Katie Lewis, Greensboro College 2020

Foresight and hustle. On the basketball court, Katie Lewis was always thinking about the next game, the next possession, the next play, and at the same time she was right in the action giving her all. She needed those qualities to complete her degree in health sciences at Greensboro College. She needed them to face some personal crises. She needed them to weather a global pandemic.

Coach Randy Tuggle was a big reason the Southeast Guilford High School graduate chose Greensboro College. “Coach Tuggle came to talk to me. He lived in Greensboro too, so he knew I didn’t want to leave my family and all the support I had here. He gave me that little push to want more and made me interested,” Lewis says. Still it seemed like a stretch. “Say Yes helped me a lot. Greensboro College is a private school, so it has definitely helped me manage that and make it more affordable; and it gave me the option to play basketball too.”

Lewis enrolled at Greensboro College in the fall of 2016 as one of the first Say Yes Guilford Scholars. She played for Tuggle all four years, scoring more than 1000 points for the Pride. The team was her second family. Lewis remembers Coach Tuggle sharing with them that he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer; her mother had just been diagnosed with breast cancer. “This past year has been really hard for basketball and my family, but our entire team has been more connected, more of a family because of that. We’re stronger because of the whole situation.”

As graduation approached, both Mom and Coach were doing well. Lewis was keeping up with her studies, working at a local restaurant and interning at a physical therapy practice. She could see her dreams right in front of her. Then COVID-19 brought everything to a halt. In-person classes were canceled, so she set herself up to work at home. The restaurant where she worked closed, she took a job as a personal shopper at Walmart. Her internship ended, but the practiced offered her a position as a physical therapy tech when they reopen.

“I have a lot of opportunities,” Lewis says. “This college has definitely given me a lot of connections.” When basketball returns you might see her back on the court. Not as a player, but as a referee. “Coach Tuggle has offered to help me.” Family sticks together. Foresight and hustle. Lewis learned those qualities on the court, but the whole college experience showed her another quality she had – heart, and she plans to follow hers. “I’m really blessed.”

Greensboro College is one of more than 100 private colleges and universities in the Say Yes Guilford Higher Education Compact. Compact schools agree to ensure that students whose annual family income is at or below $75,000 are typically eligible, at a minimum, to attend tuition and fee-free, provided they successfully navigate the institution’s regular admission process.

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