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ATHLETICS DIRECTOR JOHN CREER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

July 17, 2015

Lindenwood University's longtime athletics director, John Creer, who guided the school's move to the NCAA and as a track coach helped earn Lindenwood's first national championship, Friday announced his decision to retire at year's end.

Creer called his coaches and staff together Friday morning to tell them of his decision. Lindenwood President Michael D. Shonrock plans to conduct a national search and anticipates the new athletics director to begin around January 1, 2016.

"John Creer has provided leadership and service to the NCAA, through his early years in the NAIA and most recently with the Division II MIAA Conference," said Shonrock. "John is a respected member of the intercollegiate athletics community and recognized for his commitment to student-athlete academic success."

Creer said there is a common thread to the many highlights of his long career.

"It's the people," he said. "It's the athletes, who get their education and come back and see me and introduce me to their children, and the great staff members and coaches I've had the good fortune of working with over the years."

Creer has been a member of the Lindenwood community since 1991 when he was named the school's dean of students, a position he held until 1999. In 1996, Creer also became the head coach of Lindenwood's cross country and track and field teams, and in 2001 he was named the school's athletics director.

Creer was head coach of the track and field teams for eight years and he led the Lions and Lady Lions to 28 HAAC Championships. In 1998, the men's indoor track and field team won the NAIA National Championship, the first national title for any sport at Lindenwood. Creer's 2003 men's outdoor track and field team also won a NAIA national title.

Since becoming athletics director, Creer has directed the Lindenwood athletics department into becoming one of the premier programs in the NAIA, and then led the program through a successful transition to the NCAA Division II level.

From 2001-2011, Creer oversaw an athletic department that included 21 NAIA programs and 25 Student Life Sports programs. Those programs captured 40 national championships and 134 conference championships under Creer's leadership. In the NAIA, the athletics department finished in the top five in the NACDA Directors' Cup in every season but one while Creer was athletics director. In 2001-02 and 2002-03, Lindenwood won the Directors' Cup standings for being the top overall program in the NAIA.

In 2010, Creer helped oversee the process when Lindenwood successfully applied for membership into the NCAA. After two candidacy years and one provisional year, Lindenwood became a full NCAA Division II member during the 2013-14 school year.



In the school's short time at the NCAA level, it has had nearly unprecedented success for a new program at the Division II level. Lindenwood has won 10 conference championships and three conference tournament titles. In just two years of eligibility for postseason tournaments, seven Lindenwood teams have finished in the top 10 in the nation, and the athletics department has finished 23rd and 32nd respectively in the Director's Cup competition.

Outside of the program's on-the-field success, Creer has also helped Lindenwood athletics advance in countless ways. During his tenure, Creer has been part of the construction of the Lou Brock Sports Complex, the Lindenwood track, the purchase of the Lindenwood Ice Arena, the major renovation of Hunter Stadium, and the building of the Lindenwood tennis courts and the Student-Athlete Center. One of the biggest improvements is the academic performances of Lindenwood's student-athletes, with over 300 student-athletes receiving conference academic awards in each of the last two years.

Prior to coming to Lindenwood, Creer was a track and field coach at various schools including Troy State, Florida, Wayland Baptist, and Missouri Baptist, and he was an assistant coach for the Saudi Arabia Olympic team. During his coaching career, he coached three national championship teams in women's track, seven national championships in men's track, two world champions, three Olympic silver medalist, one Olympic bronze medalist, 15 Olympic game participants, 125 individual national championships, and 512 All-Americans.


Creer is a member of five Halls of Fame. He was inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame in 2001, the Missouri Baptist Hall of Fame in 2006, the Lindenwood University Sports Hall of Fame in 2007, the Wayland Baptist Hall of Fame in 2009, and the Drake Relays Hall of Fame in 2014.

In retirement, Creer will get to enjoy more time with his wife, Liz, and his three daughters, four grandsons, and one granddaughter.

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[A-Z Index](#) | [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)



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