

URI building to be named for Katie DeCubellis

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SOUTH KINGSTOWN -- A new athletic building on the University of Rhode Island campus is to be named in honor of Katie DeCubellis, a 13-year-old girl who was killed by a drunken driver nine years ago.

John and Meg DeCubellis, Katie's parents, yesterday announced the grant of \$100,000 to support construction of the planned Student-Athlete Development Center, to be built next to Keaney Gymnasium. The announcement of the gift, made through the Katie DeCubellis Memorial Foundation, and the naming of the building came at a ceremony at Keaney Gym.

John DeCubellis, URI Class of '82 and president of the Rhode Island Rams Athletic Association, said, "This opportunity encompasses every facet of the [foundation's] mission to promote youth leadership, support education and generate public awareness of the dangers of drunk driving and substance abuse. Our gift will forever support all of these objectives in Katie's memory."

While contributing to the overall construction of the building, the grant will specifically support the establishment of the Academic Advising & Counseling Center, one of three components of the Student-Athlete Development Center, in addition to the Strength & Conditioning Center and the Athletic Training & Sports Medicine Center.

Thorr Bjorn, URI director of athletics, said, "The Academic Enhancement Center will also house our NCAA Life Skills program, which John and Meg DeCubellis continue to play a major role in."

He added, "It is a tremendous tribute by the foundation to the memory of Katie and all she stood for in her short time in this world, and all those she touched and affected in a positive manner."

Glenn Kerkian, president of the URI Foundation, said, "This generous gift, as well as the broader, ongoing support from the DeCubellis family and the foundation, is a wonderful example of how both [the DeCubellis Foundation and URI] have

identified common areas of concern and have partnered to maximize the impact of their efforts. We look forward to the construction ... and to the naming of the academic advising center in Katie's honor."

The overall cost of the Student-Athlete Development Center is \$10 million. It involves the construction of 10,000 square feet and the renovation of another 17,000 square feet. To stand west of the athletics complex, the new building will serve as a gateway to the practice fields.

The university is putting up half of the cost, with the remainder to be raised through charitable gifts.

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