

Memories of McElroy

Black Hawks end long association with auditorium

By **MARTY STRASEN**
Courier Sports Writer

Butch Leskun took the first faceoff for the Black Hawks in McElroy Auditorium. Thirty-two years later, he was on left wing when Dave Swick took the last.

Some lasting hockey memories took place between those puck-droppings, the first in 1962 and the last in a reunion game last Friday night. From championship seasons to battles in the cellar, from senior-league stars to reckless youths, from jackets and ties in the stands to closeout prices on flat beer, the old Cattle Congress rink saw some of the sport's best and worst.

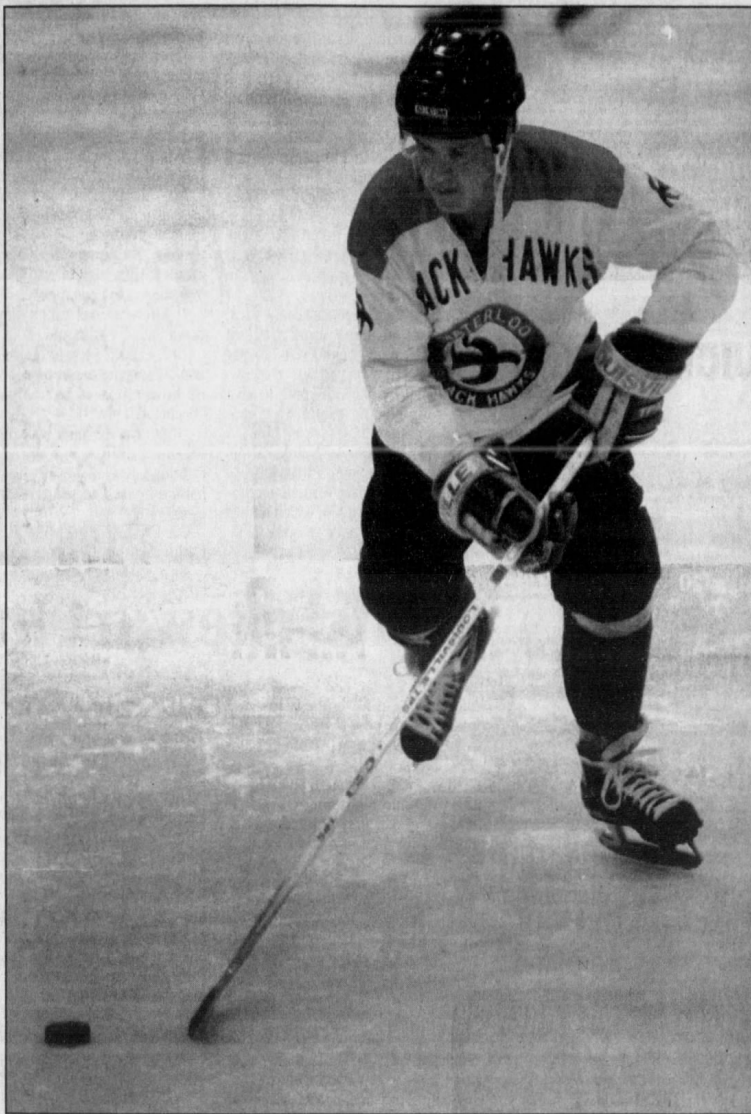
Some of its stories have been told and retold so many times that the line between fact and fiction has faded. Other McElroy memories will remain vivid to those who played and attended games there long into the life of the new Young Arena, which opens today.

The originals

Leskun, Jim Smith and Duke Dutkowski are still around, the only members of the Black Hawks' inaugural team still living in Waterloo.

Leskun and Dutkowski came to Waterloo from Saskatchewan, two of eight Canadians on the Black Hawks' 16-man roster, and Smith hails from Detroit. The man who called them here was Oakie Brumm, a former director of the Michigan State Prison who coached, played and ran a tight ship.

"Oakie knew what he could do with kids," Smith recalls. "He worked with a lot of tough guys at the state pen and he knew how to handle them. Us, we were no problem for



Jim Smith sports his 1965 jersey and skates. He played hockey with the Black Hawks for 15 years, starting in 1962.

GREG BROWN / Courier staff photographer

Waterloo hockey on way back

By **MARTY STRASEN**
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Waterloo hockey is on the rebound.

Bud Eggleston, sports director of the Waterloo Recreation Commission, says the number of skaters participating in local recreational programs is approaching a level not seen in Waterloo since the early 1970s.

That could bode well for the future of local high school and Junior Black Hawk hockey, as well as the local figure skating club as the programs move from McElroy Auditorium into the new Young Arena next week.

"We'll never turn anybody away," Eggleston said, "but this year we had to put some of the little kids on the ice on the weekends. We've never had to put the kids on Sunday before, but the numbers dictated that."

"We think we're going back to those years where we're going to be putting out better and better talent for the high school team and the Junior Hawks."

Three years ago, Eggleston said, there were 70-80 players skating in the recreational youth leagues. More than 250 signed up this season.

Eggleston said there were about 300 participating in the early 1970s, and the success of those early youth programs helped the Columbus and Waterloo Warrior high school programs become dominant once prep play began in 1976. Columbus, which won four of the first six state championships, no longer has a team.

The hours of ice use have increased from 80-85 hours to

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