

Department moves into state-of-the-art 'new house'

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

University President Myles Brand was quick to point out in his speech that Casanova means "new house" in Italian.

Literally, the Len Casanova Athletic Center is the new home for the University's athletic department, and the Aug. 21 opening ceremonies, in which Brand took part, made things official for the new building. The 101,477 square-foot structure sits at the west end of Autzen Stadium.

Casanova, Duck football coach from 1951-66 and current athletic director emeritus, said he was honored with sharing his name with the building but was quick in heaping praise upon University Athletic Director Bill Byrne.

"Coaches have dreamed of this for years. Bill Byrne has done a great job. It could very appropriately have been named after him," Casanova told the crowd before cutting a giant yellow ribbon to the Center's front door.

Brand similarly credited Byrne with success. "Don't let anyone tell you that this was possible without Bill Byrne's leadership," Brand said. "This would not have been possible without Bill."

The \$11-million Cas Center houses offices for all athletic

department faculty and staff, medical treatment and training areas, locker rooms, a wrestling room, and weight training facilities. At the north side of the center is the ticket office and a new feature, the Duck Shop, which sells University merchandise and memorabilia.

An EWEB representative speaking at the opening ceremonies on behalf of his organization said the Cas Center was well beyond the state's building standards. He said the new athletic department "will exceed Oregon's building codes by over 50 percent."

"This is one terrific building," Brand said. "We didn't settle for a second- or third-rate building."

Byrne was smiling perhaps wider than anyone at the opening.

"Have you seen the little signs around that say 'smart home'? Well, this is a smart building," Byrne said.

Previously, the athletic department's offices and facilities had been mainly located in Gerlinger Hall and McArthur Court. Casanova said the one thing he would miss about the tight confines of Mac Court was the camaraderie he shared with other faculty that would likely be diluted by the more spacious Cas Center.

"In fact," Casanova said, "we got so chummy in there, we



Photo by Jeff Paslay

Former Oregon football coach Len Casanova officially opened the athletic center that bears his name at an Aug. 21 ceremony. The new facility holds offices for the entire athletic department, as well as locker rooms and training facilities.

started stumbling over each other."

Casanova led the Ducks to an 82-73-8 record for a .528 winning percentage over his 16 seasons. During his tenure, Casanova's Oregon teams visited postseason play on three sepa-

rate occasions, going to the Rose, Sun and Liberty bowls.

Funding for the building came mostly from gifts from University alumni and community supporters. Money generated through the use of Autzen Stadium's skyboxes and sky

suites during the football season also helped finance the building's construction.

Plans for expanding the Cas Center are already under way. A sky bridge is being planned to connect the building with Autzen Stadium.

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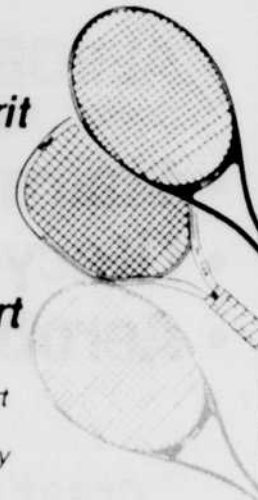
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