

Sports

Former CU track coach Jerry Quiller dies

Posted: 02/02/2012 02:40:47 PM MST
 Updated: 02/02/2012 02:41:01 PM MST **By John Meyer**
The Denver Post

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Jerry Quiller, a beloved former track and cross country coach at the University of Colorado, died today after a long battle with multiple myeloma. Quiller was 69.

"There have only been a couple guys I have known in my life that loved track and field as much as he did," said John Lunn, who was coached by Quiller in the 1960s and remained close to him for the rest of his life. "He just genuinely cared about every athlete that participated in track and field."

Quiller was a CU assistant coach from 1970-74. After head coaching stints at Wayne State, Colorado State and Idaho State, the man affectionally known as "Coach Q" returned to CU as head coach from 1985-95. CU's current head coach, Mark Wetmore, was an assistant to Quiller.

When Quiller was nearing the end of his fight with multiple myeloma many of the athletes he coached went out of their way to help him.

"I've been lucky to know many people considered to be successful ... athletic champions, Olympians, wealthy people, well-known or influential people, but I'm not sure

I ever knew anyone more successful than Jerry Quiller," Wetmore said in a statement released by CU. "Everywhere I have traveled, people have asked me, 'What do you hear from Q?' 'Can you get me Q's phone number?' We had a CU track and field reunion a year ago, with hundreds of graduates, going back 40 years. Q was surrounded all night."

Quiller helped lay the groundwork for Wetmore to build one of the best cross country programs in the country. Olympians Alan Culpepper and Adam Goucher were recruited under his tenure.

But Quiller will be remembered more for being a kind, gentle man with a wonderful sense of humor.

"The enthusiasm he showed toward all of his athletes was real, absolutely real," Lunn said. "He loved them like they were his kids."

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Former CU Buffs cross country coach Jerry Quiller dies at 69

Coach groomed 19 All-Americans at CU

Camera staff report
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:02/02/2012 07:44:03 PM MST

Former University of Colorado cross country and track and field coach Jerry Quiller passed away after fighting a battle against multiple myeloma, a cancer of plasma cells. He was 69.

Quiller coached the Buffs for 15 years over two different stretches of his career. He was an assistant at CU starting in 1970 for four years. After stints as head coach at Wayne State (Mich.) and Colorado State, Quiller returned to Boulder to lead the Buffs from 1985-1995. He finished his coaching career at Army from 1995-2008.

During his time in Boulder, Quiller coached some CU legends, including 19 All-Americans, and earned a variety of titles and honors.

He led the Buffs to three Big Eight titles and was named conference Coach of the Year five times.

In 1994, the CU men finished second and the women finished fourth at the NCAA championships, earning Quiller national Coach of the Year accolades.

Olympians Adam Goucher and Alan Culpepper are among the great athletes Quiller coached at Colorado. He had a chance to lead them again when he was an assistant coach for the 2000 Olympic team, which competed in Sydney, Australia.

When Quiller left CU, he left the program in current coach Mark Wetmore's hands.

"I've been lucky to know many people considered to be successful ... athletic champions, Olympians, wealthy people, well known or influential people. But I'm not sure I ever knew anyone more successful than Jerry Quiller," Wetmore said of the coach affectionately known as Coach Q in a release from the university on Thursday.

Added CU's associate AD for sports information David Plati, "Our offices were side-by-side for over a decade, and I can't recall a single day where he wasn't always smiling. He was an 'up' person, even throughout his battle, a 'glass is half full kind of guy.' He left an indelible mark on those lives he touched."

Quiller, a Fort Collins native, lettered in cross country, track and field and baseball at Fort Collins High School. He and his wife, Sandy, had three sons, Ryan, Rory and Robb, who were all pole vaulters.

"He had a résumé of champions and All-Americans, but that is not why he was so loved," Wetmore explained. "Simply, he was a great guy. He had a big smile, a nickname for everyone, and an arm around their shoulders. He made people feel happy, welcome and at home. What greater measure of success could there be?"

Funeral arrangements are pending.

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