



Fall 10-13-2005

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Winthrop University

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Winthrop University, "Winthrop Track Now Bears the Name of Irwin Belk" (2005). *Winthrop News 2005*. 200.
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10/13/2005


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Winthrop Track Now Bears the Name of Irwin Belk

Quick Facts

- Irwin Belk has been a generous contributor to Winthrop and has a long-lasting love for track.
- The 8,500-square-yard Belk Track, completed this summer by Farley Construction Company, is located on Winthrop Garnet Drive near the golf course.



Irwin Belk

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop dedicated its new **Irwin Belk Track** during ceremonies this afternoon in honor of the North Carolina philanthropist and president of Belk Group, Inc.

Belk has been a generous contributor to Winthrop and has a long-lasting love for track. The former North Carolina state senator and member of the House of Representatives has been a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee for more than 30 years and was a U.S. delegate at the 54th United Nations General Assembly. A track enthusiast who competed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Belk has given back to the sport significantly over the years. USA Track & Field honored him in 2004 with its top Pacesetter Award for his philanthropy and service.

"We have a special reason to be thankful tonight for the generosity of a friend that makes it possible to dedicate The Irwin Belk Track as part of the track and soccer complex at Winthrop University," said **Winthrop President Anthony DiGiorgio**. "Indeed, Winthrop's signature garnet and gold have never looked more vibrant than they do in this special oval.

"Ike Belk's generosity extends well beyond this facility, beyond this university, and frankly beyond the Carolinas that he calls his home," said DiGiorgio. His name has long been synonymous with quality and with community spirit."

The 8,500-square-yard **Belk Track**, completed this summer by Farley Construction Company, is located on Winthrop Garnet Drive near the golf course. The project provides Winthrop an NCAA Division I competition track with its Mondo Super-X Performance surface, the same surface used in the past eight Olympic Games and 10 World Championships.

Winthrop's lighted track has eight-lanes on the 400-meter oval which encircles a soccer practice area, as well as event areas for the discus, hammer, dual runways for the long jump, triple jump, high jump and pole vault.

The track is part of the **Winthrop University Track and Soccer Complex**, a \$2.8 million dual-purpose facility that includes locker rooms, team meeting and storage rooms, public restrooms and concession areas, press box facilities that overlook both competition areas, and an athletic training room. A new scoreboard soon will be added.

Winthrop's track and field program began competition in the 1993-94 season and since then has held practices and competitions at local middle schools. Hickman said the new facility and competition track have already proven a boon to recruiting. "This year's class is probably the best we've ever had," he said.

Head Coach Ben Paxton has been Winthrop's track and field coach since the program's inception. He was named the Big South cross country Coach of the Year in 2000 and 2001 after back-to-back titles for the Eagles. He was also named the outdoor track Coach of the Year in 1999 and 2004 and indoor track Coach of the Year in 2000.

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