

Wells turns the reins over after 28 years, over 500 wins

William Wells is a gentle man. He is soft spoken, and his eyes embrace you when you speak with him. This may not seem like a description of a highly successful high school basketball coach, but it is.

Wells is a true change-agent in the St. Frances Academy community. He has changed the lives of many young men who have played for him over the years.

During the 2007-2008 season, his 28th at the Baltimore school, Wells celebrated his 500th win. He captured his sixth Baltimore Catholic Tournament title and is now headed to his fourth appearance at the prestigious Alhambra Tournament in Cumberland, starting on March 14.

At the end of the season, however, William Wells will retire and turn the reins over to former Panther Mark Karcher, who is current assistant coach. Karcher and Wells worked closely together this season and by tournament time, Wells was letting go, shifting the leadership focus to Karcher. The players have responded well to the subtle shift, so much so that the 37th-annual Baltimore Catholic League tournament was brought home under the leadership of Coach Karcher, while Wells took more of a supporting role from the bench.

Wells insists that he will continue to “stay around,” but in the background, as Karcher - a three-time BCL Player of the Year and Most Valuable Player in the late 1990s, a successful college player at Temple University and a professional player in the NBA - now begins to develop his own style.

Wells has been and will remain a huge part of the St. Frances legacy. He has turned out many fine athletes year after year, helping young men find the right direction in their lives.

Wells always says, “Don’t let basketball use you. Use basketball.”

“Coach Wells has been a role model for the students and the athletes here at SFA,”

said Sister John Francis Schilling, O.S.P., school president. “He brings experience and wisdom to the table and has brought SFA basketball to a new level.”

Sister John Francis added, “Mark understands the youngsters and has had a similar experience. It’s a great transition and Coach Wells will help mentor Mark through next year, and Mark is looking forward to that relationship.”