

# Boylan will continue to influence Loyola athletics

Joe Boylan was finishing the eighth grade at the parish school at St. Charles Borromeo in Pikesville in 1952, when his parents delivered bad news: their finances would not allow him to attend what is now Loyola Blakefield.

Minus the influence of the Jesuits, one Sister of Charity at the school predicted, young Boylan was doomed to eternity in a place where no winter coat was required.

Some four decades later, Boylan was named the athletic director for what is now Loyola University Maryland, and his mother got the last laugh.

“When I got this job,” Boylan said, “Mom said, ‘Now, you get to go to heaven.’”

Boylan, who has had Loyola athletics on the right path since 1991, will step down at the end of the month, as Jim Paquette will become the Greyhounds’ director of athletics April 1.

Boylan will remain at Evergreen as athletic director emeritus, mentoring Paquette, just as he has a generation of Loyola student-athletes, coaches and fellow administrators.

“As all good leaders do, Joe led by example,” said Jesuit Father Brian F. Linnane, the Loyola president. “He’s a person of enormous integrity. Joe could be really tough if you didn’t live up to those standards, in terms of not just athletic performance, but representing the university in ways we could be proud of.

“Beyond athletics, Joe’s presence made a real difference, in his commitment to the religious life of the university.”

Boylan had never worked for a Catholic institution before he made the Loyola campus and its Alumni Memorial Chapel his de facto parish.

He taught and coached in Baltimore County public schools, and spent 17 years at Rutgers University, first as an assistant coach for a men’s basketball program that

went to the National Collegiate Athletic Association Final Four in 1976, then as an administrator.

Loyola was still a newcomer to Division I athletics when Boylan arrived. He has maintained an affable, even keel, whether the Greyhounds were experiencing joy or sorrow.

The southernmost member of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, Loyola broke through a New York lock on the men's basketball championship in 1994 under coach Skip Prosser. He was only on campus that one season, but in 2007, Prosser's sudden death at age 56 reverberated through Evergreen.

Prosser was coaching Wake Forest University when he succumbed to a heart attack. He was succeeded by former Greyhound coach Dino Gaudio, whose assistants now include Dave Wojcik, Loyola Class of 1991, a former Greyhound player and assistant, and Boylan's son-in-law.

While Boylan describes Prosser as the "Halley's Comet" of Loyola athletics, Diane Geppi-Aikens was as ubiquitous as the sun - and just as fiery.

An alumnae, she directed the women's lacrosse program to a No. 1 national ranking in 2003, two months before she lost a long battle to cancer. Loyola renamed its main field in her honor.

"I think about Diane every day," Boylan said. "I was scared the first time I met her. The passion she had for what she did, the commitment she made to her players, the life lessons she taught ... She was an extraordinary person."

The Greyhounds will unveil one of the major accomplishments of the Boylan era March 13, when the men's lacrosse team christens the 6,000-seat stadium at The Reverend Harold Ridley, S.J., Athletic Complex with a 3 p.m. game against Duke University.

That complex cost \$62 million. Another feat came in 2005, when Loyola became the smallest school ever to be the sole host of an NCAA Division I championship, when it organized the men's golf event at Caves Valley.

Under Boylan, Loyola has won 56 MAAC championships.

One of the best tributes occurred Dec. 22, when the men's basketball team posted an upset win at Indiana University, one of only four schools to win as many as five NCAA titles.

"Indiana was for Joe, we told him that in the locker room after the game" coach Jimmy Patsos said. "He's the one who encouraged us to schedule games like that, not for the (guaranteed) money, but the experience."