



UConn women's basketball fan Danny Karwoski has been to more than 100 games and shows his support at the rally at UConn's Stamford campus rally. Hour photo / ALEX VON KLEYDORFF

Stamford celebrates UConn championship

STAMFORD

By CHASE WRIGHT

• Hour Staff Writer

The University of Connecticut's Stamford branch brought the celebration home Tuesday in honor of the Huskies, who recently cruised to their sixth national women's

basketball title.

Students, faculty and alumni gathered in the university's co-op bookstore, along with members of the public, to share their Husky pride over soda, cake and buffalo wings.

"They made us very proud," Michael Ego, associate vice provost of the Stamford chapter,

said of the women's team. "They were perfection. You can't ask for much more than that."

The women's program remained dominant all season, running up a 39-0 record and beating opponents by an average of more than 30 points a game. They cruised past all 10 of the ranked opponents they

faced, then closed the season with the second-largest margin ever in a title game.

The No. 1-seeded men's team was upset by Michigan State in the national semifinals, a week before the Huskies routed Big East rival Louisville 76-

see LOCAL, A5

1 residents celebrate UConn team's victor

them all season — didn't want to jinx the team."

Kwasi Gyambibi, a former guard with the UConn men's team, now a university student recruiter, said the women's run this year was something special.

"These girls could have probably beaten some WNBA teams," said Gyambibi. He said the 2001-02 women's team, which featured the likes of Sue Bird, Swin Cash and Tamika Williams, was likely the best UConn team ever assembled.

"If they win again next year,

I might have to rethink that," he said. With UConn losing just one player, senior guard Renee Montgomery, a repeat of this year is quite possible.

The most decorated UConn fan out of a crowd of more than 50, Danny Karwoski, said he hopes to see that scenario play out.

Dressed in a white and navy wig with tiny basketballs hanging from the roots, Karwoski said this year's women's victory made him proud to be a Husky.

"It's great," he said of the national title, which he watched

with his family on television at their Stamford home.

Karwoski made it out to 29 games this season, including the Caribbean Classic for a three game set in Cancun, Mexico. He'll also be making the trip to Hartford on Sunday to watch the parade honoring the women's probable championship win.

"I'll pretty much travel anywhere for the Huskies," he said.

Sharon White, Dean of Students for the Stamford chapter, admitted that the two hour distance from the main campus

in Storrs can make stu disconnected from the and its illustrious athletic.

"That's why we have this celebration campus — to keep it alive and well," said "This is a national onship. It's not about Storrs or UConn Stamford about UConn."

*The Associated Press
tributed to this story.*

llk Jazz Festival organizers struggle to raise funds

solicited public support to fund the continuation of its season, which was in doubt due to a loss of donations to the tune of \$75,000. After the symphony's plight was publicized, the organization did receive some much needed monetary support, but the struggle was a tough one.

Earlier this year the Connecticut Opera announced it was going out of business after 67 seasons because its bank account was frozen, and funding sources had dried up following a poor turnout at a November production.

Grant said it's unfortunate

that the arts are always on the chopping block in times of an anemic economy because the arts represent something positive in a time of negativity.

"The American populous needs cultural arts and entertainment to take their minds off the negative aspects occurring around like," Grant said. "In his initial economic stimulus package President Obama said he wanted to make sure we keep the arts and entertainment industry going. I'd like to echo the president's remarks."

Some of the money raised from the festival goes to support a scholarship fund that

helps a Norwalk student pursue a collegiate degree in music, another important step in ensuring a continued devotion to music and the arts, Grant said.

"When there is a downturn in the economy like there is now, the arts and music are usually the first programs to get cut," Grant said. "I don't have anything against sports, but not everyone plays sports. If you don't encourage kids to participate in art and music how can these fields continue and grow?"

Rick McQuaid, a member of the board for the Norwalk Jazz

Festival, said that even festival does not take place year, it will not lose momentum.

"No one wants to see festival die and we're certainly not going to give up," McCoy said. "We're not going to because we know there's interest in this in the community, so we'll just come in next year."

*Jill Bodach is a features
general assignment reporter.
She may be reached at (203)
354-1046 or jbodach@hour.com.*