



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

“...parents are the pride of their children.” Proverbs 17:6b

The UAB men’s basketball program has had two head coaches in its history. Both coaches are named Bartow. Gene, the Hall of Famer, took teams from Memphis State and UCLA to the Final 4, before starting the UAB program from scratch in 1978. Murry Bartow played for his dad on some of UAB’s greatest teams. He went on to become an assistant coach at Indiana and William and Mary, before coming back to Birmingham to assist his dad. When Gene Bartow retired from coaching five years ago, Murry stepped up to the head-coaching job at UAB.

Murry Bartow says that he has learned many things from each of his career experiences but maintains that what he has learned from his father has made him a better coach and person. “He is genuinely good to people. It doesn’t matter if you are a CEO of a major company in Birmingham or on the custodial staff or grounds crew at UAB, he is simply good to people. That is part of being a Christian, treating others the way you want to be treated. That is what he does.” Gene chuckles about

his son’s comments saying, “I’m sure you can find a few referees who would not agree with Murry.”

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 22:6

Years ago when coaching at Valparaiso, Gene Bartow remembers a sportswriter asking him to have a few drinks and discuss the team. He told the sportswriter he

didn’t drink, and thus the moniker, “Clean Gene,” came to light. The coach says he did not mind it then and still chuckles about the encounter. And then there was that time back in the early 80’s when “Clean Gene” was in spirited recruiting battles with rival schools. He welcomed a NCAA investigation. As he put it, “We need the publicity.”

During his 34-year head-coaching career, Gene Bartow ran his basketball programs just like he ran his life. It was something his son emulated. Murry says, “He’s a non-drinker, and I’m a non-drinker. He’s never smoked or done drugs and I haven’t either. He doesn’t believe in using bad language and never does. He taught me you don’t necessarily have to use four letter words to let the players know that you are angry. You can talk to all his former players. Trust me, they knew when he was mad. When he would raise his voice or say things in his stern way, they knew he meant business.” Gene scoffs at the notion that his style is in the minority. “I don’t know about that,” he says, “there are people in lots of different professions who can’t say three words without using profanity. I believe there are lots more who choose to try and do it the right way.”

Gene Bartow retired as UAB’s Athletic Director last summer and has since taken over the operation of the American Basketball Association’s, Memphis Hound Dogs. Whenever possible, he returns to Birmingham to watch his son coach his old team. He admits just sitting back and watching has been one of the toughest things he has ever had to do in his life. “It has been very difficult. I feel almost the

Gene Bartow and his son Murry coached together at UAB for eight years.

About the Son, Murry Bartow

- **Parents-** Gene and Ruth Bartow
- **Wife-** Tammy Early Bartow, Birmingham native
- **Sons-** Alec (9), Stephen (7) and Connor (5)
- **Graduate of W.A. Berry High School** 1980 (Hoover High)
- **Graduate of UAB** 1985
- **Basketball and Golf Team, UAB** 1981-85
- **Graduate Assist. Indiana** 1985-87
- **Assist Coach William & Mary** 1987-89
- **Assist Coach UAB** 1989-96
- **Head Coach UAB** 1996-Present





Alec, Conner and Stephen recently gathered around their grandfather, Gene, as he celebrated his 70th birthday. Stephen (far right) is often referred to as the “spitting image” of his grandfather.

same type of pressure as when I was on the bench, may be more in some cases. It is very stressful to me. When we are winning it is a very happy time, but when we are getting beat or if it is a close game, it is hard on me. Murry is a very good coach. It hurts me that more people don't stand up and say what a good job he is doing," says the older Bartow.

Father and son were inseparable at UAB and they have a bond that runs deep. Living in separate cities— both with hectic schedules— the two are faced with the unusual circumstances of going sometimes a week without talk-

ing. "We are still extremely close," says Murry, "We don't see each other as much, but I know and feel his support."

"In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."
Ephesians 5:28

College coaching is a time consuming profession. It requires lots of time away from home coaching and recruiting. It is a six to eight month equation that requires an interesting juggling act between business and family. Both Bartows say the women in their lives have made it work. Gene explains,

"Ruth has done most of the raising of our three children. From the Christian aspect, we have certainly tried to do the right thing and be the right kind of people, and raise them in a Christian home. We have placed added importance on attending Sunday school and church." Like his dad, Murry gives credit to his wife, Tammy, for often taking a lead role in parenting their three sons. She is also his biggest cheerleader. She is at every home game, just a few rows behind the UAB bench, with all three boys. "Tammy is the way my mother was with us," says Murry, "We have always had a strong and very close family."

"He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect." 1 Timothy 3:4

The coaching situation at UAB is unique. No other program in the country has had a son follow in his dad's footsteps and coach in a building that bears his name.

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The Coach's Wife

Tammy Bartow's experience as an intensive care nurse and college cheerleader/coach often comes in handy as the mother of three boys and the wife of UAB Basketball Coach, Murry Bartow. As a UAB Cheerleader, Tammy cheered for Murry when he played for the Blazers. She continues to cheer him on as head coach. Even when it means a late night, Tammy makes it a priority to have all three boys with her at every home game. "I want them to know this is their life. It is important for all of us to be there to support their Dad."

Tammy says working in ICU taught her to be level headed and thoughtful in her approach to stressful situations. She says with a chuckle, "That's important now with three boys who are prone to stitches and broken bones." Tammy says being very independent also helps her in her role as mom and coach's wife. She explains, "Particularly during basketball season, I plan the boys activities and if Murry can break away and be there that is great, but I know not to expect it. I'm used to taking the lead with the boys' activities."

Tammy says the boys love sports just like their Dad. All three play basketball, they love soccer and Conner and Stephen both play baseball. Tammy has her own outlet for exercise. After coaching UAB's Cheerleaders and working as a private cheer coach, she and friend Amy Bradley opened Cheer Tech almost two years ago. The women conduct classes for girls ages 6 to 18. "It has been exciting to see the positive influence you can have on a young girl and the way you can help build her overall confidence," says Tammy. As you might have guessed, Tammy limits her number of classes during basketball season.

When asked about being forced to work around Murry's hectic coaching schedule, she simply says with a smile, "This is all I've ever known. This is my life and I love it."

— Laurie Stroud

About the Father, Gene Bartow

- **Wife-** Ruth
- **Children-** Mark, Murry, Beth
- **Grandchildren-** 5
- **Head Basketball Coach** 34 years, 647 victories
- **UAB Head Basketball Coach** 1978-1996
- **UAB Athletic Director** 1977-2000
- **Nine NCAA tournaments and five NIT appearances with UAB.**
- **UAB Football-** Club status to NCAA Division I-A
- **NCAA Final Four-** Memphis State '73, UCLA '76
- **Alabama Sports Hall of Fame**
- **Missouri Basketball Hall of Fame**
- **NE Missouri Athletic Hall of Fame**
- **UAB Arena renamed Bartow Arena** 1996



Ruth and Gene Bartow enjoy time with their grandsons.

Bartow

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Gene Bartow is the father of UAB athletics and has nurtured all sports at the university, not just basketball. One of his proudest accomplishments is the Blazers' football program, which is coming off its most successful season. It has all been based on a simple philosophy. Some describe it as the golden rule while others, like his son, say it is simply, "Clean Gene." Murry explains, "He has always been a great family man and incredibly loyal to my mother. He is also a great people person. Whether it is recruiting, coaching, marketing or fund raising he is genuinely good with people. He is himself and treats others like he would like to be treated."

There are so many similarities between Gene and Murry Bartow— from the way they conduct media interviews to the way they throw up their fingers when calling out a play on the court to the way they raise children. The foundation for it was laid many years ago, off and on the court.

— Doug Bell



Doug Bell anchors the nightly College Sports Central on College Sports Southeast, does play by play for the NFL and NFL Europe on FOX Sports and is play-by-play and studio host for ESPN regional college basketball. He is also V.P. of Sports Production for Collegiate Sports Partners.