



the true
measure
of a
champion

by William E. Paterson '93

It is common practice
for athletes to be
categorized,
& **characterized**
recognized
according to
N U M B E R S .

College athletes are no exception, particularly those in the increasingly high-stakes, high-profile world of college basketball. The Canisius College men's team can attest to that. Indeed, most students, faculty and alumni know senior center Darren Fenn as number 24, who stands 6' 10" and scored 13.8 points per game this season. Senior Clive Bentick is the 6' 1" guard who wears number 10 and averaged 13.6 points a game.

And, of course, there is the granddaddy of all numbers: wins. The Canisius community has been energized by the 20-win season the men's basketball team enjoyed this year, capped off by a thrilling run to the MAAC Tournament Championship Game. But statistics do not begin to tell the whole story of any student athlete, especially not Fenn and Bentick. As both have learned, the experience is a rich tapestry of physical, mental and emotional development that transcends numbers.

College basketball is not about sneaker endorsements or multi-million dollar free agent contracts. It is about sweating in a gym from one midnight in October until sometime in March. It is about learning to trust that when your opponent gets past you, your teammate will be there to bail you out. It is about experiencing heartbreak and elation on consecutive days and sharing it with the only other people on the planet who understand your emotions. And it is about having the courage to do all of this in public, as the rest of us sit back and scrutinize. All while trying to keep up with your studies,

complete internships and squeeze in some youthful recreation.

This is the life of a college athlete — the life that Darren Fenn and Clive



Bentick have led for the last four years. Now, as they wind down their exceptional college careers, it is clear that both represent more to the Canisius College community than any one number could possibly convey. Men's head basketball coach, **Mike MacDonald**, says of his two graduating seniors, "It's really about growth — on and off the court. Both Darren and Clive came in with room for improvement. And they both persevered. It's like the college's slogan, 'Where leaders are made.' Darren and Clive are great examples of that."

No need to be the center of attention

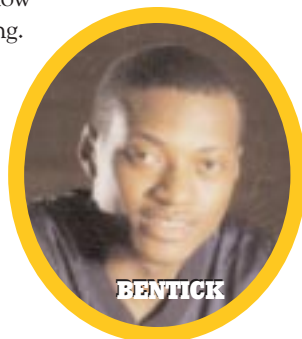
When Tonawanda, NY native **Darren Fenn** chose to play basketball at Canisius, it was a major recruiting coup. Here was a true big man who could take the program to the next level with his prolific scoring and rebounding. For three years, that is exactly what he did. Throughout the 1999-2000 season, Fenn dominated the MAAC, averaging 17.6 points per game and serving as the team's undisputed "go-to guy." But as his senior season began, a funny thing happened on the way to the Koessler Center: several other very talented players emerged.

That is when Darren Fenn really showed what kind of athlete he is. The big man on campus made way for the new players to make the team stronger. And, sure enough, when Fenn was injured during the Notre Dame game, the budding stars stepped up to fill his rather large shoes. Though Fenn saw his scoring average dip three points per game this season, the team's fortunes soared. And that is what mattered most to the senior. According to MacDonald, "Darren wanted to win. And he put the team ahead of himself."



Making a point without taking a shot

Playing time is precious to a freshman. So when seldom-used guard **Clive Bentick** entered the final game of the 1997-98 season in the closing seconds, what transpired was truly extraordinary. Also on the court was senior Dennis Wilson, who had received little playing time throughout his career and had yet to score a basket. As Bentick would do many times over the years, he quickly stole the ball and drove the length of the court. With the fans cheering and a chance to impress the coaches by putting some points on the board, Bentick promptly passed the ball to Wilson so that the senior could finally know the joy of scoring.



For that unselfish act, Clive was a finalist for the NCAA Outstanding Sportsman Award. In many ways, it would be the most meaningful moment of his career. "Clive has always led by example," says MacDonald, "As he developed as a player and a person, he learned to lead with his words, too."

Whether they are men or women, and whether they play NCAA or club sports, Canisius athletes, Canisius athletes are defined by their heart, their integrity and their willingness to bleed blue and gold. To be sure, Darren Fenn and Clive Bentick have posted some impressive numbers over the years. But the shots they chose not to take will speak the loudest about who they are and what they have learned in their time at Canisius. They are sportsmen. They are leaders. They are winners. And no stat sheet or scoreboard could ever prove otherwise. 🏀

MacDonald Stays on Main Street

Men's basketball coach, **Mike MacDonald**, signed a five-year contract in March that will keep the head coach on the **Golden Griffins** bench through the 2005 - 2006 season.

MacDonald's 58 career victories at Canisius place him 7th all-time in the history of the college program.

