



Photos by Jason Henry / Alligator

Oh my my, oh hell yes!

JOE HUNTER

GAINESVILLE HADN'T SEEN TOM PETTY IN 13 YEARS. NO WONDER THE CROWD WOULDN'T BACK DOWN.

Homecoming isn't until October, but no one told Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers.

Petty, along with Heartbreakers Mike Campbell, Benmont Tench, Ron Blair, Scott Thurston and Steve Ferrone, performed Thursday night at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center to a sold-out crowd.

Petty, Campbell, Tench and Blair — the original Heartbreakers — were all either born in or lived in and around Gainesville.

But Petty had not performed in Gainesville in 13 years.

"What can I say?" Petty asked the screaming crowd in between hits "Mary Jane's Last Dance" and "I Won't Back Down." "It's so great to be here. I really feel like I've come home."

And the crowd was a good one: The screeching guitar solos and audience's screams could be heard from across West University Avenue.

The show came in the midst of the band's tour promoting Petty's new album, "Highway Companion." Concert tickets sold out less than 30 minutes after going on sale in July.

Hours before the concert and just inside the O-Dome, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers were honored with Gainesville's most prestigious accolades.

Gainesville Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan and Chris Machen, UF President Bernie Machen's wife, paid respects to Petty and the band.

"He truly embodies what it means to be human," Machen said.

She presented Petty with the UF

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Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers perform at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center on Thursday night. Stevie Nicks embraces Petty as she joins the band onstage to sing a few songs.

Ginsburg graces College of Law

By LYNDSEY LEWIS
 Alligator Staff Writer
 llewis@alligator.org

Wearing a pair of crocheted gloves, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg shared memories of an old friend and UF alumnus Thursday at a classroom-dedication ceremony.

The Supreme Court's lone female justice traveled to Gainesville to honor Chesterfield Smith, who graduated from UF's law school in 1948 and eventually became president of the American Bar Association. Smith died in 2003.

The Levin College of Law dedicated a new classroom, which Ginsburg helped fund, to Smith in honor of his accomplishments as a lawyer. Smith founded the Holland & Knight law firm, which is now one of the largest in the country.

In a private speech before about 150 people, Ginsburg praised Smith as the most "altogether irresistible lawyer I have ever known."

Ginsburg and Smith first met during an ABA trip to China in the 1970s. From then on, she said, he served as her mentor and eventually testified at her Supreme Court confirmation hearing.

"He was never satisfied with the status quo if there was room for improvement," she said.

Ginsburg spoke inside the new Chesterfield Smith Ceremonial Classroom, which boasts wood paneling and flat-screen televisions in its lobby.

Most of the people attending the event had donated money toward the room, which cost about \$500,000 to build in Smith's name.

"May the classes and events that take place in this room prove a fitting tribute to Chesterfield's work and days," Ginsburg said. "My affection for him was unbounded."

Martha Barnett, another former ABA president who spoke at the event, said Smith frequently referred to his friends as his "boys and babes."

"Chesterfield counted Justice Ginsburg as one of his babes," Barnett told the crowd, "and I think she liked it, too."

The back of the classroom was adorned with photographs and other memorabilia from Smith's life. Audience members donned buttons bearing an image of Smith's smiling face and two of his favorite catchphrases.

"Be somebody! Do good!" the buttons read.

UF dignitaries at the ceremony included Provost Janie Fouke and President Bernie Machen.

By dedicating the classroom to Smith, Machen said, UF could place "one more piece into the foundation we are building for the Gator Nation."

"He is a great example that comes to my mind when I think of the power that is the Gator Nation," Machen said. "This is a place where he belongs."



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Faculty and students protested the five-year plan designed to put CLAS back on track after its debt. At UF's Faculty Senate meeting, UF President Bernie Machen denied responsibility for the plan. See stories, pg. 3.

Thursday was supposed to be the day the Gators announced the length of Marcus Thomas' suspension but Coach Urban Meyer failed to divulge any new information. See story, pg. 19.



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Southern upbringing inspired star

PETTY, from page 1

Distinguished Achievement Award for his musicianship and his humanitarian works.

"I've met presidents and vice presidents and heads of state, but I'm a native of Gainesville, and there's nobody bigger than Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers to someone in Gainesville," Hanrahan said. "Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers are to Gainesville what the Beatles are to Liverpool."

For audio slideshows of a press conference with Tom Petty and fans' reactions, visit www.alligator.org.

She suggested that the Heartbreakers' international renown helped elevate Gainesville's reputation, and she proclaimed that Sept. 21, 2006 be known as "Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers Day."

Each band member received a key to the city.

"It's much nicer than Chicago's," Petty noted.

Thurston and Ferrone, who do not hail from Gainesville, were named honorary Gators.

Petty got his start in the Gainesville music scene as a teenager in 1965, and was influenced by Elvis Presley's visit to Florida.

By 1971, his band Mudcrutch gained a following and performed for audiences topping 1,000 people.

In 1975, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers was formed.

The band became legendary. The many songs in Petty's repertoire about Southern living are inspired by his upbringing.

"It's a double-edged sword, the South," he said after the ceremony. "That makes it very intriguing, and sort of ... It's a romantic place — it's easy to write about, really. It's very colorful. Characters are very drawn. And there's a mystery about the South that I like."

Thirty years, 16 Grammy Award nominations and more than 50 million album sales later, Petty — meek and soft-spoken — has a rock star's reputation and a hero's welcome upon returning to Gainesville.

"It's a beautiful town," Petty said. "I have nothing but fond memories."

The band's 13-year hiatus from performing in Gainesville resulted from a tour schedule that would have brought Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers to the city dur-



Jason Henry / Alligator

Tom Petty received the UF Distinguished Achievement Award and a key to the city at a press conference before the band's concert Thursday night.

ing summer, when few students would be in town to hear them.

This time, the band went out of its way to be on the road a little longer and play in Gainesville.

"I really, really love this town," Tench said. "It's very special, and y'all really need to know what you've got here. It doesn't feel like any other town that I know — it's really warm, and it's really lovely."

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