

FILM PROJECT UPDATE
October 7, 2025

Bona Basketball Documentary To Complete Part I with \$50,000 Supporting Grant from St. Bonaventure University

The upcoming landmark video documentary series on the St. Bonaventure University men's basketball legacy and its Franciscan tradition, *Brown 'n White: The Heart of Bona's Basketball*, has received a \$50,000 supporting grant from St. Bonaventure University to advance the timely completion of Part I and its submission to international film festivals.

The groundbreaking documentary is being independently produced and directed by Mike Camoin, a 1988 St. Bonaventure graduate and award-winning filmmaker, through Videos for Change Productions. Over the past six years, he has recorded more than 75 interviews of players, coaches, Franciscan friars, administrators and alumni and will be donating the footage and related documents to the St. Bonaventure University archives for future research purposes.

Brown 'n White tells the extraordinary story of how one of the smallest NCAA Division I college basketball programs in America, nestled in the remote foothills of southwestern New York state, fought the odds to play on a national stage. It also provides a rare insight into how one school confronted the changing racial, social and economic norms of the past 70 years, including how its Franciscan values impacted future community service by its alumni.

One preview clip focuses on Fred Crawford, '64, and his longtime co-directorship of the legendary Rucker Park in Harlem that was a community gathering place in turbulent times for top-level playground basketball featuring legends like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Julius Erving and Connie Hawkins. Rucker Park was designated this year as a national commemorative site for its contribution to Black history and culture.

“The film offers a unique perspective not only on the evolution of major college basketball at a school like St. Bonaventure, but also on the power of higher education and the social impact that mission-based athletics programs can have,” said Dr. Jeff Gingerich, St. Bonaventure University president. “We sincerely believe the story Mike tells will capture the history, brotherhood and Franciscan tradition of Bonaventure basketball and will be of great interest to St. Bonaventure’s loyal alumni and fans as well as national audiences,” he said. “This unique documentary will serve as a powerful educational tool for the benefit of Bonnies past, present and future.”

“We are extremely grateful to the university for its encouragement, commitment and financial support so we can tell national and worldwide audiences about the achievements, challenges, and faith-infused model for overcoming adversity that runs throughout the history of the St. Bonaventure men’s basketball program,” Camoin said. “This story of success continues even in today’s current climate of player transfer portals and NIL compensation levels.”

The documentary’s interviews highlight the untold and forgotten stories and contributions by players and coaches to St. Bonaventure University, to the game itself and to society.

Playing a major role in St. Bonaventure University’s unique journey is the influence of its founding Franciscan friars and the values espoused by St. Francis of Assisi – that of creating a community that affirms the unique worth of each person, service to the poor and marginalized and reverence for all creation.

“It was into this welcoming environment that two African-American teens, Sam and Tom Stith, ventured from Harlem to blaze the trail to the St. Bonaventure campus,” Camoin said, “thus laying the cornerstone for the Bonnies program to advance to its first NCAA tournament in the Deep Jim Crow South and for many other successes to follow.”

The ensuing years saw the team mount an extraordinary 22-0 regular season record, reach the NCAA Final Four as the smallest Division I school ever, win the NIT Championship, push Kentucky to double overtime in the NCAA tournament, fall into a player compliance scandal, and ultimately rebound back into national relevance with five more NCAA and NIT tournament appearances this century, including a March Madness victory over UCLA.

More information is available on Brown 'n White: The Heart of Bona's Basketball at brownwhitestory.com

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Tax-deductible contributions can be made here Brown 'n White, and here PayPal. Direct contributions can be made via Venmo @Michael-Camoin.

If you'd like to learn more, please reach the filmmaker directly via e-mail or phone 518.441.5300.

