



Ron Wellman

After nearly 27 years leading the Wake Forest University athletic department, Ron Wellman retired as Athletic Director on May 1, 2019.

Wellman has served as Wake Forest University's Athletic Director since 1992. In that time, Wake Forest emerged as a national powerhouse in golf, tennis, men's soccer and field hockey; the football team recently made history with bowl wins in three consecutive years and past members of the Wake Forest men's basketball team populate professional leagues.

Wake Forest's accomplishments under Ron's leadership include five team and seven individual national titles, 22 ACC championships and the renaissance of our athletics facilities. During his tenure, Wake Forest has raised over \$400 million in philanthropic support for athletics.

Wellman served as Wake Forest's athletic director since October 13, 1992. He succeeded Dr. Gene Hooks who was the athletic director for 28 years from 1964 until 1992.

Wellman was been the dean of athletic directors in the Atlantic Coast Conference and was the nation's longest-tenured athletic director at the NCAA Division I level at the time of his retirement.

During his 27 years, Wake Forest won 22 ACC Championships and five NCAA team championships as well as seven individual national titles. The team titles came in field hockey in three-consecutive seasons from 2002 through 2004, in men's soccer in 2007 and men's tennis in 2018.

Under Wellman's leadership, Wake Forest produced nine national players of the year, four national freshman of the year awards, and 171 first-team All-Americans. In addition, during his 27-year tenure, Wellman oversaw:

- 607 first-team All-ACC selections
- 41 ACC Players of the Year and 36 ACC Coaches of the Year.
- 38 ACC Freshman of the Year awards
- 18 ACC Tournament MVPs
- 27 Academic All-Americans

Wellman played a significant role in shaping intercollegiate athletics on a regional and national level during his time at Wake Forest. He served as chairman of the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship committee, the NCAA Division I Management Council, the NCAA Baseball Committee and the NCAA Baseball Academic Enhancement Committee. Wellman is a former president of the Division I-A Athletic Directors' Association and also served on the NCAA Diversity Leadership Strategic Planning Committee.

Wellman's efforts in leading Wake Forest's rise to prominence did not go unnoticed. In 2007-08, he was honored by two organizations: Street & Smith's Sports Business Journal named him College Athletic Director of the Year and the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) selected Wellman as its AstroTurf AD of the Year for the Southeast Region—the second time in his career he received that honor.

Off the playing field, Wellman helped to enhance the overall development of the student-athlete. He asked his coaches to stress academics, and he instituted programs to assist and develop student-athletes in additional ways, apart from competition. He spearheaded Athletics' Deacon Leader program. The

program was a comprehensive leadership development system designed to identify, train, and develop student-athlete leaders from their arrival on campus through their senior year and beyond graduation.

Another one of Wellman's great achievements was the transformation of athletics facilities. Wake Forest invested \$250 million into athletics construction projects from 2008-19 ranging from McCreary Tower at Allegacy Stadium, to the purchase of David F. Couch Ballpark and the LJVM Coliseum from the City of Winston-Salem.

In 2019, Wake Forest opened the 87,000 square-foot Sutton Sports Performance Center and the 24,400 square-foot Shah Basketball Complex. The Sutton Sports Performance Center will, among other things, include strength and conditioning space for student-athletes as well as a nutrition area and expanded sports medicine and training resources. The Shah Basketball Complex includes an additional regulation court and dedicated strength and conditioning space for men's and women's basketball. In addition to those projects, the baseball team's consecutive trips to the NCAA Regionals coincided with the opening of its Baseball Player Development Center at David F. Couch Ballpark. "The Couch" project included construction of a new clubhouse with locker rooms, team lounge, training room, equipment room, state-of-the-art pitching lab, renovated dugout and new bullpen. The soccer practice fields also received a total makeover in 2017 and a renovated playing surface at Spry Stadium enhanced the home of Wake Forest's nationally-ranked men's and women's soccer teams.

In 2016, Wake Forest opened McCreary Football Field House, a state-of-the-art indoor practice facility serving all Wake Forest teams with a 120-yard FieldTurf indoor practice field. New practice fields at the Doc Martin Football Practice Complex were installed prior to the start of preseason camp in 2016 and Kentner Stadium received a new AstroTurf surface for field hockey and an upgrade in the running surface for the track and field teams. The Wake Forest Tennis Complex also saw enhancements with the addition of the Southern Family Seating at the Leighton Team Courts, a permanent outdoor seating complex for all six collegiate courts in 2016.

During Wellman's tenure, Allegacy Stadium saw many changes including the construction of McCreary Tower, the installation of a new FieldTurf surface and the construction of a state-of-the-art video board on the south side of the stadium.

Wellman also led the efforts in the construction of a new outdoor tennis center, which serves as the home to both of the Wake Forest tennis programs as well as the ATP's Winston-Salem Open and the 2018 NCAA Tennis Championships. The Arnold Palmer Golf Complex allows Wake Forest's golfers to practice at the premier on-campus facility in the nation. The Haddock House, named for Hall of Fame golf coach Jesse Haddock, provides coaches offices and locker room space for Wake Forest's men's and women's golf teams.

Born in Celina, Ohio, Wellman earned his undergraduate degree from Bowling Green State University, where he was a pitcher on the baseball team. After receiving a master's from Bowling Green, he joined the faculty and coaching staff at Elmhurst (IL) College in 1971, serving as head baseball coach, assistant basketball and football coach and associate professor of health and physical education. Wellman was the director of athletics his last five years at Elmhurst.

He compiled a 210-136 record in baseball before leaving to become the head baseball coach at Northwestern University. In five seasons with the Wildcats, Wellman's teams posted a 180-97 record and 15 players signed professional contracts. Among those moving to the Major Leagues was Joe Girardi, an Academic All-America catcher who became the manager of the New York Yankees in 2007. Wellman and his wife Linda have three daughters — Angie, who works with the Executive Partners Mentorship Program in the WFU School of Business and is married to Tim Lynde, a Wake Forest alumnus and former basketball manager who is an associate commissioner of the Atlantic Coast Conference; Nicole, a pediatrician, and her husband, Kevin Rice, a Greensboro Fire Department Captain

and former captain of WFU's men's soccer team, who live in Winston-Salem; and Melissa, founder and director of GirlCHARGE, and her husband, Ben Norman, an attorney, who live in Greensboro.

The Wellmans have 10 grandchildren including Connor, Riley and McKay (Angie and Tim); Cole, Sam, Anna Kate and Molly (Nicole and Kevin); and Miller, Emme and Hank (Melissa and Ben).

History of Wake Forest Athletic Directors

- Jim Weaver (Centenary '24), 1937-54
- Pat Preston (Wake Forest '43), 1954-56
- Bill Gibson (Wake Forest '19), 1956-64
- Dr. Gene Hooks (Wake Forest '50), 1964-92
- Ron Wellman (Bowling Green '70), 1992-2019
- John Currie (Wake Forest '93), 2019-Present