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President Emeritus Winthrop Athletics Accomplishments

President Emeritus

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President Emeritus Winthrop Athletics Accomplishments

Winthrop University's profile in [NCAA Division One](#) inter-collegiate sports grew and matured through the 24 years of Dr. Anthony DiGiorgio's presidency. Team sports grew from 12 to 18, complimented by development of an athletics complex that hosts some of best comprehensive university athletics facilities in the Southeast.

The transformation of the Winthrop athletics program eventually led to President DiGiorgio serving two terms on the NCAA Board of Directors, as well as two terms as president of the [Big South Conference](#), which in 2013 inducted him into its Hall of Fame.



Dr. DiGiorgio has likened his work nurturing the athletics program to "raising a toddler into a 30-something."

When he first arrived at Winthrop, the institution had been part of NCAA Division I athletics for just four years. He walked into a [Coliseum](#) with purple and orange seats – neither Winthrop's school colors – and found a coaching staff that was largely part-time, with some members overseeing two sports. The coaches were supported by a bare bones staff juggling multiple responsibilities. Operational budgets were tight and scholarships were minimal.

But DiGiorgio knew athletics could be a "window" through which many people could learn about Winthrop for the first time, eventually getting to know the campus's overall institutional quality and giving Winthrop name recognition nationally. That became a vision realized in 1999, when the [Winthrop Eagles men's basketball team](#) earned a first trip to the tournament known as the "Big Dance," and again in 2007, when the Eagles won not only a place in the national tournament, but also advanced to the second round by defeating powerhouse Notre Dame in a game held in Washington State.

Demonstrating a DiGiorgio maxim that "a good university is a pervasively good university", Winthrop also is known for its balanced approach to inter-collegiate athletics, focusing on excellence for student-athletes both in the classroom and in sports competitions.

- **Student-Athletes Academic Performance: Academic performance of Winthrop student-athletes received particular emphasis under President DiGiorgio's leadership.**
 - *In 2012, Winthrop student-athletes received the highest cumulative GPA in history: 3.13, topping the previous year's record of 3.1.*
 - *In 2012, Winthrop led the Big South for the second consecutive year with 136 Winthrop student-athletes making the Big South Honor Roll, indicating they achieved a 3.0 or higher GPA for the academic year.*

- Twenty student-athletes achieved President's List distinction (4.0 GPA.)
- The Dean's List, requiring a 3.5 GPA or higher, included 92 student-athletes.

- **Athletics Facilities Development:**

- Renovations to Winthrop Coliseum, the 6,100-seat headquarters for the athletic department as well as university and local high schools' commencements, included new seats and scoreboard, family-friendly food services, concourse monitors of events inside, and improved walkways.
- Memorial Tennis Courts, completed in 2003, include 12 lighted courts, seating for 300. The courts were named for members of the men's tennis team who were involved in a tragic highway accident in Hattiesburg, Miss., in 1993.
- Winthrop Ballpark, one of the most impressive collegiate ballparks in the South was built in 2001 with a second phase completed in 2008. The facility holds 1,800 spectators.
- Terry Softball Complex, home to the Eagle softball program, features four fields and 300 seats.
- The Irwin Belk Track, named for the late Charlotte businessman and philanthropist Irwin "Ike" Belk, is home to the Eagle track & field teams, and encircles a full-sized practice field for soccer, as well as areas for field events, such as discus and pole vault.
- Intramural Recreation Fields, a student use facility located at the Winthrop Recreational and Research Complex, features two lighted fields and a building that meets multiple needs for Recreational Services.



- **An era of achievement affirmed:**

- DiGiorgio Among 2013 Big South Conference Inductees Into Hall of Fame (4/11/13)
- Retiring President Inducted into Winthrop Hall of Fame For His Contributions (5/31/2013)
- As a charter member of the Big South Conference, Winthrop earned the following conference championships and NCAA post-season appearances over the past decade:

Women's Tennis

Big South Conference Championships—1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

NCAA Regional Appearances—1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

Men's Tennis

Big South Conference Championships—1997, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2010

NCAA Regional Appearances—2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2010



Men's Basketball

Big South Conference Championships — 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010

NCAA Regional Appearances — 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010

Women's Basketball

Women's National Invitational Tournament — 2010, 2013

Volleyball

Big South Conference Championships — 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006

NCAA Regional Appearances — 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006

Men's Soccer

Big South Conference Championships — 2002, 2006, 2008, 2009

NCAA Regional Appearances — 2002, 2006, 2008, 2009

Women's Soccer

Big South Conference Championships (regular season) — 2006, 2010, 2011

Men's Cross Country

Big South Conference Championships — 2000, 2001

Baseball

Big South Conference Championships — 1995, 1999, 2001, 2005

NCAA Regional Appearances — 1995, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2006

Softball

Big South Conference Championships — 1990, 1991, 2007, 2008

NCAA Regional Appearances — 2007, 2008

Men's & Women's Track & Field

Big South Conference Champions — 72 individual, 12 relays

NCAA Regional Qualifiers — 24 individual, 4 relays

NCAA Championship Qualifiers — 6