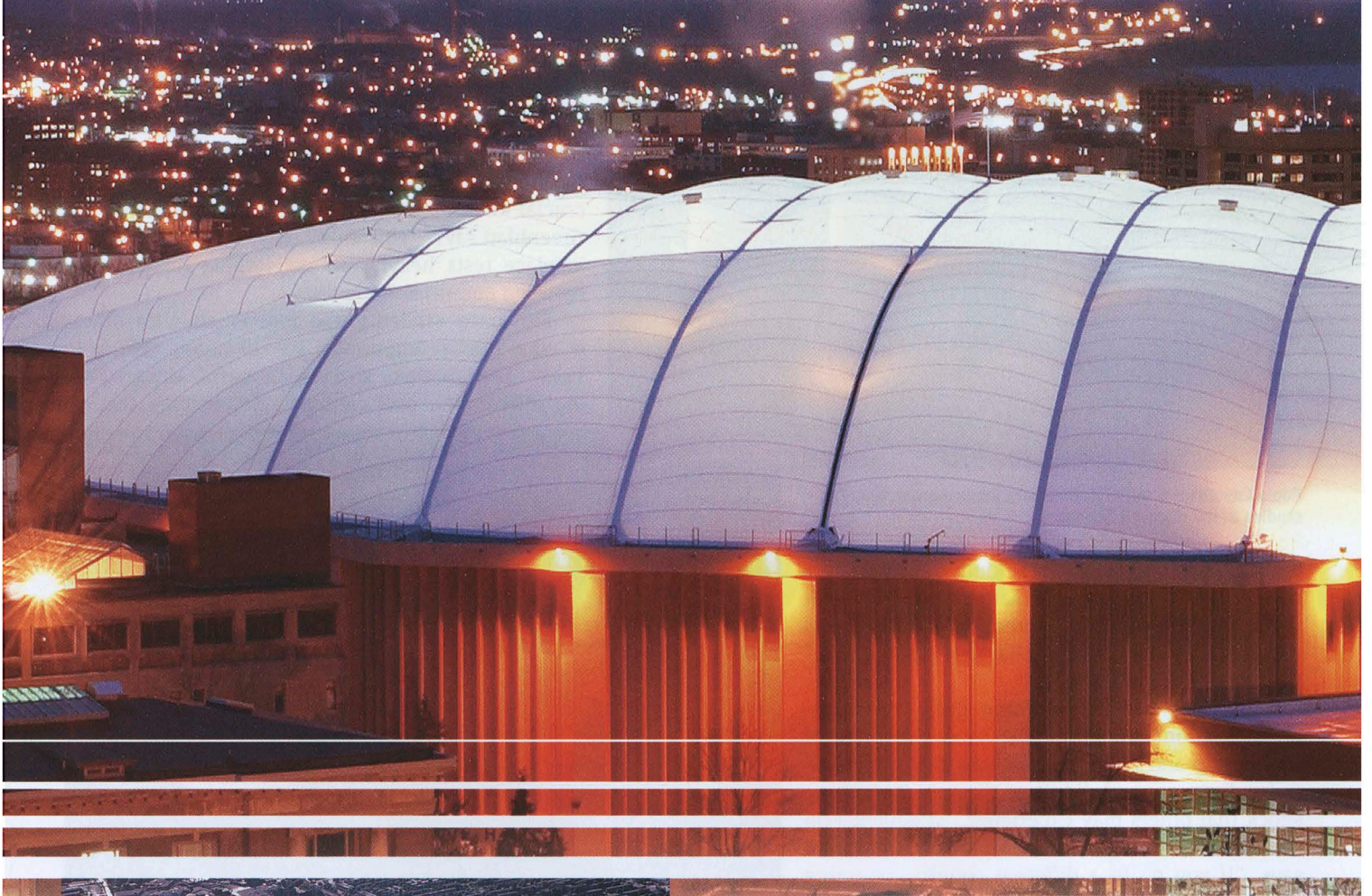
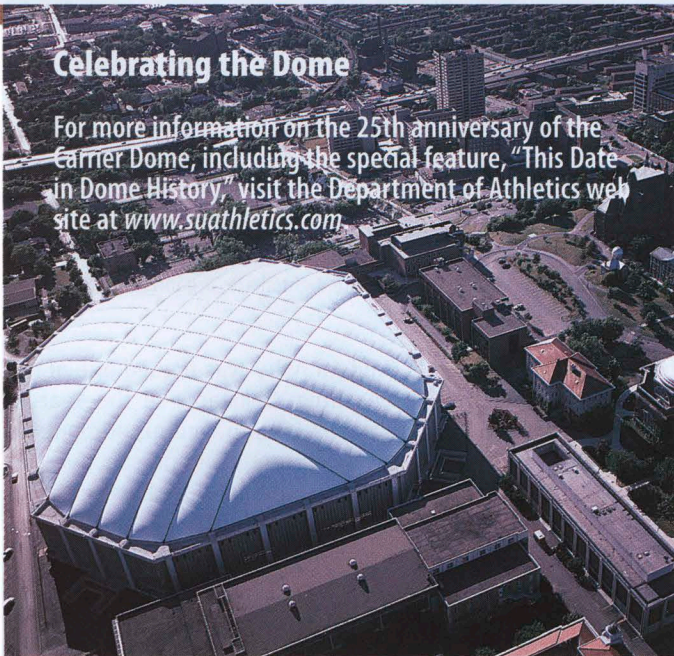


DomeSweet



Celebrating the Dome

For more information on the 25th anniversary of the Carrier Dome, including the special feature, "This Date in Dome History," visit the Department of Athletics web site at www.suathletics.com



New York City has its skyline; Los Angeles, the Hollywood sign; and Syracuse has the Carrier Dome.

At age 25, the big white bubble on the Hill has played host to 23.5 million people attending 1,740 events. Crowds in excess of 30,000 have shown up for SU basketball games 60 times. Built to keep the weather out, the Dome serves to keep the sound in. To dispel any doubt that the Dome has earned its nickname, "The Loud House," ESPN sound engineers ran tests at the 2005 Syracuse-Notre Dame basketball game. The record-breaking crowd of 33,199—largest ever to see a basketball game on a college campus—registered a decibel level of 120, three ticks above the ESPN record. New head football coach Greg Robinson has already figured the building into his game plans. "The people make the Dome a special place," he says. "I look forward to the advantage of the crowd as a factor in limiting what opposing offenses can do at the line of scrimmage." SU athletic director Daryl Gross believes that SU's student-athletes are well-served by the Dome's consistent playing conditions and all-weather practice facilities. "Beyond that," he says,

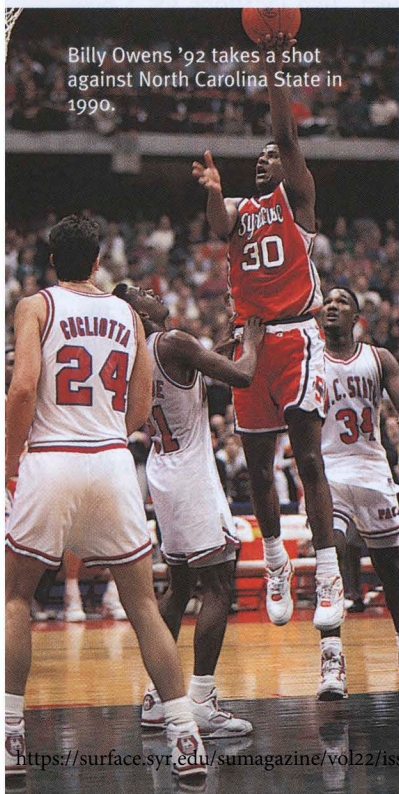
etDome

Since its opening in 1980, the Carrier Dome has become a Central New York landmark, opening the University's door to millions who come to the Hill for sports, music, academic events, and family entertainment

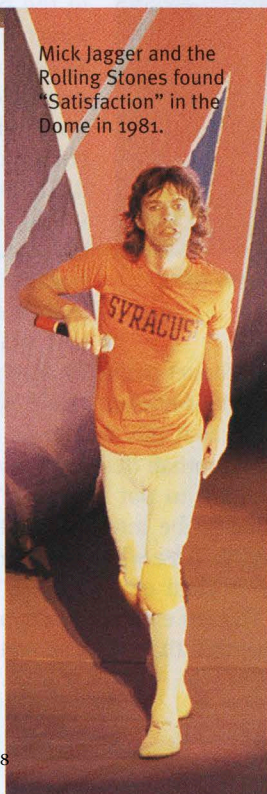
By David Marc

Photos by John Dowling

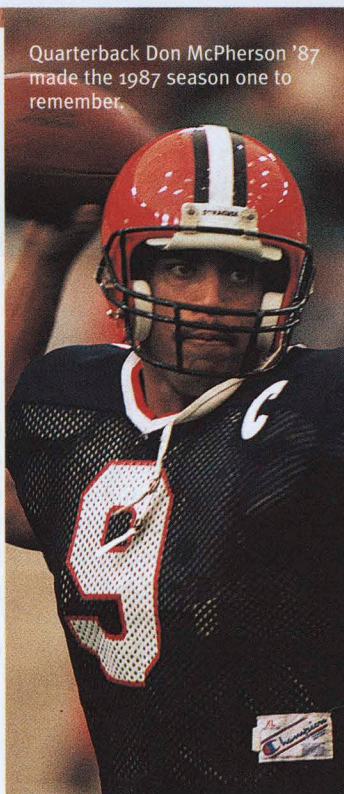
Billy Owens '92 takes a shot against North Carolina State in 1990.



Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones found "Satisfaction" in the Dome in 1981.



Quarterback Don McPherson '87 made the 1987 season one to remember.



Orange fans crank up the volume in "The Loud House."



“it is such a unique and special venue—one of the seven wonders of intercollegiate athletics.”

More than a home to Orange sports, the Dome has brought Syracuse NCAA championship tournaments, pre-season NBA games (yes, Air Jordan has flown this route), world figure skating exhibitions, and even a Sugar Ray Leonard title defense. More than a sports stadium, it has put Central New York on the map for an eclectic array of events that includes the Moscow State Circus, a Billy Graham crusade, and performances by Frank Sinatra, Jerry Garcia, Dolly Parton, Rod Stewart, and Snoop Dogg. Generations of Central New York kids grow up dreaming of their own special moments under the Dome—catching a pass in the end zone, laying down licks on the sound system, or marching down the aisle to receive a Syracuse University diploma.

Crumbling Old Archie

How did SU come to build the first and only domed stadium on a college campus? How did that stadium become a bridge carrying tens of millions of people to the University? How did the Dome grow into a symbol of pride and excitement for an entire region? It wasn't easy.

During the 1970s, home field was becoming something less than an advantage for Syracuse football. Venerable Archbold Stadium, home to the Orange since 1907, was showing its age. A marvel in its day, the coliseum-like structure at the west end of campus had generated more fond memories than snowflakes in a lake-effect squall. But sentiment turned to embarrassment—and then to worry—as wood splintered, rest rooms flooded, and cracks, large

debate. Then push came to shove. In 1977, the College Football Association (CFA), which then controlled network television rights to major NCAA games, issued a proviso: Only stadiums averaging more than 33,000 per game in home attendance would be considered as sites for national telecasts. Originally built for 20,000, Archbold had been enlarged several times, reaching a peak of 40,000 during the late 1950s. But its gradual decay had not escaped the notice of fire marshals. Capacity, which had dipped as low as 26,000, had recently found a plateau somewhere in the low 30s. “Our capacity was on the edge of what our average attendance had to be,” Crouthamel says. “If we didn't get a bigger stadium, we might be kicked out of the CFA and lose all of our TV arrangements and revenue streams.”

Chancellor Melvin Eggers considered three viable options. Some suggested downgrading the football program, as SU's traditional rivals, Colgate and Cornell, had done, and renovating Archbold to a manageable 20,000. Others called for eliminating intercollegiate football as NYU and others had done. The most impassioned voices came from those who believed that the Syracuse football tradition should be maintained to ensure its future as a source of pride across generations of alumni and fans. Eggers responded to that message. Early in 1977, he turned to Vice Chancellor Clifford L. Winters to take charge of building a new stadium. Remarkably, in less than three years, Archbold was gone and the Carrier Dome stood in its place. On September 20, 1980, a crowd of 50,563, still the largest ever to see football in Syracuse, showed up for the home opener, a 36-24 victory over Miami of Ohio. “This happened years before the movie *Field of Dreams*,” Crouthamel says. “But we built it—and they came.”

Atop a Solid Foundation

Thomas F. Benzel '63, who was involved with the construction of the Dome and served as its first manager, believes that the personal vision shared by Eggers and Winters was an important asset to the project. Two locations for a new stadium were originally proposed: the Skytop area of South Campus and the Archbold site. Though there was support for leaving the old site behind, Winters reasoned that a lack of access roads at the southern limits of the University would force virtually all stadium-bound traffic to cross the campus. Worse, any stadium built that far from the pedestrian-friendly Quad would sit like a distant island in a sea of concrete parking

lots. Benzel points to another, more subjective factor in the location decision: “Cliff Winters told me, in no uncertain terms, that this was to be a multipurpose facility, and not just a football field,” he says. “A stadium is a huge complex structure to put in people's backyards, and Cliff believed it had to be integrated into the life of the community. It needed to be where people could see it as a positive, useful part of their environment.”

Though enclosed stadiums are usually thought of as more expensive than the conventional kind, the idea of putting a



The SU football team spent the 1979 season on the road while the Carrier Dome was being built on the site of Archbold Stadium.

and small, scribbled ominous messages across the face of the third concrete stadium ever built. The catacomb-like locker rooms developed a rodent problem that stymied experts. The situation became so bad that visiting teams were taken to other locations to dress before arriving at the field. “Archbold had gone beyond the ‘quaint old stadium’ stage,” says Jake Crouthamel, SU's athletic director from 1978 to 2005. “It was an eyesore in deplorable condition.”

University officials, alumni, students, and fans agreed that something had to be done, but were gridlocked in



The 2005 SU-Notre Dame basketball game drew an NCAA on-campus record crowd of 33,199.

Dome TALK

Syracuse men's basketball has led the nation in home attendance 12 times, including 11 straight years (1985-95) and 2005. Since 1980, some eight million fans have attended 465 home games.

Sugar Ray Leonard knocked out Larry Bonds in a 1981 defense of his welterweight boxing title before 20,165.

The building has fought Central New York cabin fever with healthy doses of March Madness, hosting NCAA men's basketball tournament games nine times since 1983.

The last two winners of NCAA men's basketball regional finals played in the Dome went on to win national championships: Maryland (2002) and North Carolina (2005).

Seven NBA preseason games have been played in the Dome, including the Denver Nuggets-Detroit Pistons contest, which marked the return to the 'Cuse of championship season star Carmelo Anthony '06. A crowd of 20,315 greeted him.

The Philadelphia Eagles and the New Orleans Saints played in the Dome's only NFL action, a 1981 preseason battle that drew 28,001.

On March 13, 1993, during a marathon 43-inch snowfall, the old Dome roof was deflated to forestall the possibility of collapse. The current roof, installed in 1999, has a heating element that melts snow on contact.

Contrary to popular belief, the Orange played its first indoor football game not at the Carrier Dome, but at the Astrodome, squaring off against the University of Houston on September 20, 1970.

roof on the projected stadium opened the door to crucial funding sources. Mel Holm H'81, chair of SU's Board of Trustees (1975-82) as well as CEO of the Carrier Corporation, was asked to sound out New York Governor Hugh Carey about state funding. Holm learned there was little chance of persuading Carey, much less the state legislature, to aid in building a facility that would be used only a dozen times a year for college sports. But, given the region's weather, how could a stadium of this size be of use to the community year-round? Winters looked skyward for the answer.

Domed sports stadiums were nothing new. Houston's Astrodome had opened for Major League Baseball in 1961. But another structure caught Benzel's attention: a stadium being built by the NFL's Detroit Lions in Pontiac, Michigan. "The Silverdome was originally going to have a hard roof, like the Astrodome," Benzel says. "But there were cost overruns and David Geiger, a structural engineer, came up with a solution, mid-project. He designed a less expensive, air-supported dome and retrofitted it, proving it could be done." Geiger later came to Syracuse and designed the Dome's first roof.

The Pitch: An Element of Theater

Governor Carey was invited to campus and taken on a stroll through poor old Archbold to hear the pitch for a domed stadium from Eggers, Holm, and Syracuse *Post-Standard* publisher Stephen Rogers. Carey was told how a domed stadium would be a bona fide community asset to Syracuse and the region. With more than twice the seating capacity of any existing venue in 100 miles, and with weather eliminated as a scheduling factor, Central New York would have,

for the first time, a year-round facility capable of bringing in large-scale entertainment and sports events, otherwise available only in the largest metropolitan areas. It could host high school and amateur sports, political rallies, religious revivals, and other events, enriching the region's cultural life—and its tax coffers. For the *piece de résistance*, they invoked the football legends—Jim Brown '57, Ernie Davis '62, Floyd Little '67—and appealed to the governor to keep that great tradition alive. "It was an emotional pitch, but Carey was a veteran politician and just agreed in a noncommittal way," *The Post-Standard* later reported. Action spoke louder than words. The Democratic governor, working with Syracuse State Senator Tarky J. Lombardi Jr. '51, G'54, a Republican, lined up \$15 million in state funding for the domed stadium. The project sparked reaction, but Carey held sway, lauding the Dome as the epitome of public-private partnership. The University waged a quick-action special campaign and raised the balance. A \$2.75 million gift from the Carrier Corporation capped the campaign—and launched the era of corporate stadium sponsorship.

In the 25 years since its completion, the Dome has kept its promise of creating new and intimate bonds between University and community. Each year, more than 800,000 people attend events in the building. Central New York student-athletes aspire to play on Dome turf, and thousands of them have done just that in hundreds of high school and amateur sports events. More than 1.5 million of their parents, friends, and neighbors have passed through the turnstiles to share those moments of glory. The Empire State Games have come to town seven times

and the National Sports Festival, the Junior Olympics, and the Special Olympics have been held here. “The Dome just rocks when the high school kids come to play,” Crouthamel says. “The only other place that might excite these kids as much is Yankee Stadium.” Appearing in the Dome is no less a thrill for thousands of young musicians and their families. “We brought in the New York State Field Band Competition during our first year and 11,000 people showed up for it,” Benzel says. “It’s been held in the Dome every year since.”

Perhaps no individual has a deeper, more varied collection of Dome memories than Tim Green ’86, G’94. The novelist, sports commentator, attorney, and former Atlanta Falcons star attended concerts in the Dome as a boy and first took the field as a junior at Liverpool High School in the annual

New York State Football Section III championship tournament. “Talk to players and coaches around upstate New York, and they’ll speak of appearing in the Dome the way NFL players talk about the Super Bowl,” says Green, who called the Dome home as a member of the Orange football squad. Asked about crowning moments, he singles out the 1984 victory over top-ranked Nebraska. But he’s just getting started. “I remember winning a gold medal in wrestling at the Empire State Games, which was tremendously exciting,” he says. “And it goes even deeper. For me, growing up in the area, there was another dimension to the Dome. Having great bands, like the Rolling Stones, come to Syracuse was more than just fun. It was a source of pride for me, for my friends, and, really, for the people of upstate New York.”

Scores of Dome concerts, most of which could not have been booked into any other venue short of a three-hour drive, have served a wide range of popular tastes. Consider a random sampling: David Bowie, Santana, Pink Floyd, Styx, U2, Garth Brooks, Eric Clapton, Prince, The Police, Duran Duran, Foreigner, and Kenny Rogers. For certain events, notably the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, the playing field is transformed into a grand banquet hall. Philanthropic organizations such as the American Kidney Foundation and the Syracuse Rescue Mission have used the facility to raise funds. A catwalk has even been set up for fashion shows.

Pat Campbell, managing director of the Carrier Dome since 1991, is responsible for making sure the stadium is properly configured and that each event goes off without a hitch. “We have a full-time staff of about 35, including concessions and catering,” he says. “We have a part-time staff that can go as high as 1,000 for, say, football games. There are ushers, ticket-takers, police, medical, fire, production labor, extra concession labor, student workers, volunteers. It takes hundreds and hundreds of people to make this place go.”

Basketball, Anyone?

The decision to play basketball at the Dome was made late in the game, according to Benzel. “We took a hard look at the economics of running the place, and discovered that without basketball, we would have problems with operating expenses,” he says. “Happily, it cost us only about \$250,000 to construct a system to bring the east end zone seats down to the center to form a basketball arena, and our sightlines were equal to or better than most places.” Just one detail remained as work crews rushed to complete the project: The coach was dead set against it.

When the Dome opened in 1980, Jim Boeheim ’66, G’73 was starting his fifth season as head coach of the men’s basketball team, which played home games at Manley Field House. “I agreed that football needed a new facility—no doubt about that,” Boeheim says. “But, as far as I was concerned, we weren’t going to play basketball at the Dome. We had won 56 straight games at Manley! Nobody moves out with that kind of streak.” It took orders from on high to bring the coach into line, but he soon came to see the wisdom of the move. “We had a capacity of about 9,400 at Manley and in a relatively small town, you don’t think you need much more. Even when we agreed to go to the Dome, we didn’t anticipate drawing much more, figuring if we get 15,000, that would be almost unbelievable. Then we discovered we could draw 30,000. It’s something that sur-

Memorable Dome Moments in SU Sports

September 20, 1980:

Running back Joe Morris ’82 racks up 300 all-purpose yards as the Orange defeats Miami of Ohio, 36-24, as the Dome opens for business.

March 7, 1981:

Leo Rautins ’83 (pictured) tips in the winning basket as men’s basketball defeats Villanova, 83-80, in triple overtime, winning the Big East tournament.

January 21, 1984:

Dwayne “Pearl” Washington ’87 sinks a buzzer shot—and Boston College—from just inside half-court, securing a 75-73 Orange victory.

September 29, 1984:

The football team confounds the pundits and doubters, upsetting top-ranked Nebraska, 17-9.

October 17, 1987:

The football team ends a 17-year drought against old “Eastern indie” archival Penn State in a 48-21 blowout.

November 21, 1987:

Quarterback Don McPherson ’87 engineers a 22-point fourth quarter, including a TD pass with no time on the clock, followed by a two-point conversion pitch to Michael Owens ’88, defeating West Virginia, 32-31—and completing a perfect 11-0 regular season.

May 28, 1988:

Gary Gait ’91 astonishes the lacrosse world, scoring twice by dunking the ball over the top of the goal, his patented “Air Gait” move, in an 11-10 win over Penn in the NCAA semifinals.

May 30, 1988:

Men’s lacrosse wins the NCAA title with a 13-8 victory over Cornell before a record-breaking lacrosse mega-crowd of 20,007, finishing the season at 15-0.

January 28, 1989:

Sherman Douglas ’89 dishes out 22 assists, tying an NCAA men’s basketball record, to lead the Orange to a 100-96 win over Providence.

March 4, 1990:

Men’s basketball knocks off archival Georgetown, 89-87 in OT, before 33,015 to win the Big East regular season championship.

November 28, 1998:

Quarterback Donovan McNabb ’99 leads the Orange to a 66-13 rout over Miami as SU claims its third consecutive Big East football title.

November 9, 2002:

The football team defeats Virginia Tech, 50-42, in a triple-overtime thriller.

February 1, 2003:

Men’s basketball upsets second-ranked Pitt, 67-65, in a topsy-turvy game in which fans stormed the court three times during the final minute.

March 9, 2003:

The men’s basketball team, led by Carmelo Anthony ’06, defeats Rutgers, 83-74, before 33,071 (an NCAA record) to finish the regular season undefeated at the Dome.

February 26, 2005:

Men’s basketball coach Jim Boeheim ’66, G’73 collects his 700th career win as the Orange defeats Providence, 91-66.

Rockin' The Loud House (Top 10 Concert Draws at the Dome)

The Who (1982)	47,319	Bruce Springsteen (1989)	38,868
The Police (1984)	40,575	Billy Joel and Elton John (2005)	38,298
The Rolling Stones (November 27, 1981)	40,541	Bruce Springsteen (1989)	38,104
The Rolling Stones (November 28, 1981)	40,100	Elton John (1996)	38,085
Genesis (1983)	39,842	Pink Floyd (1998)	37,151

passes the wildest imagination of anybody 25 years ago.”

Larry Kimball, former longtime SU sports information director, points out that Syracuse’s move to the Dome was part of a series of events that reshaped college basketball nationally as well as locally. “The Big East Conference was created in 1979 and so was ESPN, and here we were, building the Dome, which fit nicely with those developments,” he says. “The Big East went from an unknown entity to the center of college basketball because ESPN loved nothing more than setting up at the Carrier Dome. There was Syracuse—with our great new stadium—for the entire country to see.”

Sheer Wow Factor

Built with the idea of helping football recruitment, the Dome has done that job and several others. Basketball players from as far away as the West Coast started wearing Orange as they watched Syracuse play in its huge new indoor arena via the budding miracle of cable TV. This season, the women’s basketball team will play most of its home schedule in the Dome—“a huge step for our program,” says Coach Keith Cieplicki. Among SU sports, lacrosse may have benefited most of all. “The Syracuse men’s lacrosse team was not the dominating program in 1980 that it is today,” Kimball says. “Since playing in the Dome, the team has won nine national championships in 25 years.” Lisa Miller, head coach of the women’s lacrosse team, believes that playing in the Dome has helped recruit both women and men, and given the sport a boost nationally as well. “The Dome is a setting for lacrosse unlike any other,” Miller says. “The sheer ‘wow factor’ of the place has helped our recruitment and, on a practical level, it would be very difficult for us to compete without a good indoor practice facility.” The women’s lacrosse team, formed in 1998, has been to the NCAA tournament five times in its eight seasons. The “Final Four” of the NCAA women’s tournament came to the Dome for the first time in 2003.

Judge Joanne Fogel Alper ’72, past president of the SU Alumni Association, tells a different kind of Dome-related recruiting story. “We took my son, Michael [’99], on a trip to look at schools. When we got to the Dome on the Syracuse tour, he sat down to think things over. Then he said, ‘This is the place!’ and that was that.”

Special Occasions on Campus

Beyond the public excitement of Syracuse team sports, national tournaments, mega-band concerts, and other public events, the Carrier Dome plays an integral role in campus life. It is the place where Convocation dinners are held and where Chancellor Nancy Cantor was inaugurated last fall. Following the 1988 terrorist bombing of Pan Am 103, which claimed the lives of 35 SU students, more than 14,000 members of the University community gathered in the Dome to seek some measure of emotional solace. Some students go there during off-hours for some peace and quiet; others to scream at the tops of their lungs for the Orange.

Trustee Joyce Hergenhan ’63, who has attended SU basketball games since opening day at Manley Field House, has a special place in her heart for Senior Day 2005 at the Dome. “Craig [Forth], Hak [Hakim Warrick], and Josh [Pace], warriors from the 2003 national championship team, played their final home game that day,” she says. “On top of that, Jim Boeheim got his 700th win. It was very special.”

Joe Lampe ’53, G’55, H’04, board chair emeritus, is as avid an SU sports fan as walks the face of the Earth. Nevertheless, he counts Commencement 2002 as his most compelling moment under the Dome. “It was the first graduation since September 11,” Lampe says. “I walked into the Dome next to Rudy Guiliani and as we came on to the field, 20,000 people began chanting, ‘Rudy! Rudy!’ to acknowledge what he had done. The noise was deafening. It was a wonderful moment.”

Vice Chancellor and Provost Deborah A. Freund rarely misses a home basketball game. But, like Lampe, when asked about the Dome, her thoughts go beyond sports. “It’s our gathering spot, the place where we come together to engage,” Freund says. “It’s the alpha and the omega. We go to the Dome to begin the SU experience at Convocation and we come back home to it for Commencement. We celebrate the pinnacles of success there by conferring our honorary degrees. The Dome is a defining place—and a defining icon—in the lives of our students, alumni, and friends in Syracuse and around the world.”