Tucson fans to get up and cheer.

Arizona Stadium, McKale Center and Wildcat Field are considered neutral sites due to the passive fans. Ooh-Aah is the lone ingredient that transforms them to a home field advantage.

The morons who were throwing things at the ASU players and coaches are not a result of Ooh-Aah. In fact, on Friday night when the situation started to get out of hand, Jerry Kindall thought enough of Ooh-Aah to ask him to quiet the crowd. What that proves to me is that even if people such as Bob Morrow don't appreciate Ooh-Aah, at least important people like Jerry Kindall do.

Sam Elliott
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Get a bone to pick with the Citizen sports staff, or want to express to them our way? Get a sports opinion you'd like to express? Then get your pen, pencil or typewriter and drop a line to "Write or wrong," c/o of the Tucson Citizen Sports Department, P.O. Box 3670, Tucson, Arizona, 85726.