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Interview with Rich Posipanko

Rich Posipanko

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LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview #186
POSIPANKO, Rich

POSIPANKO, Rich

Head Men's Soccer Coach

At Winthrop: 1989-Present

Interviewed: March 23, 2015

Interviewer: Jenna Kasmarik

Index by: Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

Length: 00:23:31

Abstract: In his March 23, 2015 interview with Jenna Kasmarik, Rich Posipanko talks about how Winthrop built up its athletic department and the challenges it's faced in the subsequent years. Specifically, Posipanko shares his opinions on how Title IX has affected athletics at Winthrop. Posipanko concludes his interview reminiscing of the changes he's seen in the athletic department. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Soccer, Title IX, scholarships, fundraising, athletics, sports, recruitment, Anthony DiGiorgio

Interview Session (March 23, 2015): Digital File

Time Keywords

00:00:00 *Start of Interview*/Interviewer's Introduction

00:00:15 *Question:* What was your first year like? *Answer:* The program had a good foundation – built by his predecessor. Between the time his predecessor left and Rich was hired, the program fell apart. Difficult to build it back up. “Those two years probably cost us four years.”

00:01:05 *Question:* Facilities? *Answer:* Poor. There was just a field with bleachers. Budget and scholarships bad. Everything changed in 2000.

00:01:30 *Question:* Why Winthrop? *Answer:* RP looking for a Division I job. RP turned down a lot of good positions. Winthrop wanted to improve the situation. RP did not realize how bad the program was. There was no recruitment done for two years.

- 00:02:26 *Question:* What are the selling points for recruitment in soccer? *Answer:* Winthrop is academically a good school. In terms of wins/championships Winthrop is as good as any school. Winthrop's problem is the conference is not very good. "You can be a good club, but your still in a bad league."
- 00:03:20 *Question:* What else made it difficult to recruit? *Answer:* It was easy to recruit. Winthrop is a nice school. Dr. DiGiorgio renovated the entire campus. Winthrop's soccer team was in the hole.
- 00:04:04 *Question:* Have you always looked internationally? *Answer:* If Winthrop wants to compete at this level, then you have to get international players.
- 00:04:41 *Question:* Adding sports makes it hard to recruit? *Answer:* No.
- 00:04:51 *Question:* What kept soccer going? *Answer:* Having a President that understood athletics was important, but he didn't want it to consume the University.
- 00:06:15 *Question:* What relationship did you have with DiGiorgio, in terms of building up soccer? *Answer:* He had the same relationship. He would help anyone, if you did things the right way. A lot of change happened with fundraising.
- 00:06:48 *Question:* How many men's and women's sports were there when you first started? *Answer:* No Lacrosse or track and field. The track was built about ten or twelve years ago.
- 00:07:55 *Question:* How do you feel about the addition of these sports (currently there are 10 women's sports and 8 men's sports)? *Answer:* There will always be an imbalance. RP doesn't mind adding sports, but the problem is the lack of funding. There are very few sports that will be able to compete nationally, because of Winthrop's set up.
- 00:08:47 *Question:* How has Title IX impacted athletics at Winthrop? *Answer:* It's everywhere. Passed in 1972, but no one did anything until the 1990s, RP speculates. The money is already there.
- 00:09:28 *Question:* Has Title IX had any negative influence on athletics at Winthrop? *Answer:* Yes. It has dropped sports. Wrestling for instance throughout the nation. RP says, if people had followed the law in the 1970s, then there wouldn't be any issues today – everything would have been worked out.
- 00:10:15 *Question:* What would you say to the sentiment, "Men's sports pay for women's sports?" *Answer:* It's true for few schools, Ohio State for existence. Winthrop doesn't make money.

- 00:10:55 *Question:* What do you think about the notion of Winthrop adding another female sport in the next three years? *Answer:* There have been talks about swimming. RP doesn't think anything should be added until a sport has been fully funded.
- 00:11:20 *Question:* How has it impacted everyone? *Answer:* Everybody is trying to do the best they can. When budgets are frozen, it's a loss of money. RP talks about the difference between equivalency and head-count sports and their funding is affected. RP says, if you don't fund raise, then you won't be successful.
- 00:13:03 **[no question]** RP lists off head-count sports at Winthrop. RP refers to a lawsuit at Winthrop a few years ago and the amount of money raised.
- 00:14:10 *Question:* What changes would you like to see in Title IX? *Answer:* RP would get rid of football.
- 00:15:25 *Question:* How does Title IX interfere? *Answer:* RP doesn't see any problem. "There's just one pie, and everybody's trying to grab at it."
- 00:15:50 *Question:* Do you think they should hold off on adding a sport? *Answer:* There should be fundraising. RP talks about lacrosse. Every detail should be figured out, before a sport is added. RP shares his concerns about the future of athletics at Winthrop. RP says there needs to be more funding for athletics. RP talks about morale across the campus.
- 00:18:05 *Question:* Does the next President need to have as much interest in athletics as DiGiorgio? *Answer:* Doesn't have to be an interest, but the President has to decide athletics' importance at Winthrop. There are so many things that need attention.
- 00:19:15 *Question:* Adding athletics and becoming NCAA hurt academics? *Answer:* RP not sure. RP says be Division I or III, no reason to be Division II.
- 00:21:00 *Question:* What was the conference like when you first got here? *Answer:* It wasn't good. It changed drastically. Lists off schools formerly in the conference. The conference has come a long way. Around the 2000s, Winthrop was boosted.
- 0022:39 *Question:* What were the factors in the 2000s that boosted Winthrop? *Answer:* Were able to hire full-time assistants – gave Winthrop more recruiting effort, and RP was able to fundraise more. Raised enough money to create new facilities and create new scholarships.
- 00:23:31 ***End of interview***