

By TOMMY BRYAN, *sports editor*

The late **Nick Coutras** and much-traveled basketball coach **Bud Childers** are among the six newest inductees into the Cumberland University Sports Hall of Fame. Induction ceremonies are planned Friday and Saturday, Oct. 1 and 2 as part of CU's homecoming weekend.

Coutras was hired by CU's late president Dr. Tom Mills in 1989 to revive a football program that had been dormant for some 40 years. His tenure lasted just three seasons, but he helped set the groundwork for years of success within the program under one of his assistant coaches, Herschel Moore.

Coutras' original signing class was the first to reach the postseason, posting a 9-2 mark in 1993 and making the NAIA playoffs.

He spent 30-plus years as a high school coach in Nashville, leading the Overton Bobcats to a state championship in 1981. He compiled a 145-36 record in 16 seasons at OHS, including a 40-0 regular season record during one four-year stretch, winning seven bowl games and six regional titles. Coach Coutras passed away in 2003.

Childers transferred to Cumberland Junior College from Mississippi State in 1976, playing basketball for coach Mickey Englett and shortstop for baseball coach Harry Frank for one season. He then transferred to Charleston Southern, where he was a First Team Academic All-American as a senior.

The North Judson, Ind., native has compiled a 454-316 record in 26 seasons as a head coach at six different schools, earning a reputation as a program builder, taking all six programs to the postseason, including four at the Division I level.

His first head coaching job was at Cumberland as the women's basketball coach for two seasons, leading the Lady Bulldogs to the National Junior College Athletic Association national championship game in 1983 with 13 freshmen and one sophomore. Childers compiling a 49-10 record in his two years. Two CU Hall of Fame members (Nicky Neal and Sherrie Chaffin) starred on that team.

He then took over at Montevallo University for one season, helping the Falcons to the NAIA National Tournament, before taking the head coaching position at Murray State and leading the Racers to an 82-63 record in five seasons with consecutive 20-win campaigns.

Childers moved to the University of Louisville for eight years, posting a 152-88 mark and leading the Cardinals to a pair of regular season conference championships and three NCAA Tournament appearances. He then became head coach at James Madison for five years, compiling an 87-65 record that included Coach of the Year honors in 2000.

He has spent the last five seasons at Winthrop University, posting a 69-77 mark in five seasons, including a 20-12 mark in 2007-08, the best mark in the program's Division I history.

"When I heard of the selection into the Cumberland Hall of Fame I admit I was a little taken back," Childers said. "I've tried hard all of my life to work hard for my teams and the universities so they have had a chance to be successful...our Cumberland years were some of our most memorable both as a player and coach...I am indeed humbled by this honor and look forward to getting back on campus this fall."

An outstanding fourth grade teacher at Byars Dowdy Elementary here in Lebanon, **Rita Maynard McCarthy**

played volleyball and tennis at CU from 1996-00, earning All-Mid-South Conference honors in tennis in 1999. The Bulldog tennis team won the Mid-South Conference Championship that season and advanced to the NAIA National Tournament. She also garnered All-MSC honors in 2000 as well.

The Sparta native was also a member of the 1997 MSC Conference Champion volleyball squad and was named a Mid-South Conference Scholar-Athlete in both sports for three straight years.

She also earned NAIA National Scholar-Athlete accolades in both sports her final two seasons at Cumberland and received the Lindsey Donnell Award as a senior, recognizing the athletic department's highest achieving student-athlete both in the classroom and on the playing field each year.

"I'm thrilled and really surprised to be honored in this way," McCarthy said. "Cumberland was an important part of my life."

Randy Stegall played just one season at CU, but the Orlando, Fla., native left his mark on the program with records that still stand today. He batted .479, still the single-season record for the Bulldogs, with 20 doubles, four triples, 20 home runs and 85 RBIs. Stegall collected 113 hits and tallied 201 total bases as well, breaking four single-season school records during his 1998 campaign (average, hits, runs scored and total bases). He was voted the Mid-South Conference and Region XI Players of the Year, as the Bulldogs won the regular season and conference tournament titles as well as the Region XI Tournament and finished fifth in the NAIA World Series. Stegall was selected in the 25th round that year by the Cincinnati Reds.

Stegall was also a member of the Bulldog coaching staff on the 2004 national championship team before becoming a head coach at Indiana Tech in 2006. He is now the head coach at Embry-Riddle, leading the Eagles to the NAIA World Series in each of the last three seasons.

Infielder **Tommy Smith** played four seasons for the Bulldogs from 1987-90 and ranks in the Top 10 in six career statistical categories at CU, including No. 1 in hits with 229. He also ranks second in at-bats (653) and RBIs (153), fifth in triples (8) and seventh in runs scored (153) and doubles (39) as well as 11th in home runs (39). The Taylorsville, Ky., native was a member of the program's first NAIA World Series team in 1988 and is one of only 25 former players to bat .400 in a season, posting a .404 average in 1990.

He added 69 hits and 14 home runs during his final season and earned All-District honors as a junior and All-TCAC accolades as a senior. Smith was drafted in the 42nd round by the New York Yankees at the conclusion of his career.

Roger Cox played at Cumberland Junior College for the 1971-72 seasons for coach Tom Kirby, batting .404 with 36 runs scored in 32 games as a sophomore. He was a unanimous All-Conference choice by the Tennessee Junior College Athletic Association. He ranked second nationally in batting average and triples (4) while collecting 47 hits with 33 runs scored and 22 stolen bases and garnering NJCAA All-America accolades.

Cox transferred to Middle Tennessee State for his final two seasons, earning All-Ohio Valley

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honors as a senior for coach John Stanford. He then embarked on a long coaching career at Valley View High School in Germantown, Ohio, earning 331 varsity wins in 21 seasons.

He garnered four Southwestern Buckeye League Coach of the Year accolades and three Miami Valley Area Coach of the Year honors at VVHS. He also coached basketball for 18 years and golf for 10 seasons as well while serving as an English and Language Arts teacher for 35 years at VVHS.

The six inductees make up the 24th class in the Cumberland Sports Hall of Fame.