

WOLLMERING | A brief look at Truman State's Athletic Director shows work he's put in to get the program where it is today.



Photo by Truman Athletics Communications
Truman State Athletic Director Jerry Wollmering walks the field at halftime while the Marching Statesmen begin their halftime show at Stokes Stadium this past fall.

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courts, the baseball field, I think everyone feels good about where we've ended up with this."

The student athletic fee has accounted for \$3 million since its inception and generates \$500,000 annually for the athletic department.

Head basketball coach Matt Woodley said he understands what kind of pressure Wollmering is under to balance the athletic budget, which has remained relatively constant since 1999.

"In these times that we're in financially, it's always going to be a struggle," Woodley said. "We're different than most schools at this level, we're not funded like the rest of them but we're expected to compete with them and he does as good a job as he can to help us do that."

But the money isn't what's most important to

the former accountant, nor is winning and losing. Wollmering said the most important goals of the athletic department consistently have been reached year after year.

"Our entire success isn't defined just by winning and losing," Wollmering said. "We're proud of the fact that we're a national leader in student athlete graduation rates. Proud of the fact that student-athletes and students go on to do great things in our society."

Wollmering's hair isn't as thick as it was 14 years ago, and glasses didn't hang off the collar of his shirt when he began his time as Athletic Director. If you had asked the Iowa-born CPA fresh from an Assistant Athletic Director job 14 years ago where he would be 14 years later, he said he knows what he would have answered. "I would've probably

said no," Wollmering said. "[I've] just really grown to appreciate the Div. II philosophy of athletics."

Yet, he's still on Truman's campus, still at Truman sporting events, watching quietly from the side. He's still making his rounds around the athletics offices in Pershing Arena, dropping by to check on his staff.

That 2001 win against Northwest Missouri State was just one piece of the most successful Bulldog football season throughout Wollmering's 14 years.

If you asked Wollmering where he'll be 14 years from now, he said he'd probably answer the same way he would've 14 years ago, though he said he doesn't really know where he'll end up. But if he has his way, before that time comes for him to move on from Truman State, he might have to get a bigger bulletin board.

SCHLUETER | After 33 years as the Track & Field head coach, this is the first year John Cochrane will wear different shoes.

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I come to praise Cochrane, not to bury him, to borrow a line. Any press release can sum up the results Truman's runners had with Cochrane. The facts are not being disputed. It's what's behind the facts that can blur and become distorted.

Cochrane and I had this conversation once, several years ago, when we were talking about why one of his athletes hadn't done as well as might have been expected at a meet due to injury. Cochrane sighed.

"In five years, everyone will forget," he said. "It'll just be on a website somewhere, and no one will remember the story."

It'd be a shame if that happened to Cochrane. He was a man built for the story. The first time I met him when I was a freshman, for one of the first stories I did as an Index reporter, I entered his office nervous and clammy. We sat down and began talking. He mentioned several athletes who had done well at a recent meet. I innocently asked what they had done to perform well.

"Well," he said, "[alumna triple jumper] Jenny Zweifel jumped far and [alumnus runner] Joey Walls ran fast." And he stopped and stared, saying nothing more for 10 seconds.

It probably wasn't 10 seconds. But it was long enough for me to wonder how I was possibly going to obtain anything useful from the interview. Then Cochrane chuckled and proceeded to tell me exactly what each of them had done successfully.

"Okay," I thought to myself, "he was just

messing with me the first week. He won't do that again."

That optimism lasted all of two weeks, when the next scene played out identically. Yet what has stayed with me most from two years of interviewing Cochrane isn't his initial sarcastic answer, but how helpful he always was after he gave it. The only thing I have ever known about running is it hurts, and Cochrane always was willing to discuss not only race strategy and preparation with me, but how the NCAA track and field and cross country systems operated. All I know about those sports, I learned from him.

The closest current coach to Cochrane in terms of years spent at Truman is women's head soccer coach Mike Cannon, but with all due respect to Cannon, he's only been here for 20 years, as if "only" is a word that belongs in front of that number.

Cochrane's 33 years at Truman stand as a true testament to his dedication to this university and its athletes. I'm sorry to see him go, and I wish him nothing but the best during his retirement. I know the new track and field and cross country coach Tim Schwegler, the rest of the athletic department and all of Cochrane's athletes, current and former, wish him the same.

Inevitably, I haven't paid him his full due here. This column deserves to be longer, and not fail quite as badly at capturing his story. Maybe the best we can say is this — what did John Cochrane do that allowed him to be such a successful coach? Well, John Cochrane, he coached well.

LEMON | Cardinals fans need to soften up to their Royals supporting friends and cheer with them for a winning season.

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be even cooler if they made the playoffs for the first time since 1985, when they won the World Series against the Cards. This event isn't likely at this point in the season, but remember what Joseph Gordon-Levitt said in 'Angels in the Outfield' — "It could happen!"

Now, Birds fans, don't go all Lou Piniella about the 1985 World Series because of Don Denkinger's blown call at first base during game six. The Redbirds got trampled during game seven 11-0. The Royals deserved to win. Simply let your friends have that victory. Unfortunately for your friends, they

most likely weren't alive during that time or at least didn't have cognitive thought to remember their World Series victory.

Remember, the most important thing right now is for you to be with Royals fans and root them to victory, and when they don't win just remind them how lucky they are to not be Cubs fans.

There is one more person, or beast to some, standing in the Royals' way of a winning season. Miguel Cabrera, who is closing in on a possible second consecutive Triple Crown.

Well, at least you'll be good three years from now, Royals.

TRUMAN INTRAMURALS

<p>Amazing Race Registration ends Sept. 2nd Event: Sept. 5</p> <p>Teams will receive clues, complete activities and race to win an Intramural Champion t-shirt.</p>	<p>Baggo Registration ends Sept. 12 Season: Sept. 17 & 18</p> <p>Also known as cornhole, two person teams toss beanbags at targets. Winners receive Intramural Champion t-shirts.</p>	<p>Golf Scramble Registration ends Sept. 3 Event: Sept. 9 & 10</p> <p>A nine-hole, best shot tournament, following all USGA rules for an Intramural Champion t-shirt.</p>	<p>Softball Tournament Registration opens Sept. 2 Tournament: Sept. 21 & 22</p> <p>Slowpitch softball tournament between teams of nine. Winners receive Intramural Champion t-shirts.</p>	<p>Flag Football Registration ends Sept. 4 Season starts Sept. 9</p> <p>Teams of 7 face off at the fields behind Centennial Hall. Winners receive an Intramural Champion t-shirt.</p>
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