



A REMINDER—Mrs. James Naismith, widow of the originator of basketball who will be honored at K. U. Friday, reminisces in Topeka Wednesday about her husband as she pauses in a department store beside a fine metal basketball goal, much unlike the peach basket that started it all.

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Father of Basketball To Be Memorialized

BY ANNA MARY MURPHY
Of The Daily Capital Staff

An ordained minister who never had a pulpit.

A surgeon who never practiced his healing profession.

The originator and lifelong teacher of a game he never coached.

That is the won-lost record left behind by Dr. James Naismith, beloved father of basketball whose memory will be honored Friday night at the University of Kansas.

And if lives were scored like basketball games, Dr. Naismith himself might have considered this a pretty ineffective showing.

But Dr. Naismith "didn't consider basketball his real work in life," Mrs. Naismith revealed in Topeka Wednesday.

He merely used the game, his ministerial training, and medical degree to reach his goal: "to help and guide young men."

Mrs. Naismith, now a house-mother for the Delta Gamma Sorority at Washburn University, will be present Friday at the half-time ceremony of the K. U.-Colorado game.

At that time, a lifesize oil painting of her late husband will be presented to the university's athletic department for display in its new Allen Fieldhouse.

The occasion will carry a significance many of the youthful fans won't catch, Mrs. Naismith feels. It will prove athletics have finally "arrived."

The K. U. students of today don't know that the night Dr. Naismith left McGill University in Canada to accept his first athletic directorship, the entire faculty and graduating class "prayed for his soul."

"They felt he was surely headed for the devil by giving up the ministry for such a disreputable position," Mrs. Naismith recalled her husband saying.

But a few years before he died in 1939, the same theological seminary invited and pleaded with him to come back and preach the graduation sermon and confer the degrees.

"At first," Mrs. Naismith remembers, "he just laughed and said that was quite a turn of events. We didn't want to go because he would have to buy a cap and gown. But he did."

That first job which brought

on the prayer meeting was at Springfield, Mass., College.

After the football season was over, the college president called in his Presbyterian minister-athletic director and asked:

"Now that the football season is over, we need some form of athletics to keep the boys active. Can't you find some sort of indoor game to take the place of football?"

Dr. Naismith thought for quite a while, but had to report failure to the president.

But the president told him to try again. The result was Dr. Naismith's famous trip to the basement to salvage two peach baskets to be used as hoops for his new game.

No one was more surprised than he that basketball grew to become the game attended each year by more Americans than any other.

The K. U. professor was in Berlin for the 1936 Olympics when his game came into its own as an international sport.

Though Dr. Naismith will be remembered by strangers as "the man who invented basketball," the thousands who were influenced by him on Mt. Oread during his 40 years there prefer to recall "he was never too busy to help a boy."

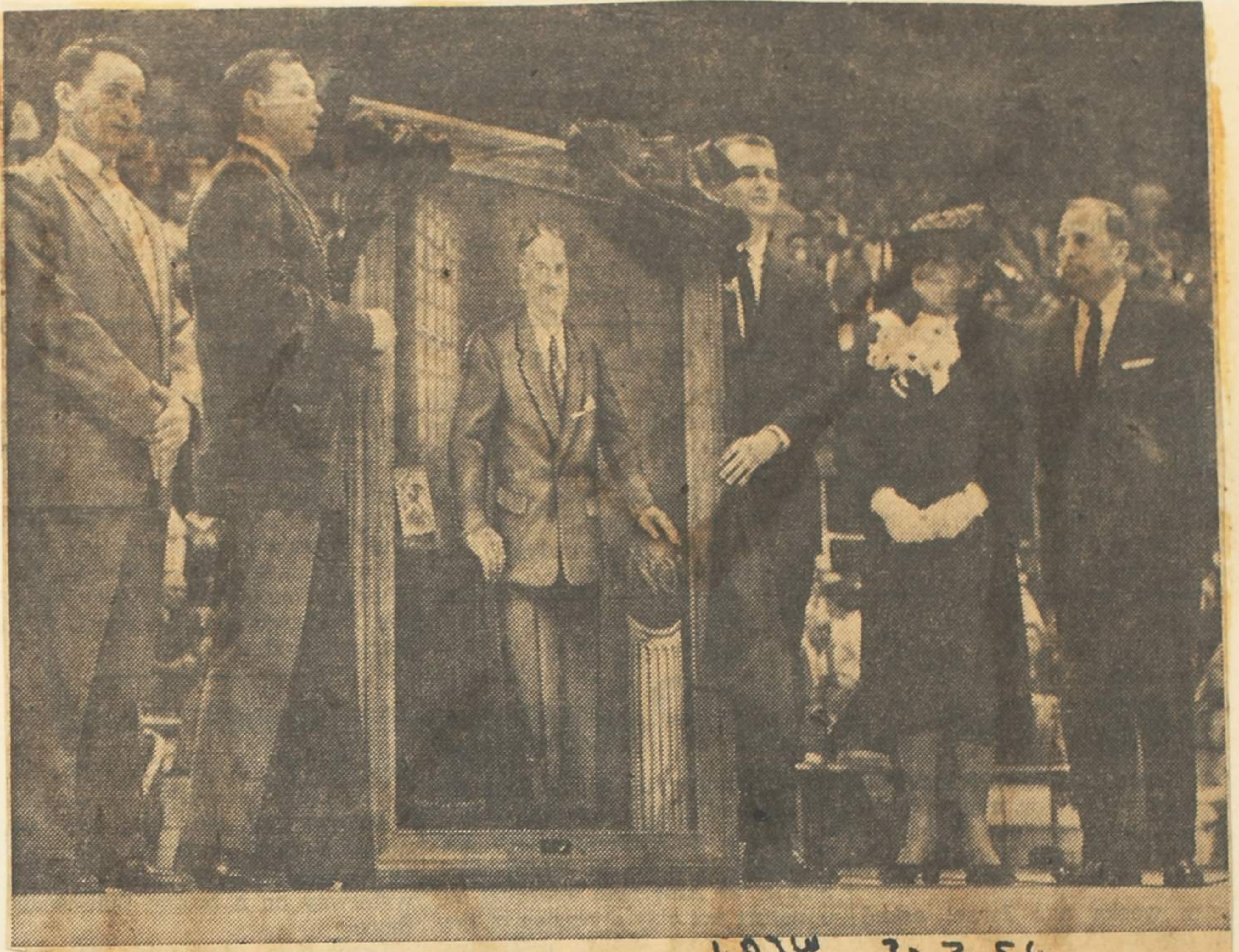
An unhappy, orphaned childhood lay behind this dedication to youth, his wife believes.

And she also knows he wouldn't mind that the K.U. fieldhouse doesn't bear his name, as many had proposed.

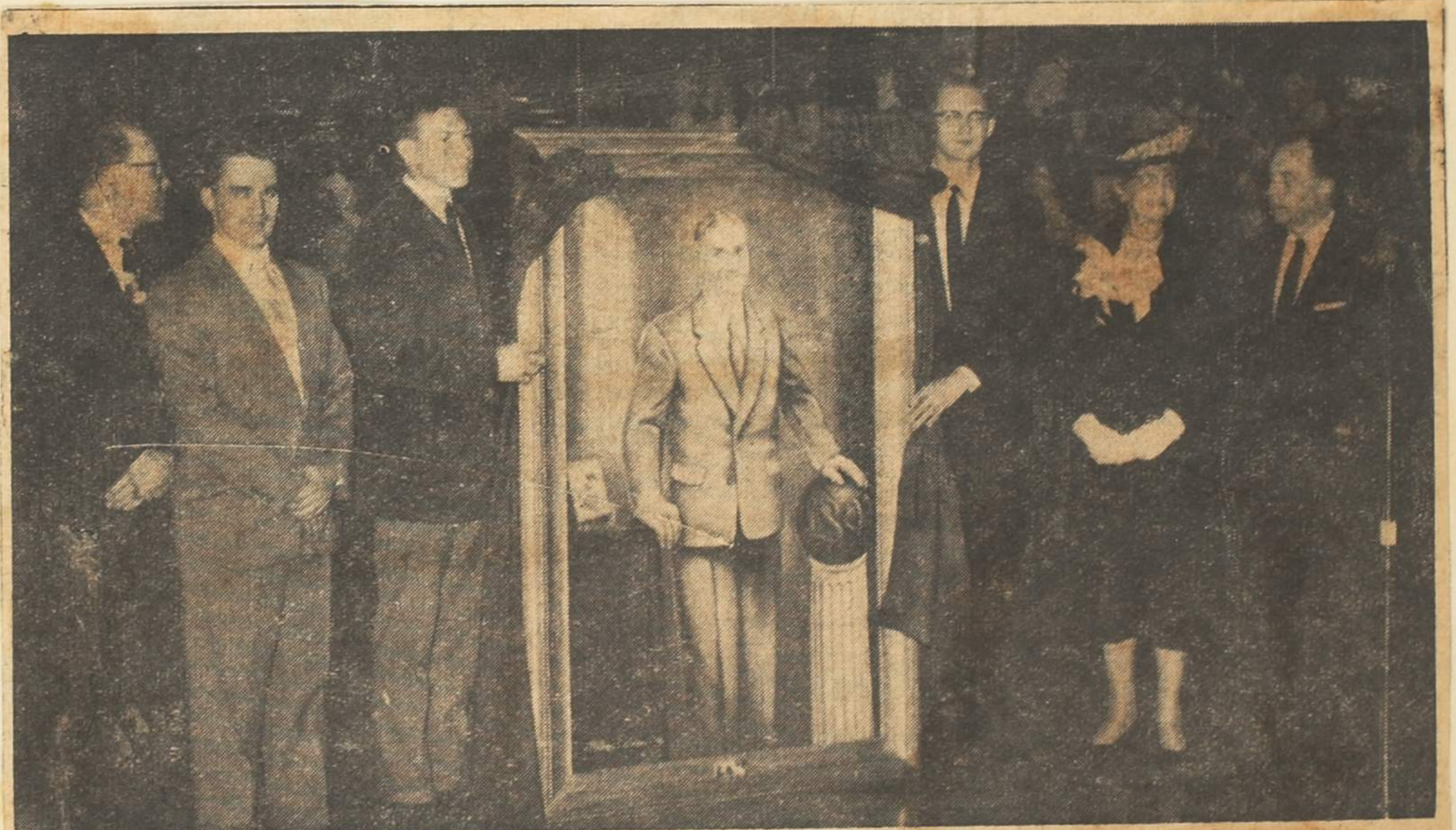
"He just never thought of himself," she said.

"In fact," she added, "shortly before he died he remarked: 'You know, Florence, I feel God's hand has guided me throughout everything I have done in life.'"

His gracious wife said the "best way she could sum it up" was that "he lived a life that counted."



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PORTRAIT PRESENTED—Sigma Phi Epsilon Friday night presented a painted portrait of Dr. James Naismith, inventor of basketball, to Kansas University. Presentation was made at halftime of the K.U.-Colorado basketball game. The painting will be hung in Allen Fieldhouse; A. C. (Dutch) Lonborg, K. U. athletic director, said. Shown in the picture at far left is J. R. Callahan, Kansas City, Mo., the painter; at the right is Chancellor Franklin Murphy, with Mrs. Naismith, widow of the former K. U. faculty member, next to the chancellor. The picture is flanked by Dave Schwartz on the left and Bob Hopkins, both members of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. (Journal-World Photo.)



SOMETHING NEW—A new addition to the field house is this portrait of Dr. James Naismith, which was presented to the University at the basketball game Saturday. Left to right are Douglas Paddock, Kansas City, Mo., 1951 alumnus; J. Richard

Callahan, painter of the portrait; Bob Hopkins, Russell freshman; Dave Schwartz, Russell junior; Mrs. Naismith, and Dr. Murphy, chancellor of the University. Sigma Phi Epsilon presented the Kansas portrait.—(Daily Kansas Photo) 3/5/56



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GRANDSONS VIEW NAISMITH PORTRAIT in the lobby of the Allen fieldhouse at the University of Kansas, where they are students. Dr. James Naismith, inventor of the widely popular game of basketball, was the grandfather of James Dodd (left) of St. Louis and Ian Naismith of Corpus Christi, Tex.—(Associated Press photograph).