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Meet your Truman State AD

Photos by Truman Athletics Communications

Truman State Athletic Director Jerry Wollmering stands beside University President Troy Paino during the Homecoming football game during 2010 against Missouri Southern University. This is Wollmering's 14th year as Athletic Director and is making progress through upgrades to Pershing Arena, Stokes Stadium and other facilities.

BY SAM SHERMAN
Staff Reporter

A Kansas City Star article from 2001 stays pinned to the bulletin board above Athletic Director Jerry Wollmering's computer screen.

The headline reads "Bearcats Stunned By TSU" and the picture accompanying the article is of a Bulldog football player mid-game against former conference rival Northwest Missouri State University. Though a mute addition to an office filled with pieces of Bulldog memorabilia, it might be the most significant representation of the amount of change that's occurred during Wollmering's 14-year career at Truman State.

No student since Oct. 20, 2001, has seen Truman win the famous "Ole Hickory Stick," given to the winning team of the Northwest Missouri-Truman football rivalry. In fact, last season was the first throughout 65 years that the longest-running rivalry in Div. II didn't take place.

But the Wollmering-led athletic department is used to such change. The article pays homage to a bright time for Truman football but sits amid the present. Next to it on the bulletin board are breakdowns of athletic department funding for the year. A Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletic Association hat sits on a shelf, but next to it is a Great Lakes Valley Conference hat.

Wollmering's journey to this office began with the ticket manager at his alma mater, Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Wollmering was a Certified Public Accountant and had been auditing various educational institutions around Iowa, and said he was unsure whether he could continue on that path for 40 years. When the ticket manager introduced him to a friend of his who worked in sports administration at Drake, it was enough to convince him to go back to school.

"My dad, who had never graduated from high school and had worked in a factory for 30-something years, first thought I was a little crazy to give up a pretty good-paying job," Wollmering said. "But he was very supportive in [my decision], so I packed up my stuff and moved to Ohio."

At Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, Wollmering earned his master's degree in athletic administration then got a job at Southeast Missouri State University as an Assistant Athletic Director. After short stints at SEMO and Bowling Green State University, he finally arrived at Truman.

Since then, Wollmering has seen national champions, new coaches and new rivalries. He's seen players come and go, school spirit fluctuate and Bulldog athletic facilities get completely revamped.

Last year it was announced the Truman athletic department would experience possibly the most notable

change during its history, leaving its 101-year MIAA legacy behind for the greener pastures of the GLVC. With the move came a new era in Bulldog history, along with another change to tack onto the growing list with Wollmering's administration.

Despite the historical ramifications, Wollmering said the addition of the Student Athletic Fee during 2007 is the move he's most proud of.

"Without [the student athletic fee], I'm not sure if we'd have all the sports that we still have today," Wollmering said. "Obviously the student athletic fee has been a huge impact on intercollegiate athletics and how our facilities look today compared to what they did before."

A piece of paper titled "Progress As Promised" details just how many additions to athletic facilities the student fee has accounted for. New lights and turf were added to Stokes Stadium as the first project coming from the new funding, but since then, the baseball field fence has been replaced, the tennis courts have been resurfaced and Pershing Arena gained new seating and a new sound system.

"When it did pass and the first thing we did was the turf and the lights, I think some people were like, 'Oh, is this all going to go to football?'" Wollmering said. "But the nice thing about now, having just done the soccer field, the tennis Please see WOLLMERING, Page 13

Show Royals fans some love



Commentary

DAVID LEMON

Bay Rays. Nonetheless, their starting pitching, resurgent first baseman Eric Hosmer and powerful designated hitter Billy Butler are the core of the team's successes.

Many Royals fans, though, are upset with the way the front office is working, and how management has struggled during recent years. For starters, the hiring of ex-Royal and Hall-of-Famer George Brett as Kansas City's hitting coach might be the best thing to happen to them since, well, George Brett placed 7th in the American League MVP voting during 1990. Then, as history has it, something didn't go the Royals' way and Brett stepped down from his position late last month.

Looking toward the rest of the season, the Royals must find that magic they left behind during their 9-game winning streak during late July. Unluckily for the Royals, their September schedule has a stretch of 15 games against teams with high playoff hopes. Twelve of those games are against the Tigers and Indians.

On the other side of Interstate 70, the Cards close their season with 19 games against teams with losing or close to .500 records. Twelve of their 19 games also are home games in front of the 'sea of red' at Busch III. The Redbirds do have a rough schedule coming up soon against division rivals the Pirates and Reds so be sure to keep an eye on that. The point is to realize there is no need for stressing out about the Cardinals right now when you could be helping a friend.

Cardinals fans, here is a proposal. Seek out your friends with an affinity for the Royals and have a one-on-one talk with each of them. Let your friends jab about how 'Moose' will pull it together and how Alex Gordon and Salvador Perez are underrated players. They're right. All of those guys have so much potential to be great players like Carlos Beltran, Johnny Damon, Wil Myers and Zack Greinke.

Tell them how much you are rooting for the Royals to have a winning season for the first time after a decade and how it would

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- Head Coach from 1980 to 2013
- MIAA Coach of the Year during 1983
- 1999 Indoor Season MIAA Coach of the Year
- 2000 MIAA Indoor/Outdoor Coach of the Year
- NCAA D-11 Track Coaches Distinguished Service Award

JOHN COCHRANE

Stepping down after 33 years of coaching



Commentary

KIRK SCHLUETER

career at Truman. Four women won individual titles during his tenure, and 52 individuals and seven relays garnered All-American honors at the indoor track, outdoor track and cross country national championships. Cochrane's teams won seven conference titles. The highest individual finish by any Bulldog at the cross country national championships occurred while he was the cross country coach. Fourteen athletes Cochrane coached have been Academic All-American.

Not enough for you? Cochrane was inducted into the Missouri Track and Field/Cross Country Hall of Fame during 2011. Before that, he had been named Conference Coach of the year five times, NCAA Regional Coach of the Year, and won the Distinguished Service Award from the NCAA track coaches and cross country coaches.

Still not impressed? Until 2005, Cochrane was only the coach of the women's teams, but began coaching the men when the previous men's coach, Ed Schneider, retired. During 1989 he served one year as Truman's Athletics Director.

But enough of this showboating, as good as it is.

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