University Mourns the Passing of Walter “Bucky” Harris
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PHILADELPHIA, Pa. – The Philadelphia University community is mourning the death of Walter “Bucky” Harris, former administrator and coach, who passed away early this morning. Harris, 80, worked in several capacities in his 46 years at the University including Director of Athletics as well as Director of Physical Plant, but gained national notoriety for his accomplishments as head men’s basketball coach.

“The Philadelphia University community is saddened today by the sudden death of Bucky Harris, who gave many years of service to the University as a basketball and soccer coach and athletic director,” said Philadelphia University President James P. Gallagher. “During his 46 years of service at the University, Bucky Harris took two basketball teams to the NCAA tournament and greatly expanded both intramural and intercollegiate sports programs. He was a true friend to Philadelphia University.”

During his tenure as the head men’s basketball coach, Harris compiled a 240-56 overall record in 13 seasons and remains the all-time winningest coach in NCAA Division II history in winning percentage. This stretch included winning the Eastern Regional Championship in 1963 when his team was led by two-time All-America and current Rams’ coach Herb Magee. Harris also coached the program’s first All-American, Charles Barnes in 1958 and led the Rams to a pair of NCAA Tournament appearances.

In addition to basketball, Harris also coached the University’s men’s soccer team from 1956 through 1960, registering a 20-13-3 mark. As the Director of Athletics, Harris was instrumental in expanding the University’s intercollegiate programs and intramural program as well as spearheading the addition of tennis courts and a baseball field to campus.

Despite his retirement in 1996, Harris and his wife, Lorraine, remained active at the University with various projects and committees and also established the Billy Harris Scholarship. The scholarship, which is named for Harris’ son, a University graduate who sadly passed away from leukemia in 1986, remains the largest endowed scholarship at Philadelphia University

Harris is survived by his wife Lorraine, a son Walter Jr. “Buddy” and his wife Cathy, daughter Marianne and her husband Dr. Keith Harrison. Grandchildren include Michael, Walter Buddy III, Brent, Ashley, Bradley, Jonathan, Jennifer, Mark, Katie and Billy. Great-grandchildren are Kyle, Will and Daniel Walter.

“This is a tremendous loss for Philadelphia University,” said Magee of Harris. “His accomplishments during his time here are too numerous to list, but his lasting legacy will be the lives he touched along the way with his kindness, generosity and dedication. We will miss him dearly.”

www.PhilaU.edu/athletics/

For more information, contact
Tony Berich (215) 951-2852