

New Orleans youth to benefit from "Tyler's Court"

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Veteran Hollywood actor and Tulane alumnus Harold Sylvester returned to his hometown of New Orleans for the NCAA Final Four games and associated community events. On Sunday (April 1) Sylvester emceed the dedication of "Tyler's Court," a newly refurbished floor in the basketball gym at the new West Bank YMCA at Federal City in Algiers, La.



Actor and Tulane alumnus Harold Sylvester, at podium, leads the ceremony to dedicate "Tyler's Court." Among the honored guests was Victor Ugolyn, the father of Tyler, who died in the 9/11 attacks and whose foundation supports youth basketball. (Photo by Kathryn Hobgood Ray)

"My first form of expression was through things that I did on the basketball court in a place very much like this Algiers YMCA ? a place called Rosenwald Gymnasium at the end of the Calliope Projects," said Sylvester, a 1972 Tulane graduate who was a standout basketball player for the Green Wave.

"It's where I learned, essentially, how to face challenges, how to define goals and how to complete the effort. I learned that kind of stuff on the basketball court and then translated it the rest of life," Sylvester said.

That other kids will learn such life lessons from basketball is the hope of Tyler Ugolyn family members, who were present to see the dedication of the court commemorating the life of their son, a Columbia University student-athlete who was a victim in the 9-11 terrorist attacks in New York City.

The nonprofit Tyler Ugolyn Foundation supports youth basketball, with an emphasis on court refurbishment and providing character-building educational programs and skills clinics to children in urban settings.

The 9,000-square-foot playing surface will serve West Bank kids for years to come. The upgrades at the YMCA also include a scoreboard, six basketball goals, painting and padding for the walls and 24 new basketballs. A replica of the 2012 Final Four logo adorns each side of the floor.

The unveiling of court marked the culmination of several [community initiatives](#) undertaken during Final Four week by the NCAA in cooperation with the New Orleans Local Organizing Committee.