Nevada’s first women’s basketball coach founded Assistance League

Ada Edwards holds a special place in Nevada history after leading the women’s basketball team to the school’s first ever win over a varsity opponent when her team defeated Stanford in 1899.

But recent research shows that Edwards was not only a pioneer in women’s sports. After she left the University of Nevada, Ada Edwards Laughlin co-founded the Assistance League, a national volunteer organization.

Educational leadership professor and past dean of the College of Education William Sparkman and his wife, Susan, past president of the Assistance League of Reno-Sparks, discovered Edwards’ involvement after seeing her name in a Reno Gazette-Journal article on the 40th anniversary of Title IX last summer. They began combing through Nevada’s special collections and yearbooks and found that Edwards was indeed also a pioneer for women’s leadership and philanthropy.

Nevada had started its women’s basketball team in 1896 without a coach. After the team lost a game to California 14-1 in 1898, the University decided Nevada needed a coach and turned to Edwards, who had graduated from Stanford in 1898 and was an assistant in the gymnasium there. She coached the team for a short time in 1899, dropping a 7-3 decision to Cal before turning in the historic 3-2 victory over Stanford.

According to an excerpt from the 1900 yearbook, “For about a month, Miss Ada Edwards of Stanford coached the team (in 1899) and a strong nine was formed … Miss Edwards is again coaching and the outlook is a pleasant as well as a successful one.”

Edwards left the University in 1902 and with her then-husband, Homer Laughlin Jr., became involved in the society scene in Los Angeles. She became friends with Anne Banning, and the two founded the Assistance League of Southern California to provide food and clothing for families impacted by World War I. The Assistance League became a national organization in 1935 and now has 25,000-plus members and 120 chapters all over the country.

According to Assistance League national historian Anne Salenger, “Ada was involved in every philanthropic effort the league ever did behind the scenes.” To this day, the Assistance League honors her dedication by presenting the Ada Edwards Laughlin Award to members who have given selflessly to the organization’s work without seeking credit or recognition.

Johnson Takes Over Helm of Wolf Pack Baseball

Head coach Jay Johnson has the Wolf Pack baseball program heading in the right direction as he begins his first year at the helm. He is the first new skipper for the Wolf Pack in three decades after taking over for Gary Powers, who retired last spring after 31 years with the Wolf Pack.

In his first months on the job, Johnson has already signed one of the best recruiting classes in school history, held one of the most well-attended Bobby Dolan Dinners in recent memory and won his coaching debut in February. He will coach in his first Mountain West Tournament at the end of May.

He came to Nevada after spending the last eight seasons as the associate head coach at the University of San Diego, where he helped the Toreros make six trips to NCAA post-season and capture four West Coast Conference titles in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2013.

“My goal is to make the University’s baseball program a place where the top young players on the West Coast can work toward their dream of becoming Major League Baseball players and earn a degree from one of the finest universities on the West Coast.”
Message from the Athletics Director

The 2014 spring semester and sports season is coming to a close following a year full of academic and athletic success.

Our successes included personal bests, school records, individual conference champions and coach of the year recognition. We are energized by the challenge of bringing home the first conference team championship. And we will.

Our students continue to grow and learn in the traditional classroom, but also through life lessons learned in daily practice and competition in their sport. These are the lessons that will stick with them and prepare them for success in life. This is our mission.

Thank you for your continuing and growing support of Wolf Pack Athletics. Your emotional support in the bleachers sends a strong message to our teams: our community is behind you.

Your financial support gives our coaches and student-athletes the chance for academic and athletic success. Together, your emotional and financial support will create champions— at Nevada and in life.

Visit NevadaWolfPack.com for the latest news, schedules and events and to watch Wolf Pack teams on the new Mountain West Network.

Call us today to get Wolf Pack tickets for all events. (775) 348-PACK.

Doug Knuth

Nevada Athletics Financial Information for Fiscal Year 2013

Revenues

- Contributions $3,461,475
- Direct State Support $4,930,885
- Endowment Income $250,000
- Concessions/Program Sales $354,700
- Royalties/Licensing/Advertising $1,059,460
- Direct Institutional Support $970,145
- Guarantees $807,335
- Broadcast/TV/Radio $400,000
- Ticket Sales $3,461,475
- NCAA Conference Distribution $3,413,815
- Student Fees $2,492,480
- Indirect Facilities/Adm Support $1,924,405
- Other $1,308,700
- Indirect Facilities Adm Support $1,924,405
- Other $1,308,700
- Salaries $8,900,950
- Student Financial Aid $5,800,870
- Team Travel $2,888,770
- Other $2,413,370

Expenses

- Debt Service $487,355
- Memberships/Dues $402,625
- Marketing/Promotions/Fund Raising $339,830
- Medical Expenses $294,120
- Recruiting $55,620
- Salaries $8,900,950
- Student Financial Aid $5,800,870
- Team Travel $2,888,770
- Other $2,413,370
- Indirect Facilities/Administrative Support $1,437,050
- Equipment $774,055
- Game Expenses $941,265
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- Debt Service $487,355
- Memberships/Dues $402,625
- Marketing/Promotions/Fund Raising $339,830
- Medical Expenses $294,120
- Recruiting $55,620
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Source: NCAA Financial Report