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Boylan Leaves Behind Memorable Legacy at Loyola Upon Retiring

Joseph Boylan, Loyola's athletic director since 1991, has announced his plan to retire come July 2010, prompting the Loyola athletic community and supporters of the Loyola athletic community to reflect on what their leader has accomplished during his nearly 20-year tenure. During Boylan's time at Loyola, he saw the addition of women's soccer, women's indoor and outdoor track, and men's and women's crew to the roster of Loyola's NCAA Division I teams. In terms of specific team accomplishments, five of Loyola's Division I teams earned NCAA postseason berths in 1994, the men's lacrosse team was ranked No. 1 nationally in 1999, the women's lacrosse team was ranked No. 1 and reached the Final Four in 2003, and women's soccer qualified for the NCAA tournament for five straight years from 2000-2004. Boylan will also be remembered for the recent improvements in Loyola's athletic facilities, including the enhancement of Reitz Arena, the construction of a new track shared with Johns Hopkins, and the building of the Ridley Athletic Complex, the new lacrosse/soccer stadium set to open this spring.

Boylan's legacy will also be marked by his emphasis on the academic life of Loyola athletes. He has led the expansion of academic and other support programs for Loyola's student-athletes, and the fruits of his efforts can be seen in a graduation rate of 96 percent, one of the highest nationwide among Division I programs. In an article featured in the Greyhound a couple of years ago about the role of the student-athlete in a college setting, he was quoted as saying that academics should come first

for all Greyhounds. After all, student comes first in the term *student-athlete*, and Boylan obviously believes that this is for a good reason. In the director of athletics welcome letter in the 2009-2010 student-athlete handbook, he noted that in the past year many Loyola teams achieved their highest average GPA's ever, with over 50% of all student-athletes earning a 3.0 or better.

Boylan's concern for the well-being of his student-athletes also extended to the health of their social lives. On the evening of Tuesday, October 20, every one of Loyola's student-athletes was crowded into Reitz Arena for a presentation by Mike Green, a recovering alcoholic, who spoke about the consequences of "one-night problem" drinking. This is simply the latest in a long line of speakers who have appeared during Boylan's tenure who have discussed issues relating to drugs, alcohol, parties, and sex in regards to the life of a student-athlete. Although student-athletes often grumble about being forced to attend these talks from *another* mandatory speaker, the response at the end of these events is generally positive, as these guests tend to be entertaining and informative. Boylan has proven to have a great track record for choosing some of the most unique speakers on the topics discussed.

Joe Boylan began his collegiate athletic career as a basketball and soccer player during his undergraduate years at Lafayette University in eastern Pennsylvania. He began his coaching career in 1963 at Lansdowne High School in suburban Baltimore. In 1970, he became the coach of American University's freshman basketball team. In 1974, he moved to Rutgers University, where he

served initially as associate head men's basketball coach and then as assistant athletic director for academic support.

Rutgers graduate Bob Malone, the father of this article's author and a former member of Rutgers' basketball booster club, remembers his experiences with Joe Boylan: "When he started at Rutgers, he didn't really stand out at first, except for his plaid pants. He did the color commentary [for the basketball games] on the radio, and he was knowledgeable, calm and sensible. Overall, he was a very down-to-earth guy. I ran him into on Loyola's campus a few years ago. I hadn't seen him since he left Rutgers, so that would be about 15 years. I was impressed that he recognized me right away, even though I never really worked that closely with him at Rutgers." It was from Rutgers that Joe made his move to Loyola in 1991.

Boylan clearly looks back at the years that have passed at Loyola with fondness. He says, "My father once told me to find work I loved to do, and I'd never work again. That's how I feel about my years at Loyola."

Despite retiring, Boylan will still be able to show his love for all things green and grey, as he will continue to serve the University as athletic director emeritus.