Not long after David Blackstock (64) retired from his post as Union’s athletic director, he found himself greeting guests at the newly dedicated Heritage Center inside the Carl Grant Events Center. In his new role as a part-time fund raiser for the advancement office, he even led informal tours of the permanent display, which chronicles Union’s history all the way back to 1823.

One of his guests joked that Blackstock was the perfect tour guide, since he had experienced most of Union’s history first-hand.

Blackstock’s good-natured sense of humor allows him to deflect such barbs with ease. But there is no hyperbole in this observation: David Blackstock’s leadership played a key role in shaping one of the nation’s most successful small college athletic programs over a period of four decades.

Women’s Basketball National Championship. He also laid a firm foundation for national titles under the leadership of Mark Campbell in 2005 and 2006. "It’s hard to be a first-year head coach and follow somebody who has been so successful," Campbell said. "It takes of areas of study that are available to Union students.

“Sometimes I still slip down to practice," Blackstock admits. “After all these years, it’s in your blood.”

His association started in the early 1960s, when he entered Union as a student-athlete. He played baseball for all four years, on a team that earned a small college national championship in 1963 and was runner-up the following year.

His wife Armita is also a Jackson native and Union graduate (68). Within nine years of graduation, Blackstock had earned a Master of Education degree from the University of Memphis and a Doctor of Education degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. In 1973, he returned to Union to become athletic director.

Starting in 1981, Blackstock spent 18 seasons as head coach of the women’s team, compiling a 509-89 overall record. He credits those outstanding numbers to the student athletes he coached.

“T o many, Coach Blackstock is the face of Union athletics,” says Tommy Sadler, acting athletic director. “He has been a great coach, administrator and friend for not only students, but the players and fans throughout his career.”

As with many high achievers, retirement will require adjustments. He enjoys having a role in fund raising, and he gives a very good tour of the Heritage Center.

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When he watches practices in Fred Delay gymnasium, he sees a recently refurbished facility that now bears the name ‘David Blackstock court’ in large letters.

“Walking in and seeing that for the first time was a humbling experience," he says. “But we will be there a lot. We’ll be Bulldog supporters for the rest of our lives.”

Recent Faculty Retirements
In addition to Blackstock, five faculty members announced retirements in 2008. Three were from the department of music: Ron Boud (1996), Kathleen Guinn (1987) and Richard Joiner (2002). Also retiring were Wayne Johnson (Communication Arts, 1961-66 and 1987) and Carol Leslie (Chemistry, 1985).