

INDUSTRY MESSAGE

Photo Inspiration: Mechanical Insulation and Basketball



It is commonly said that a picture is worth a thousand words. As a fan of the University of North Carolina (UNC) basketball program and a devotee of New Orleans, I like to consider the connection between the two, and how an inspirational photo may have made all the difference for two of UNC's most successful teams in New Orleans.

The Tar Heels have ended the season three times by playing in the Final Four in The Big Easy. The 1982 appearance resulted in the first national championship for the great Dean Smith (punctuated by a winning shot by freshman Michael Jordan). In 1993, Smith returned to beat The Fab Five of Michigan; and in 2022, a trip to New Orleans was the culmination of Hubert Davis's first season as UNC Head Coach. Davis did not take home the championship title but arguably achieved something even more important to die-hard Tar Heel fans—his team beat Duke in the final game of Duke Coach Krzyzewski's career.

In 2022, most basketball experts didn't expect the Tar Heels to go very far in the NCAA Tournament. The start of the season was unremarkable on the court, so Coach Davis motivated his team with a trick he learned from his own college coach—yes, Dean Smith. Davis placed a photo of the Superdome in his players' lockers on the first day of practice, a visual representation of where they all wanted to be at the end of the season. (Dean Smith had famously done the same at the start of the 1992–93 season.) Although Davis's 2022 players were not yet born the last time the Tar Heels spent the season in pursuit of a finale in New Orleans, surely the significance of the photo was not lost on the young men. Of course, no one could have anticipated that the 2022 Final Four in NOLA would feature an epic matchup between rivals Carolina and Duke at Coach K's final game—the only matchup of these teams to date in the NCAA tournament. I like to think that the

Superdome photo made all the difference in motivating the UNC team to work toward that Final Four appearance.



NIA President
Laura Dover,
Cleo Doran, and
Hank Gilliam at the
NCAA tournament
in New Orleans.

For those who were in National Harbor for NIA's Fall Summit this past October, you know that NIA launched the first-ever Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition, (see page 10). Congratulations to Brooks Holmgren and his crew at Elite Insulation in Minnesota for the winning entry, and to all the companies who submitted photographs of mechanical insulation work. NIA staff did a great job displaying the photo entries at a networking event, and association members in attendance were able to vote for their favorite project photos. It was not just a competition, but indeed an Art Gallery Showcase, as billed.



NIA's Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition was held at NIA's 2023 Fall Summit.



I absolutely love the idea of celebrating our craft and motivating our fellow insulation professionals by displaying photographs of fine workmanship. As far as I am concerned, mechanical insulation IS art, and photographs of top-notch insulation work are nothing short of inspirational. I am proud the annual Insulation Project Art Gallery Showcase and Competition was launched during my time as NIA President, and I am already looking forward to seeing future entries. Let's commit to proudly photographing and documenting our industry at its best.

Let's be **Better Together** (and go Heels!)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Dover'.

Laura Dover
President
National Insulation Association