

named Southwestern

Story by Charles Osen '94

Character

JIM HELMER:

Jim Helmer, a 1971 graduate of SC and cross country and track coach since 1978, has a conference winning streak that extends past single years—it's into decades. Despite this amazing streak Helmer deflects the credit from himself to "the kids." Not just the kids that are running today, but the ones who were here when Helmer was a student.

"Part of the reason I have been able to last as long as I have is the student athletes I have the privilege to work with," Helmer says. "I thought we had a lot of good kids here then and I think there are still an awful lot of outstanding young student athletes here now with good character. They are the kinds of people I want to be surrounded by."

In the past 24 years, 97 track and field athletes have been named Academic All-Americans. His cross-country men's team was named NAIA Scholar Team, the team with the highest grade point average among cross country teams, in 1995, 1996, and 1997 and the women's team won the award in 1999.

"One of the advantages that we have in terms of the make-up of the student body is that we are a small, private, church-related school. We're into value-centered education," says Helmer. "We are different from state schools, universities, and junior colleges in that respect."

Helmer's brother, Ron '70, also has achieved notable success in coaching, now at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Ron has coached 22 teams to top 10 finishes at NCAA championship meets.



Jim Helmer



Brothers Ron and Jim Helmer both are SC Athletic Hall of Fame members and head coaches of track and field—Ron at Georgetown University, Jim at Southwestern College.



photo by Salina Journal

Marvin Diener

Marvin Diener's Salina Central Mustangs have reached the 5A Kansas state football championship game eight times in his 18 years as head coach; they've won the championship five times.

Preparation

MARVIN DIENER:

Marvin Diener, a 1983 graduate, says Southwestern College is the main reason for all of his success.

"This place did an outstanding job of preparing me. I got my first job thanks to the relationships I had here," Diener says. "I had no thought of winning five state championships, but this place got me off to such a good start, everything just fell into place."

He began his coaching career at Bishop Carroll High School in Wichita. Diener would eventually be offered a head coaching job at Salina Central High School. He was hesitant, considering that the football program was not known as a powerhouse. In fact, they just weren't very good. But Diener accepted the challenge of turning the program around. Eighteen seasons later, Diener has compiled a record of 157-42 including five state championships.



photo by Mitchell Loyton

Leadership

LINDA HARGROVE:

Linda Hargrove '75 is a pioneer in professional women's athletics, and was the only coach and general manager of the now-disbanded Portland Fire from 2000 to 2002.

Already a successful college coach before joining the professional ranks, Hargrove compiled a 429-248 record over 26 seasons as head coach for the Wichita State University Shockers and Cowley County Community College Tigers.

"I am not surprised Southwestern College attracts so many potential leaders," Hargrove says. "Nobody takes the easy road at SC. The college nurtures this potential until it is time to leave and then those potential leaders go off and do great things. Southwestern is a great foundation."

Hargrove says she saw coaches handling numerous chores—"small school responsibilities"—besides just coaching. This ability to do more than simply coach was instrumental in her being general manager of a professional basketball team.

Lessons learned at Southwestern.

Linda Hargrove

Linda Hargrove, a pioneer in professional women's basketball, also has made her mark as a general manager.