



PEARL JAM - FOUR SHOWS  
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN - SIX SHOWS  
THE DEAD - TWO SHOWS  
FLYERS HOCKEY  
76ERS BASKETBALL  
HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS

# EVERYTHING MUST GO

by LINDA DECKARD

Marketing the Spectrum's final year was a celebration of unprecedented proportions for Philadelphia and the Comcast-Spectacor management family. There is a reason 2 million people turned out for the parade when the National Hockey League Philadelphia Flyers won the Stanley Cup in 1974 and 1975. Philadelphia loves the Flyers.



And there is a reason sellouts were the matter of course the final year for the venerable old building. Philadelphians love the Spectrum.

The yearlong Remember the Spectrum campaign earned the Venues Today 2009 Hall of Headlines Award for marketing for Ed Snider, chairman of Comcast Spectacor, and Peter Luukko, COO. With a marketing budget of about \$150,000 plus a monthlong partnership with WYSP radio, the celebration reaped national publicity. Having the Harlem Globetrotters play on the roof — in the snow — brought international headlines.

Most remarkably, this marketing campaign had nothing to do with selling tickets. "To celebrate the final year of something is really unique," Snider said. No one knew what the public reaction would be, but "after awhile the surprise lessened," Snider said. "At the beginning I was surprised at how many people this building affected, from all walks of life for all sorts of reasons. That's probably true in most cities, but I don't think anyone ever had the opportunity to express it. We gave people an opportunity to say goodbye and relive those memories."

"What was great is we knew we had the year to celebrate. The idea of the Spectrum wasn't to do a final week of something. It was to celebrate it all year," Luukko said. "We were very fortunate to have the living history in Ed Snider, who built the Spectrum."

The celebration of the Spectrum started in September 2008 with a Flyers preseason game, followed by a Flyers/Philadelphia Phantoms game celebrating the Phantoms last minor league hockey season there. The Philadelphia 76ers played a regular season game that also honored some past players, including Julius (Dr. J) Erving, a highlight for the younger players especially. In spring 2010, the Spectrum will be demolished and the new Philly Live

retail and entertainment district will be phased in, eventually incorporating the Spectrum footprint.

Luukko's fondest memories of the Spectrum are the people. "Because of the design of the Spectrum, everybody was pretty much jammed together. I remember players coming in for games, walking down our hall and in various offices before and after games. Players, coaches, media, and management enjoyed a proximity that you don't get in compartmentalized offices and arenas today," Luukko said.

Along with Larry Magid from Electric Factory, the Comcast-Spectacor staff created the ultimate final farewell concert series. Shows featured Neil Young, Tina Turner, Dane Cook, Green Day, Bruce Springsteen for six shows, two in the spring and four in the fall; the Dead; Maxwell; Hall & Oates and four Pearl Jam shows. "What's really neat was these artists really wanted to play the Spectrum," Luukko said.

Altogether, a variety of events at the Spectrum from September 2008 to October 2009 grossed \$29,332,943. It's a far cry from the good old days when the young and vibrant Spectrum hosted 300 event days a year, Snider said. 2009 was certainly not the most profitable year, but it was among the most memorable, right up there with the afternoon in 1974 that Snider joined the fans jumping onto the ice after the Flyers won the Stanley Cup for the first time. "I guess we didn't have enough security," he said.

Neither Snider nor Luukko are so sentimental as to think there is a place for an arena like the Spectrum in today's world. It worked as an alternative site when the Wachovia Center was not available. "We like to call it 104 Saturdays and 104 Fridays with two arenas," Snider said of the booking options during the 14 years the Spectrum sat side by side with Wachovia Center. But the old arena needed \$10 million-\$20 million in deferred maintenance.

"I don't see the design of a Spectrum or Boston Garden or Chicago Stadium again," Luukko admitted. "They don't have the amenities today's fans demand."

"We're doing the final shows over there and the walls are sweating and the floor is slippery from the humidity. Those fond memories came back, too."



MARKETING