



At the 2008 Sports Hall of Fame Banquet Coach Blackstock was presented, by Dr. Dockery, a framed picture of the new David Blackstock Court in the Fred Delay Gymnasium.



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.

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.

Along with co-head coach Linn Stranak, he guided the baseball team to a third-place finish in the 1983 NAIA World Series, still the only season Union has participated in the event.

Perhaps he will be remembered most for his leadership of the women's basketball program.

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.

"I found out that you can be pretty good if you have pretty good players."

He earned his 500th career victory during the 1998-99 season, and led the Lady Bulldogs to the 1998 NAIA

somebody very special to allow for an atmosphere where you can fail. He really trusts the people he hires to do their job, which ultimately gives you confidence. He allowed me to have confidence in myself, because he allowed me to be me."

Anyone who spends much time around Blackstock sees a man who is humble about his accomplishments.

"My parents were not proud people, but they knew what to be proud of," Blackstock says. "They emphasized having a relationship with Jesus Christ, and a strong work ethic. I was very fortunate to grow up in Jackson, Tenn. and have the family that I did."

His personal accomplishments are impressive: He has been enshrined in the NAIA Hall of Fame, the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, the Madison County Sports Hall of Fame and the Union University Sports Hall of Fame.

"To many, Coach Blackstock is the face of Union athletics," says Tommy

COACH BLACKSTOCK CALLS A TIMEOUT

Legendary Athletic Director Retires After Shaping Athletic Success at Union

He says one of the biggest changes he's seen in that time is the expansion of areas of study that are available to Union students.

"That number has grown so dramatically that we are able to recruit from a wider pool of students from all over the world," says Blackstock. "It's really expanded to the extent that it's mind-boggling."

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

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

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.

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

When he watches practices in Fred Delay gymnasium, he sees a recently resurfaced 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), Dianne Gatwood (1989) and Richard Joiner (2002). Also retiring were Wayne Johnson (Communication Arts, 1961-68 and 1997) and Carol Leslie (Chemistry, 1985).