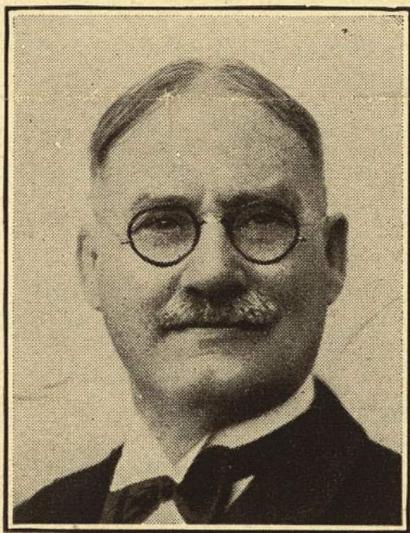




*The First Basketball Team: (Back row, left to right) John G. Thompson '93, Eugene S. Libby '92, Dr. Edwin P. Ruggles '95, Wm. R. Chase '93, T. Duncan Patton '92. (Center) Frank Maban '93, Dr. James Naismith '91. (Front row) Finlay G. MacDonald '93, William H. Davis '92, Lyman W. Archibald '93.*

## “Father of Basketball” Dies in Kansas Home



ON November 28, death came to Dr. James A. Naismith, '91 who through his invention of basketball at Springfield College in 1891 made an outstanding contribution to the youth of all nations. Dr. Naismith died at his

home in Lawrence, Kans., of heart disease following a cerebral hemorrhage. He suffered a critical hemorrhage on November 19, but rallied and returned to his home from a hospital after four days. Two days later he was stricken with a heart attack which resulted in his death.

One of the most widely known and best loved Springfield Alumni, Dr. Naismith returned many times to the campus of the school where as a student instructor in physical education he originated the game which was to be carried around the world in a few years by other Alumni of the same institution.

His last visit to the campus was in the spring of 1939 when he attended the New England high school basketball tournament, sponsored by the College. At the end of the tournament President Ernest M. Best announced College plans for the construction of a basketball arena to be named in honor of Dr. Naismith.

In paying tribute to Dr. Naismith following his death, Dr. Best said: “Dr. Naismith was one of the founders of modern scientific physical education and recreation. He was one of a little group of unusual men who pioneered at the Springfield Y. M. C. A. Training School in the foundation of what became a new vocation.”

It was in the gymnasium of the first building

of Springfield College (known then as the International Young Men's Christian Association Training School) then located on State Street that the first game of basketball was played with the 18 members of the class in physical education all taking part in the game with nine players to a side. The story has become legend that Dr. Naismith sent the janitor for boxes to toss the ball into and the janitor returned with peach baskets. Thus the game became basketball instead of box ball. It must have been the same janitor who, according to the legend, sat on a stepladder during that first game to retrieve the ball from the basket when a player made a goal.

When Dr. Naismith looked for a place to fasten the baskets his eye fell on the side of the balcony. Since it was nine feet above the floor the basket was placed at that height. That must have been a fortunate choice for that has remained the official height of the basket.

Invented to fill a definite need in the winter program at the College, Dr. Naismith's game evidently filled a need everywhere for within a few years it sprang into wide popularity. It was estimated by the *New York Times* two seasons ago that 18,000,000 persons play the game and that 90,000,000 spectators watch it annually. This means that more people participate in and watch basketball than any other sport.

Dr. Naismith was born in Almonte, Ont., on November 6, 1861. He was graduated from McGill University, Montreal, in 1887, and for three years was director of physical education there. He came to Springfield in 1890 and took the two year training course. He remained on the staff at the college until 1895, when he went to Gross Medical College in Denver, Col. Graduating as a doctor of medicine in 1898 he went to the University of Kansas as professor of physical education. At the time of his death he was professor emeritus.

Dr. Naismith was one of the first four recipients of the Edward Norris Tarbell medallions for distinguished service to Springfield College at the commencement exercises in 1935.