

## Early Graduate Trent Forrest Achieving On And Off The Court For Florida State

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Trent Forrest has achieved a lot on the court in his Florida State basketball career.

The senior point guard has played a crucial role in the rejuvenation of the FSU basketball program. He's come up big in FSU's deep runs in the NCAA Tournament runs in each of the last two seasons while catapulting his way into the Top 10 in the program record books in career steals (181, eighth) and assists (371, 10th).

If Forrest plays in 34 games this season, he'll surpass former teammate Terance Mann for the most games played in program history.

While accomplishing great feats on the court, Forrest has also been ahead of schedule in the classroom. He's set to graduate Friday with his bachelor's degree in sports management. He'll do so with a 3.46 GPA and in less than four years considering he arrived at FSU in the summer of 2016.

It's a plan that has been in the works dating back to his high school career in Chipley.

"In high school earlier, in ninth or tenth grade, I didn't really think I would be in college classes in high school," Forrest said.

"I had good grades so my teachers and advisors, they went ahead and just put me in those AP classes and I kind of did good in them. It just kind of went from there. My junior year, I had a couple AP classes and then senior year, I had another AP class and I dual-enrolled that year so that put me ahead. When I got here, I was already ahead and now I'm graduating in (three and a half) years so it paid off for sure."

The benefit of being from Chipley, only about 90 minutes west of Tallahassee? Forrest is expecting a big crowd of supporters in attendance for Friday's ceremony.

"I have 20 graduation tickets right now and I may need more, hopefully by Friday," Forrest said.

"It'll probably be a good bit of family and friends there."

None of them may be prouder than his mother, Barbara Lee. Due to her displeasure for traveling, she didn't complain about the fact that her son fell in love with the nearby Seminoles during his recruitment.

"It was indeed such a blessing," Lee told the *Democrat*.

"I did not try to interfere. I pretty much just left it up to him because I didn't want him, down the road, to say he missed out on anything or my intervention and helping him make a decision may lead to regret. I just said you decide where you want to go, we'll pray about that and see if we come up with the same thing and whatever you want to do then I'm supporting you with whatever your decision is.

"When we went over for his official visit. I was really pleased with all of the things that they had to help them as far as academics, personal life...It just seemed to be the total package."

At their busiest, Forrest's school days -- jam-packed with class, studying, projects, workouts, practice and film study -- can exceed 16 hours of constant work.

His mother credits his intrinsic work ethic that has allowed him to perform so admirably on the court and in the classroom.

"With Trent, it just came real natural. To this day, I'm amazed at his discipline academically as well as his work ethic with sports and all," Lee said.

"He still studied, you know, he put the time in studying and preparing for tests and different things, but it really did come naturally for him."

Forrest also credits the ideals instilled into him from childhood about the importance of education. He believes this has played a role in him being an ACC Academic Basketball Team honoree in each of his first three seasons with the Seminoles.

"Sometimes (my family is) more proud of that than anything I do on the court because they stressed to me that's one thing no one will be able to take from you is your education," Forrest said.

"My family, they're very proud of me graduating and all the academic awards I have received."  
Lee is equally proud of the things she hears about Forrest from FSU fans each time she visits Tallahassee.

"It never fails when I'm at FSU that someone comes up to me and asks if I'm his mom and just compliments him on how humble he is and how respectful he is," Lee said.

"That makes parents really proud because I knew what he was here, but sometimes kids, they tend to change when they leave home and that has stayed with him."

Forrest's head start and early graduation will allow him to get a jump start on a Master's degree even though he didn't redshirt and will spend just four years at FSU.

Forrest was admitted to FSU's highly-regarded Master's in Sports Management program -- rated the best in the country by *College Choice* -- and will complete one semester of graduate classes in the spring before pursuing his professional career.

"It's definitely hard to get into," Forrest said of the program.

"You have to have the right GPA and then have the right references for people to help you get in. It's definitely a hard group to get in, but our advisors and even having (FSU basketball coach Leonard Hamilton) on my side kind of helped me with that."

He won't finish his Master's before leaving, but he plans to complete it gradually over his professional career through online classes.

That will give Forrest a boost on his post-playing-career plans. He wants to stay around basketball and follow in the footsteps of a few FSU graduates like Jeff Peterson, assistant general manager for the Brooklyn Nets, and Luke Loucks, player development coach for the Golden State Warriors.

"Either GM or coach, just something to keep me around basketball definitely would be the plan."