



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 25, 2008

MEDIA AVAILABILITY - Bill Rowe will be available Thursday morning from 11 a.m. to Noon in the Alumni Lounge on the upper level of Hammons Student Center. Please use this opportunity for all interview requests.

MISSOURI STATE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR BILL ROWE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. -- The individual synonymous with Missouri State University's intercollegiate athletics program for more than a quarter-century is retiring.

Today, Bill Rowe announced that in June 2009 he will step down as Director of Athletics, a position he has held since 1982. Including his time as a student and then as a coach, Rowe has been associated with the University for more than 50 years. Even after retiring as Director of Athletics, he intends to continue to serve the University in some capacity.

A seemingly permanent fixture on the Springfield campus, Rowe is currently in his 47th year as part of the University's athletics staff. He spent 19 years (1963-82) as head baseball coach, athletics business manager and assistant athletics director before becoming the school's ninth director of athletics in 1982. He will complete his 28th year in that capacity

this spring. He is a 1961 graduate of Missouri State, enrolling as an undergraduate in the fall of 1957 after graduating from Marionville (Mo.) High School. As an undergraduate, he served as a student trainer for the University and later served as an assistant coach in football and track for the Bears. Rowe also holds a Master's degree from the University of Missouri and completed 30 hours beyond his Master's at Indiana University.

Missouri State Directors of Athletics

- Corliss C. Buchanan 1910-12
- Arthur W. Briggs 1912-38
- Howard H. Blair 1938-47
- Tommy O'Boyle 1947-49
- Claude Groves 1949-51
- Robert Vanatta 1951-53
- William Dellastatious 1953-55
- Aldo A. Sebben 1955-82
- William L. Rowe, Jr. . 1982-2009

"Coach Rowe has been an integral part of our University and the many successes of its Athletics Department for almost five decades," said University President Dr. Michael Nietzel. "I have never met anyone as loyal and committed to a University as Bill Rowe has been for Missouri State. He has given his heart to this University.

"The announcement of his retirement is an opportunity for the Missouri State family and everyone who has had the pleasure of associating with Bill to celebrate the person he is and the many milestones of his career. Bill and I are discussing how he can continue to serve the University after his retirement. I look forward to working a lot more with him."

Rowe became Athletics Director as Missouri State was transitioning to NCAA Division I status in 1982. During his tenure, the MSU men's and women's intercollegiate teams have made 46 trips to the NCAA championships along with numerous individual NCAA appearances, achieving national recognition almost immediately. Two teams, women's volleyball and softball, made NCAA Tournament appearances during the school's first season at the Division I level.

Under Rowe, the Bears Fund foundation, established in conjunction with the move to Division I, has grown exponentially, as has the Annual Auction Benefitting Intercollegiate Athletics which developed under Rowe in 1987. The Bears Fund alone has raised more than \$34 million to contribute to the financial stability of MSU's Intercollegiate Athletics programs.

Likewise, the expansion and improvement of athletics facilities on and around campus have been the envy of Rowe's contemporaries around the nation. Missouri State's athletics teams now enjoy some of the finest practice, competition and support facilities in the region. Most noteworthy among the many capital projects undertaken by Rowe and his staff are the new JQH Arena, which will open in November; Forsythe Athletic Center renovation in 2002-03; Plaster Field improvements from 1987-91 and the new Plaster Field scoreboard in 2008; multiple renovations to Hammons Student Center, including the most-recent upgrades in the summer of 2008; and collaborative efforts with community facilities such as Hammons Field, Cooper Tennis Complex, various golf courses, and the future Killian Softball Stadium.

Rowe was named Executive of the Year by the Mid-Continent Conference four times, including Missouri State's final year in the conference in 1989-90. A charter member of the league in 1982-83, MSU won 30 titles overall and 20 titles in its last four seasons in the conference before joining the Missouri Valley Conference in 1990-91. The Missouri Valley Conference transition proved to be a unifying force on campus just a few short years later when the MVC absorbed the women's Gateway Conference, incorporating the men's and women's programs into one conference for the first time in school history. He served on the Missouri Valley Conference transition committee to incorporate women's athletics into the league in 1992.

As a member of the Missouri Valley Conference, Missouri State has finished in the top five in all but one season in the 10-team Valley all-sports competition. Missouri State has won the Missouri Valley Conference All-Sports Title three times – 2000, 2002 and 2003.

Rowe has also served on various national committees and assisted with NCAA events on numerous occasions. Missouri State has hosted NCAA Division I and Division II regional and national events in baseball, basketball, cross country, golf, wrestling, football and volleyball during Rowe's tenure as athletic director, coach and business manager. He has also served as chair of the NCAA Division II All-America and Coach of the Year committees and spent five years on the American Baseball Coaches Association Executive Committee. He served on the NCAA Division I FBS Committee and Division I Baseball Committee. He has served two terms as chair of the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee and been an NCAA representative at more than 20 baseball regionals and super regionals.

Honors have also been frequently bestowed on Rowe. In 1988, he was inducted into the ABCA Hall of Fame and named an MSU Outstanding Alumnus. He was inducted into the Missouri State Athletics Hall of Fame in 1994, the Springfield Area Sports Hall of Fame in 1998 and the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame in 2004.

In recent years, the establishment of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee, Student-Athletic Advisory Committee and Student-Athlete Code of Conduct by Rowe and his staff have helped solidify the University's standing as a national leader in character education and reinforced the statewide Public Affairs mission of the Springfield campus. Likewise, Rowe's determination and hard work on behalf of the University have positively impacted thousands of student-athletes, coaches, administrators and colleagues during his storied career.

"I am grateful for the people who gave me an opportunity to be involved in athletics at Missouri State when I first got started," Rowe said. "There are two ways I measure the impact athletics has at this great University. The first is when former athletes and coaches send their sons and daughters to school here, and the second is when I see our student-athletes cross the stage on graduation day."

"Coach Rowe" by the Numbers

- 19 seasons as MSU's head baseball coach (1964-82)
- Overall Record of 394-230-1
- MIAA Conference Record of 126-62
- Seven NCAA Division II Tournament appearances
- Four NCAA Division II World Series appearances
- 1969 NCAA Division II Runners-up
- 1970 NCAA Division II Third Place
- Three MIAA Conference championships
- Retired as the winningest coach in MIAA history
- 17 professional signees
- 9 All-Americans
- Four-time Regional Coach of the Year
- 1988 American Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame inductee
- May 8, 2004 became first MSU player or coach to have his number (22) retired.

Bill Rowe's Top 10 Career Milestones (in random order)

- The move to NCAA Division I athletics in 1982
- Joining the Missouri Valley Conference in men's (1990) and women's (1992) athletics
- Winning his first NCAA Baseball Regional as a coach and advancing to the Division II World Series (1969)
- Making two Final Four appearances in women's basketball (1992 and 2001)
- Seeing the baseball team reach the College World Series in Omaha (2003)
- The football team's first two NCAA Playoff appearances (1989 and 1990)
- The men's basketball team's run to the NCAA Sweet 16 in 1999
- The renovation of Briggs Stadium/Plaster Sports Complex from 1987-91, and the renovation of Forsythe Athletic Center in 2002-03.
- Establishing a long-term friendship and relationship with John Q. Hammons and realizing the dream of Hammons Field and JQH Arena through his vision and support
- Enjoying the successes and NCAA tournament appearances by all MSU teams and individual qualifiers.

"The theme I have always tried to use throughout my career is 'it takes everyone to make it work,'" Rowe said. "I have never asked anyone to perform a task I wouldn't do myself. The great family that we have at Missouri State and in Intercollegiate Athletics makes everything work, and for those relationships and the many successes we've enjoyed over the years, I'm extremely grateful."

With little doubt, the inaugural game at JQH Arena on November 22 will be a crowning moment for MSU athletics and Rowe's legacy. The 11,000-seat facility will be the largest on-campus basketball facility in the Missouri Valley and will provide the University with a long-awaited entertainment venue that will attract nationally-prominent acts and events.

During Rowe's tenure, he has seen the Bears softball team make the NCAA's four more times since their first run 1982, while the volleyball program has now made seven NCAA trips, including four in the last five seasons. MSU men's basketball teams have made 14

postseason appearances, including six trips to the Big Dance and a memorable run to the Sweet 16 in 1999. The baseball program has made seven NCAA Tournament appearances, reaching the College World Series for the first time in 2003 and opening Hammons Field, one of the gems of college baseball stadiums, in 2004. Women's basketball has emerged as a national power, both in terms of success and fan base, under Rowe's administration. The storied Lady Bears have reached the NCAA Tournament 13 times with Final Four trips in 1992 and 2001, three runs to the Sweet 16, and a 2005 WNIT title. In addition, football, men's golf, women's golf, men's soccer, and women's soccer have also combined to make seven NCAA Championship appearances in the Rowe era.

A search for a new Director of Athletics will begin in October. Brent Dunn, Vice President for University Advancement, will chair the search committee for a new director, and the other members of the committee are in the process of being contacted. The composition of the complete committee will be announced within the next few days. The University plans to announce Rowe's replacement sometime in the Spring of 2009.

Rowe and his wife, Nydia, have two adult children, Jeff Rowe and Nancy Rowe Wedgeworth who are 1994 and 1996 graduates of Missouri State, respectively. He also has three grandchildren, Grace Marie Wedgeworth (7), Drew Rowe Wedgeworth (3) and Elinor Kathleen Rowe (3 months).

"Bill Rowe is a legendary figure at Missouri State and among athletics directors in the MVC, a mentor and friend to so many people. He is probably the hardest-working and most dedicated person I've met in all my years in college athletics. He'd do anything for his coaches and student-athletes. The thing I'll always remember about him is that as good as he has been as an athletics administrator, he's an even better person."

-- Doug Elgin, Missouri Valley Conference Commissioner

"It has been my privilege and pleasure to be acquainted with Bill Rowe for many years, both as Missouri State University's Athletic Director and as a personal friend. Throughout the years, Coach Rowe's visions for the MSU athletic programs have been the driving force behind MSU's success in the athletic arena. Under his leadership, the MSU athletic programs have certainly grown in scope and success, and the University has benefited greatly from his many contributions. It has been gratifying to work with Coach Rowe and from a personal standpoint; it has been a personal pleasure to attend many sporting events together. Bill has accomplished much for the MSU Athletic Department, and he will be sorely missed."

-- John Q. Hammons, Developer and Missouri State Alumnus