Junior forward Aliyah Boston lifts the NCAA women’s basketball national championship trophy above her head at the Target Center in Minneapolis, MN. The Gamecocks defeated the University of Connecticut 64-49 on April 3, 2022.

Students stormed the fountain in front of the Thomas Cooper library after the South Carolina women’s basketball team won its second national championship on April 3.

Gamecocks lined the sides of the fountain watching the final minutes of the game on their phones. When the final buzzer blew, hundreds of students yelled out and jumped into the fountain, mirroring the celebrations after head coach Dawn Staley led the team to its first national title in 2017.

“Oh my gosh, I was in my dorm actually, in my pajamas. And I screamed. I was like, ‘Oh my God, we won!’ I mean, I knew we’re gonna win but just to see it actually happen,” first-year sociology student Amber Montgomery said.

Students came from all parts of campus to join in the celebration.

“I came out here and celebrated, celebrated it with the students. I met with the students on campus here. We’re having a ball, time of our lives,” fourth-year mechanical engineering student Lonnie Boston said.

Students who were not waiting in front of the library were soon on their way, rushing across campus towards the sounds of celebrating Gamecocks.

“Immediately, I was jumping up and down and immediately ran out the door to go to the fountain,” first-year sports management student Samuel Truett said.

“The crowd — and the piles of shoes on the bricks around the sides of the fountain — continued to grow after the Gamecocks took the national title.

Graduate business administration student McKenzie Hagwood came from the watch party in Russell House to the fountain.

“Getting to see this experience as I’m about to graduate, I’ll be able to take it with me forever,” she said.

For students who weren’t enrolled in 2017, this was their first time storming the fountain.

“I’m happy we finally got a chance to kind of not redeem, but really just prove ourselves and show everybody that we are who we thought we were,” third-year electrical engineering student Daquan Wise said.

For some students, the women’s championship title means more than just a new trophy.

“Toward the goal, I’ll be able to take it with me forever,” fourth-year business administration student McKenzie Hagwood said.

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Final Four brings Gamecocks women’s basketball team, fan tradition, together for memorable experience

LAWSON MURRELL

During the final weekend in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the culture descended on April, women’s basketball — to win multiple championships. To crown its 35-2 season wire-to-wire on its way to its second national championship game with the win.

Senior guard Victaria Saxton shoots during the national championship game on April 3, 2022. South Carolina defeated the University of Connecticut 64-49.

Senior forward Aliyah Boston (5) drives to the basket during the national championship game on April 3, 2022. South Carolina defeated the University of Connecticut 64-49.

The Gamecocks face the University of Connecticut during the national championship game on April 3, 2022. South Carolina defeated the University of Connecticut 64-49.

Another Gamecock fan knew they had to travel over 1000 miles to Minneapolis, not all Gamecock fans had to make a long journey to the Final Four. Edir Williams a South Carolina alumna who relocated to Minnesota after graduation, brought along his friends Taylor and — to cheer for their favorite player, junior forward Aliyah Boston.

Williams graduated in 2003, but during his time in Columbia as a student he worked with The Daily Gamecock. After having games delayed due to the pandemic in 2020, the Gamecocks were able to win multiple championships.

The 2022 South Carolina women’s basketball national championship team ries above all other programs in program history, Staley said. “I do think this is our best team, just the roster from top to bottom, the commitment to their roles.” Staley said. “They can defend. This team can really defend. I think we’re the deepest team, that’s the separator from my other teams.”

“We fought since day one, and we knew that we could come out on top this year,” Henderson said. “Our coaches have just prepared us for this moment, our teammates just believed in us since day one and we all just came in ready to play and fighting with gut.”

Henderson was aggressive on both ends of the floor and Staley emphasized for treating the process throughout the season. “I think coach Staley did a great job of scheduling the games which kept us fresh. She said one thing that I really remember her doing the job both offensively and defensively,” Staley said.

Junior forward Aliyah Boston turned in another captivating performance. She finished with 16 points and 16 rebounds for her 30th double-double of the season and added two blocks and three assists. Boston said the ability to hold its No. 1 ranking throughout the season is a testament to their hard work. “I think coach Staley did a great job of scheduling the games which kept us fresh. She said one thing that I really remember her doing the job both offensively and defensively,” Staley said.

Junior forward Aliyah Boston (11) shoots during the national championship game on April 3, 2022. South Carolina defeated the University of Connecticut 64-49.

Photo: FAITH WORRELL

The Daily Gamecock is the editorially independent student newspaper at the University of South Carolina. DailyGamecock.com, along with daily email, is one of the main assets for The Daily Gamecock’s coverage of all things USC. Check us out on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for more updates on the Gamecocks. Opinions expressed in The Daily Gamecock are those of the editors and authors and not those of the University of South Carolina. The board of the Daily Gamecock is the publisher of the Daily Gamecock. The Department of Student Media is the newspaper parent organization. The Daily Gamecock is supported in part by student activity fees.

The Daily Gamecock
The South Carolina women’s basketball team won the national championship on April 3, 2022, defeating the UConn Huskies 64-49 at the Target Center in Minneapolis, MN.

While confetti rained down on the Gamecocks on the court, students in Columbia, SC stormed the fountain in front of the Thomas Cooper Library. Students wrestled, jumped around, chanted “USC! USC! USC!” and sang the alma mater.

The fountain celebrations mirrored how Gamecocks reacted when head coach Dawn Staley led the team to its first national championship title in 2017.

The South Carolina women’s basketball head coach Dawn Staley lifts the national championship trophy a few minutes after winning the national title. The Gamecocks defeated the University of Connecticut 64-49 on April 3, 2022.

Students are seen celebrating the women’s national championship victory in front of the Thomas Cooper Library fountain. Hundreds of Gamecocks gathered in and around the fountain to celebrate.

South Carolina students splash water around while celebrating the Gamecocks win in the Thomas Cooper Library fountain. Students celebrated the win for over an hour in the fountain on April 3, 2022.

Senior guard Destanni Henderson cuts a piece of the net after winning the national championship. Players and coaches cut off pieces of the net after winning games to commemorate the experience.

Senior forward Victaria Saxton cuts a piece of the net after winning the national title. Saxton scored 6 points against the Huskies.

Former Gamecock forward A’ja Wilson celebrates the win with junior forward Aliyah Boston. Wilson attended both the Final Four and championship game in Minneapolis, MN.

Senior forward Aliyah Boston lifts the NCAA Women’s Basketball National Championship trophy above her head at the Target Center in Minneapolis, MN.

A sea of Gamecock fans in the reflection pond outside Thomas Cooper Library at the University of South Carolina. Students stormed the fountain seconds after the Gamecocks won the national title.

A student is raised above the crowd giving a “spurs up” during a celebration in the reflection pond outside Thomas Cooper Library. This follows the women’s basketball team winning the national championship on April 3, 2022.

A group of South Carolina students celebrate the national title by the steps on Greene Street by the Thomas Cooper Library fountain. Hundreds of Gamecocks gathered to and around the fountain to celebrate.

A student is seen above the crowd going “spurs up” during a celebration in the reflection pond outside Thomas Cooper Library. This follows the women’s basketball team winning the national championship on April 3, 2022.
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-TWO
NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

"Our history over their history."
Dawn Staley