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Longest-Serving Winthrop Athletics Director Tom Hickman Announces Retirement

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Longest-Serving Winthrop Athletics Director Tom Hickman Announces Retirement

Quick Facts

- Tom Hickman, the longest-serving athletic director in Winthrop and Big South Conference history, announced his retirement effective June 30.
- During Hickman's tenure, more than \$20 million in new facility construction and facility improvements have been completed and four additional sports teams added.
- Under Hickman's leadership Winthrop has captured 48 Big South Championships and made 48 NCAA team appearances while 14 student-athletes have earned individual NCAA invitations.



Tom Hickman

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — **Tom Hickman**, the longest-serving athletic director in Winthrop and **Big South Conference** history, announced today he will **retire effective June 30** after completing his 27th year overall at the school and his 20th year as Winthrop's director of athletics.

"It is with many great memories that I have decided it is time for someone with new energy and new ideas to come in and take over the reins of **Winthrop athletics**," said Hickman, who came to Winthrop in 1989 as associate athletic director and was appointed athletic director on July 1, 1996. "Making this decision at this time will allow **President Dan Mahony** the time he needs to identify the right person and have them in place by the start of the new academic year on July 1."

During Hickman's tenure, **more than \$20 million in new facility construction and facility improvements** have been completed and **four additional sports teams**—women's soccer and lacrosse and men's and women's indoor track and field—have been added.

New facilities have been added for baseball, softball, tennis, track and field, and soccer/lacrosse. Major improvements have been made to the Winthrop Coliseum, and new lighting has been added to all of the outdoor sports facilities. Digital scoreboards and videoboards have been installed in the coliseum as well as the baseball stadium while new scoreboards have been added at the softball, tennis, track and soccer/lacrosse complexes.

Since becoming AD in 1996, **Winthrop has captured 48 Big South Championships** and made **48 NCAA team appearances** while **14 student-athletes have earned individual NCAA invitations**. In 2007, Winthrop earned the **Big South All-Sports Men's Cup**. Winthrop has also been **awarded the Kallander Cup four times** by the Big South Conference for the community service work by its student-athletes, and its **student-athletes rank at or near the top of the conference schools for academic achievement**. The women's teams have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above for 37 consecutive semesters dating back to 1997 while the men's teams have reached or exceeded a 3.0 GPA in 17 of the last 20 semesters since 2006.

"Under Tom Hickman's leadership, Winthrop's athletics program has realized great success while **never wavering from a focus on the total student-athlete**," said President Dan Mahony. "Tom bleeds Winthrop garnet and gold. He and his wife, Karen, will always be a part of the Winthrop family."

In addition to his work of overseeing the growth in the physical plant and the competitive and academic successes of Winthrop's teams and student-athletes, Hickman has also been **involved in the administration of the NCAA and Big South Conferences** by serving on numerous committees.

Hickman is a member of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) and is a former member on the NCAA Div. I Championships/Sports Management Cabinet, the NCAA Div. I Management Council, the NCAA Div. I Legislative Review and Interpretations Committee, and the NCAA National Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee.

He currently serves on the Big South Conference Basketball Tournament Committee, Compliance Committee, Men's Basketball Committee and is chair of the Baseball Committee. In past years, he has served on the Championships, Baseball,

Before his arrival at Winthrop, Hickman served as the athletic director and chair of physical education and recreation at Ferrum College in Virginia from Jan. 1, 1986 until 1989. He also served as assistant professor and intramural director at Ferrum from August 1977 until 1986.

The Enfield, North Carolina, native is a graduate of Wake Forest University where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1970 with a major in health, physical education and recreation. He also earned his master's degree from Wake Forest in 1974 in exercise physiology.

While in graduate school, Hickman served from 1970 to 1972 as a graduate assistant coach for the men's basketball program.

He and wife Karen are the parents of two sons, Wesley and Brett; a daughter, Lauren; and have two granddaughters, Aubrey and Addison.

"For the past 30-plus years, my professional life has been wrapped up in intercollegiate athletics. Even prior to that, going back to my high school and college days, every job I've ever had has been in the field of sport and recreation. These past 27 years at Winthrop have been **a great place to cap off my career**. What makes working in college athletics so unique is that you have the tremendous emotional highs but you also suffer through the lows with your coaches and student-athletes. Those low moments make you appreciate the high ones even more.

We have had many great coaches, staff members and wonderful student-athletes during my time at Winthrop and the athletic successes we have had are directly attributable to their efforts. Likewise, they have all played a major role in the academic successes of our athletic teams which continue to be a point of pride for this university. I would also like to express my appreciation for all our **Eagle Club** members and volunteers who have faithfully supported Winthrop athletics.

I'd like to thank our past administrations and particularly Dr. Anthony DiGiorgio for giving me the opportunity to serve as Winthrop's athletic director. To Steve Vacendak, I want to extend a special thanks for bringing me to Winthrop in 1989 as his associate athletic director. The support our athletic program has received from all our presidents and trustees over the years has been instrumental in our success, and for that I am grateful. **I wish only the best for Winthrop in the years to come and will always be an Eagle fan.**"

Highlights of Tom Hickman's Winthrop Athletic Director Tenure:

Since 2000, more than \$20 million of new facility construction and facility improvements have been completed. This includes:

- New facilities for baseball, softball, track and field, soccer/lacrosse and tennis.
- Renovation of the interior and exterior of the Winthrop Coliseum (including padded VIP seating with cup holders, a new playing floor, locker rooms, academic support center with study hall and computer lab area, upgraded athletic training and rehabilitation area, new strength and conditioning area, lighting and sound system, videoboard, scoreboards, and digital signage)
- New athletic training facilities at track/soccer/lacrosse, softball and baseball
- New practice infield for baseball
- Installation of lighting at all outdoor venues
- New press box facilities at baseball, softball, track/soccer/lacrosse and tennis
- New practice facilities (both indoor and outdoor) for men's and women's golf
- New paved parking lots for baseball, softball and soccer/track/lacrosse
- New scoreboards for baseball, softball, track and tennis
- The installation of an event marquee on Cherry Road

Since taking over as AD in 1996, Winthrop has captured 48 Big South Championships and made 48 NCAA team appearances while 14 student-athletes have earned individual NCAA invitations. In 2007, Winthrop earned the Big South All-Sports Men's Cup. Winthrop has also been awarded the Kallander Cup four times by the Big South Conference for the community service work by its student-athletes, and its student-athletes rank at or near the top of the of the conference schools for academic achievement.

NCAA Committee Involvement:

- Division I Men's Soccer South Region Committee
- Division I Management Council
- National Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee
- Division I Legislative Review and Interpretations Committee
- Division I Championships/Sport Management Cabinet

Big South Conference Committee Involvement:

- Past chair of Council of Athletic Directors
- Past member of the Budget Committee
- Past member of the Audit Committee
- Current Chair of Baseball Committee
- Current member of Compliance and Men's Basketball Committees
- Past and Current member of Basketball Tournament Committee

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