

Employing a Student-First Approach Remembering Mercy’s First Athletic Director, Neil D. Judge

With the passing of Neil Judge in January 2023, the Mercy College community lost a cherished friend and supporter. Judge served as Mercy’s first athletic director for 34 years until his retirement in 2005.

The student-first approach he employed, which was based on supporting the holistic needs of each athlete, is still invoked by the Mercy College Department of Athletics to this day.

Just a month prior to his passing, Mercy dedicated the Student Athlete Center on the Dobbs Ferry Campus in honor of Judge. Named the Neil Judge Student Athlete Center as a tribute to Judge’s dedication to student success, the Center encompasses the athletics wing of Victory Hall. Many former athletes, coaches and colleagues returned to campus for the dedication ceremony and shared their memories of and admiration for Judge. To view highlights from the dedication ceremony, visit www.mercy.edu/judge.

Matt Kilcullen Jr., Mercy College assistant vice president of athletics, was master of ceremonies during the dedication, which included remarks from Mercy College leadership and several of Judge’s former colleagues and athletes. “It is an absolute pleasure and an honor to celebrate the legacy of Mr. Judge, as he was affectionately known,” expressed Kilcullen.

Judge’s support of each student-athlete was unmistakable throughout his time at Mercy. “What amazed me about Neil was his connection to every individual student-athlete. It is cliché when we say that an individual has a relationship with everyone – Neil redirects the cliché because he owned his relationship with every individual,” said Bill Sullivan, deputy athletic director of athletics.

Former Mercy baseball coach, former professional baseball player, author and 2008 inductee in the Mercy College Athletics Hall of Fame Rick Wolff said, “Neil didn’t do his job to bring attention to himself, he did things because he thought they were the right things to do. Every time I asked Neil for something for the players, he always found a way. No complaints, no push back, no discussion. He just got it done because it was the right thing to do.”



Judge was credited with laying the foundation for a thriving athletics program at Mercy College and creating an environment of academic accountability and achievement on and off the field. He was instrumental in securing Mercy’s membership in the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference in 1973, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 1975, and a charter membership in the New York Collegiate Athletic Conference in 1989.

Mercy College sports teams were successful under Judge’s leadership, with highlights that included three straight 20-win seasons by the women’s basketball team in the early 1980s, five straight winning seasons from the baseball team in the early 1980s, a 1986 state championship by the softball team, the men’s soccer team’s run to the NCAA regional finals in 1989 and a NCAA Elite Eight appearance by the volleyball team in 2001.

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Among his many professional achievements, Judge was inducted into the Mercy College Athletics Hall of Fame in 2006, earned the East Coast Conference Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011 and was inducted into the East Coast Conference Hall of Fame in 2018. In 2017, Mercy College honored Judge with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Annual Trustees’ Scholarship Dinner. To watch a tribute video shown at the event, visit www.mercy.edu/judge2.

“We are blessed to have worked with him,” said Dr. Darryl Bullock ’73, former Mercy College assistant athletics director, head men’s and women’s track and field coach and head men’s and women’s cross-country coach. “Neil, thank you.”

To donate to the Neil Judge Student Athlete Center so that generations of Mercy College athletes can continue to benefit from state-of-the-art athletics facilities, please visit: www.mercy.edu/neiljudge.

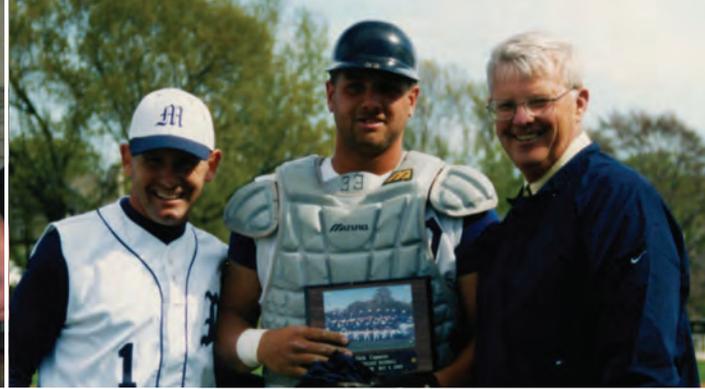
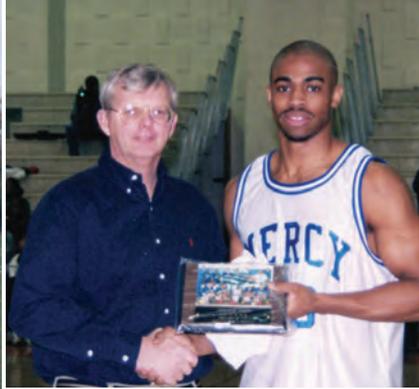


Photo by John Raiola