

Athletics director retiring after 19 years of service

by News Bureau - Wednesday, March 31, 2010

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2599/uwo-athletics-director-retiring-after-19-years-of-service/>

After nearly two decades of service, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Director of Athletics Allen Ackerman announced March 31 that he is retiring effective January 2011.

Ackerman came to UW Oshkosh from Elmhurst College (Ill.) in 1991. His 19 years as athletics director current position ranks second to only Robert Kolf in UW Oshkosh's history.

"Al has provided excellent leadership and vision to the athletic department," Deb Vercauteren, senior assistant director of athletics, said. "We appreciate his hard work and the dedication to the community, University and athletic department."

Added Chancellor Richard H. Wells, "For two decades, Al has provided outstanding leadership that has resulted in many years of national respect for our athletic programs, which are known and admired throughout the country. Al has always been dedicated first and foremost to the welfare and academic success of our student athletes."

At UW Oshkosh, Ackerman has led aggressive movements in a 21-sport athletics program that competes at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III level as a member of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC). His tenure has been punctuated with outstanding vision and significant achievements in athletics as well as academics.

Ackerman also was responsible for spearheading a collaboration with the Oshkosh Area School District, the Unified Catholic Schools, UW Oshkosh and the UW Oshkosh Foundation to construct the Oshkosh Sports Complex, a sports venue for the community that is expected to generate at least \$25 million annually for the local economy.

"Nearly 15 years ago, a man had a dream about the possibilities of changing a shared community sports facility from a strained, worn-out structure into a state-of-the-art sports complex," said UW Oshkosh Foundation President Arthur Rathjen. "Al Ackerman had a larger vision for our community: to work together to renovate and rebuild one complex for the benefit of all, and while there are many people, partners, supporters and friends to thank who made this community facility a reality, people need to know that it was Al who got the ball rolling on the Oshkosh Sports Complex. We are collectively in his debt for pushing, promoting and fighting for a sports complex that serves as a point of pride in our community and is arguably one of the finest facilities in Wisconsin and the Midwest."

Ackerman has also overseen physical changes at UW Oshkosh, including construction of a new natatorium and remodeling and upgrades to the University's indoor and outdoor sports complexes. This summer, efforts will begin to improve the school's softball facility.

UW Oshkosh teams have flourished under Ackerman's tenure. The school captured a total of 19 NCAA

Division III titles, including six in both women's indoor track and field and women's outdoor track and field. National championships also were won for men's baseball, women's basketball, men's cross country, women's cross country, women's gymnastics, men's indoor track and field, and men's outdoor track and field.

In addition, UW Oshkosh teams earned 64 WIAC championships, including 10 in women's cross country, nine in men's baseball and women's basketball, and eight in women's volleyball.

In the classroom, Ackerman believed in the ideals of the student athlete. Since the 1991, UW Oshkosh student athletes combined to collect 43 College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-America Awards and 42 WIAC Scholar-Athlete of the Year citations.

"I have had the pleasure to work with Al for only the past five years, but in that time I have been impressed with his understanding and value of the Division III philosophy that focuses on the student athlete — emphasis on the student," said Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Petra Roter. "Al has been proactive and responsive to the needs of the students, and their success and development on and off the field are paramount for him. Al's vision, dedication and hard work are evidenced by the success of the student athletes, coaches and athletic teams. His legacy is demonstrated in successful student athletes and programs and the Oshkosh Sports Complex."

Ackerman has played a key role in the success of both the National "O" Club and Titan Booster Club, the major fundraising arms of UW Oshkosh athletics. The two organizations have raised more than \$14 million for the nearly 500 student athletes who compete for the Titans on an annual basis.

During his service to UW Oshkosh, Ackerman received several awards. In 2003, the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics named Ackerman as its NCAA Division III Central Region Athletics Director of the Year. In 2001, the Fox Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau presented Ackerman with the Pinnacle Award, the organization's most prestigious annual honor.

Ackerman's first-hand working relationship with the NCAA resulted in a four-year tenure as a member of the Track and Field Committee. His local leadership experiences include work with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Oshkosh Police and Fire Commission.

"It has been a great pleasure working with the coaches and administration at UW Oshkosh over the past 19 years," Ackerman said. "Their commitment to the student athlete and Division III philosophy has been why UW Oshkosh athletics has had the success in the conference and nationally during my tenure.

Ackerman, a native of Athens, Ohio, graduated from Ohio University with a bachelor's degree in physical education in 1975 and a master's degree in 1978. Before coming to UW Oshkosh, Ackerman served as the director of Athletics at Elmhurst College from 1981 to 1991, where he also taught physical education classes, along with coaching student athletes in football and track and field.

The University will be conducting a national search for an athletics director in the near future, with a goal of filling the position sometime between Aug. 1, 2010, and Jan. 1, 2011.

For more information about athletics at UW Oshkosh, visit www.titans.uwosh.edu.