

Remarks of Hon. Roger L. Putnam, Mayor of Springfield and Chairman of the Naismith Memorial Executive Committee, given at the Press Luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City, October 14, 1941.

Mr. Chairman, Honored Guests, Gentlemen:

I regard it as a very happy privilege to be here today to inaugurate the Golden Jubilee of Basketball campaign in honor of Dr. James Naismith, the founder of the game.

I don't have to tell you that regardless of how far sighted he may have been, Dr. Naismith could never have foreseen the almost incredible development of this pastime in the fifty years of its existence. Young as it is, basketball has enlisted the whole-hearted enthusiasm of millions, not only in our own country but throughout the world. There is probably not a nation today that does not have representative teams.

All of you men here today, I know, are particularly familiar with basketball, with its technic, with its importance in the athletic world, and with the part it plays in the development of American youth. But at this time, with the world in the throes of one of its most deplorable wars, our Golden Jubilee Campaign takes on a special significance. I refer to the part that basketball is playing and will play in the national defense program. It is a peculiar but undeniable fact that those nations of the world who indulge wholeheartedly in competitive athletics are inherently less aggressive than those nations whose motif is imperialistic and militaristic. We in this country are proud of what basketball has accomplished in building character. On the court all players are on their own. No game could be more democratic, more constructive, more enjoyable.

All of you here know I am sure the aims of the Naismith Memorial Committee. And I think you will agree with me that in erecting a Museum and Hall of Fame in honor of that gentleman, Dr. James Naismith, we will not only be commemorating the name of a worthy sportsman, but will at the same time be helping basketball immeasurably by crystallizing its traditions and ideals and perpetuating them for future generations.