



An athletics administration family - Rick Hart, North Carolina; Dave Hart, Jr., Florida State; and Dave Hart, Sr., former commissioner of the Southern Conference and former AD at Missouri and Louisville.

The Intercollegiate Hart Connection

Over the years, the name of Hart has become synonymous with collegiate athletics administration. The family connection of Dave Hart, Sr., Dave Hart, Jr. and Rick Hart, has combined for more than 65 years of athletic leadership.

Dave Hart, Sr. began the trend in 1951 when he took a position as the head football coach at Mt. Pleasant Township (Hurst) High School in Pennsylvania. The 1951 graduate of St. Vincent College (Pennsylvania), who for three years was the head football coach at Pittsburgh, also worked in the college, professional and conference ranks in a career that spanned 40 years. He retired as the commissioner of the Southern Conference in 1991, a position he had held for five years.

Of the 40 years Dave Sr. spent in his chosen profession, 21 were in intercollegiate athletics administration. His longest position was as the AD at Missouri, where for eight years (1978-86), he guided the Tigers' programs and served as a mentor for several of the current leaders in intercollegiate athletics. Dave Sr. had eight assistants who went on to become ADs at Division I institutions, including Jack Lengyel, AD at Navy and a NACDA past president (1989-90); Jim Copeland, AD at Southern Methodist and a NACDA past president (1995-96); and the current AD at Missouri, Joe Castiglione.

Dave Jr. followed in his father's footsteps, first coaching and teaching at the high school level for 10 years. He broke

into the college ranks at East Carolina in 1983 as an assistant athletics director for marketing. He advanced through the ranks of associate director for external relations and executive director of the Pirate Club to become ECU's AD. The 1971 graduate of Alabama was named Florida State's AD in 1995, becoming only the 10th person to lead the Seminoles' program.

Both men were leaders on the national level. Dave Sr. was a member of NACDA's Executive Committee and had served as the Association's second vice president in 1986. He also managed and instructed at the Intermediate Level of NACDA's Management Institute from 1980-86.

Dave Sr. was inducted into the NACDA Hall of Fame in 1992 and had a \$2,000 scholarship established in his name by the Southern Conference in 1991. This month he received the Robert Neyland Athletic Directors Lifetime Achievement Award from the All-American Football Foundation, Inc.

Dave Jr. is also a member of NACDA's Executive Committee and has been an instructor at the Graduate Level of NACDA's Management Institute for eight years.

Rick Hart, Dave Jr.'s son, broke into the business at North Carolina as a ticket office assistant in 1995. A 1994 graduate of UNC, Rick served internships in the business office at UNC and the ticket office. He also worked as a ticket selling supervisor at the Olympics this summer.

Despite the family trend, there was no pressure placed on Dave Jr. or Rick to enter the field. "My dad definitely had an influence on me going into athletics administration," said Dave Jr. "It was almost by osmosis."

"I don't see the influence I had on Dave," said Dave Sr., "but I could see the influence Dave had on Rick. I let Dave go on his own, but I may have whispered in Rick's ears a couple of times."

For a field where finding a position can be difficult, it helps to have a recognizable family name. "The family relationship helped in providing an opportunity," said Rick. "But, once you're in, you still have to prove your worth."

Said Dave Jr., "I met a lot of people through my father. Rick met a lot of people through his father and his grandfather. The relationships that are passed on do help."

The job of the athletics director has changed dramatically since Dave Sr. accepted his first head position in 1973 at Louisville. "This is one of the toughest jobs on campus," said Dave Sr. "But I would do it all over again. It's the greatest business in the world."

"An AD's job today is more like that of a corporate CEO," said Dave Jr. "This is a multi-million dollar business. I think there'll be an even starker transition in the future."

Watching the evolution of the role of the AD did not deter Rick. "It's not the joyride people think," he said. "But I never get up in the morning and dislike going to work."

Having the legacy of two of the top administrators in the business can be daunting, but Rick handles it in stride. "I have a high goal, the challenge to become as successful as they have been. I have two outstanding role models. People need to realize that the student-athletes are what college athletics is all about. I'm hoping I can make a difference down the line."

Rick does not have any children as yet to continue the legacy. But North Carolina and Florida State both have an open date in their football schedules on October 19, the date set aside for Rick's wedding. So the fourth generation of Harts may carry the torch for intercollegiate athletics well into the 2000s.