

2016 USATF *Pacific* Tom Moore Awardees

Jean Snuggs

Sacramento

Age 64

Coach, Athletic Director American River College,
Helped with Olympic Trials 2000, 1995 USA Outdoor Championships, in addition to countless community college regional and championship events.



More than 33 years ago, American River College needed a new assistant athletic director. Lyndell Wilken, who was moving to Oregon and leaving ARC, called Jean Snuggs to suggest Snuggs apply for the job. “They are really, really desperate — they might hire you,” Snuggs laughed as she quoted her friend. Snuggs applied and got the job, and what started as a joke ended up being a career lasting over 33 years, which ended in June 2012 when Snuggs retired. “I’m healthy and want to do the stuff I have been too busy to even think about,” she said.

Snuggs earned her degree in physical education from the University of Chicago in January of 1972 and immediately began teaching at Cooper Junior High in Buffalo Grove, Ill. She had not planned to teach; she wanted to research motor learning skills, also known as kinesiology, but since she graduated early and had an extra semester free, she took the teaching position as a temporary job.

That spring Title IX passed, opening up competitive sports to female student athletes, and Snuggs, already teaching physical education, was in the perfect position to coach women’s sports. The other women’s physical education teacher had no interest in athletics, so Snuggs stepped up to the challenge. “There was no way I was going to just let it go,” she said. Although she had not taken any coaching classes, Snuggs decided to take on the coaching position and ultimately to stay. Over the following four years she coached volleyball, basketball, track and field, and field hockey.

“I was really fortunate because it was a big school for cross country and track and field, and the guys really helped me out since I had no coaching experience,” Snuggs said. “They jumped right in, and we practiced three or four hours every night.” Snuggs didn’t compete in any sports during her early education — no women did until after Title IX — so she was very aware

of the great opportunity for girls to be able to play sports competitively in school. She became very interested in cross-country and track and field; “It was really fun. We had a good time,” she said.

Snuggs completed her master’s degree in education from Northern Illinois University and developed interest in exercise physiology, which led her to Sacramento and University of California, Davis, where Jack Willmore, the leading expert in exercise physiology, was teaching. After Willmore left Davis, Snuggs realized she missed teaching and soon got the call from Wilken to apply at ARC. She was an adjunct instructor for a year, then a full-time job opened up and Snuggs has been on the ARC faculty ever since.

In a career studded with honors, Snuggs led ARC cross country to 12 conference championships, and the track and field team to 10, worked on the local organizing committee for the US National Track & Field Championship in 1995 and U.S. Olympic Trials in 2004, chaired the Commission on Athletes Management Council, and was a city appointee on the Sacramento Sports Commission. In 2001, Snuggs was appointed dean of athletics and kinesiology, the position she held until her retirement in June 2012

“This has been a fun place to work,” Snuggs said relating to her time at American River College, “especially teaching physical education. It is such a positive thing to do, and students’ thank you every day for a good workout.” She sets a high standard for education at ARC, the state of California, and for the nation as well.

Deanne Vochatzer

Davis, retired to San Luis Obispo

Age 67

Honors

Head Women’s Coach Atlanta Olympic Games (1996)

Competition Director, Olympic Trials, Sacramento (2004)

Head Coach, World University Games (1994, 1995)



Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator of Women's Athletics, Olympic Festivals (1982-94)

USATF President's Award (1996)

USATF Joseph Robichaux Award, Outstanding Contribution (2001)

USTFCCCA Hall of Fame (2002)

USATF Special Service Award (2005)

Ten Conference Coach of the Year, 5 Indoor and 3 Outdoor Regional NCAA Coach of the Year and 3 NCAA Division II Coach of the Year (1990, 1991, and 1999)

Deanne has been active in track most of her life. She was an outstanding age group and open athlete in the Pacific Association. She ran for the Laurel Track Club of San Francisco whose coach was Roxanne Anderson. She qualified for several USA national teams as a sprint hurdler.

She graduated in 1971 from Chico State with a bachelor's degree in physical education. She then served her alma mater from 1972-75 as women's track and cross-country coach, where her teams in each sport won the conference championship each season.

In 1976, Vochatzer moved to Florida, where she stayed busy coaching, owning and managing an apparel company, and earning a master's degree. Vochatzer owned and managed One-Der-Wear, Inc., and from 1977-79, Vochatzer served as the women's head cross country and track & field coach at the University of Florida.

However, the West Coast beckoned anew for her in 1980 as she took the reins as athletic director at Presentation High School in San Jose, Calif., a position she held through 1987. She also coached track and cross-country at Presentation. During part of that time she worked in the Stanford track office.

Her first UC Davis experience came from 1987-89, when she taught and was women's coach in 1988 and assistant to both the men's and women's programs in 1989-90. Vochatzer then moved to Cal Poly as head women's coach for both track and cross-country from 1989-90, before her return to the Davis campus in 1990-91 as head women's track coach. While at Cal Poly, Vochatzer's squads were back to back NCAA cross country champions in 1990 and 1991, and track champions in 1991.

Her national and international coaching experience goes back to 1979 when she was an aide to that year's Sports Festival team, a role she would reprise in 1981. From 1982-87, Vochatzer was assistant coordinator for women athletes with the U.S. Olympic Festival. She served as coordinator from 1987 to 1994.

Few coaches have earned the accolades bestowed upon Vochatzer in her storied career. In 1992, Vochatzer was alternate head Olympic coach for women and then in 1994 and 1995 was head coach for the World University Games prior to being selected as head women's coach for the 1996 U.S. team at the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta. Then in the fall of 2002, the track and field community honored her again, this time in the form of her induction to the U.S. Track Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Vochatzer is in demand as both a clinician and speaker on her sport and has had media exposure as an expert commentator for ESPN. She is a consultant for Nike, the National High School Coaches Association and the U.S. Justice Department on Alcohol & Drug Education for Athletics.

Vochatzer was one of the lead presenters in Sacramento's successful bid to host the 2000 Olympic Trials, for which she served as Director of Competition. She also acted as a consultant for the 2008 Olympic Trials at Eugene. She earned USATF's prestigious Joe Robichaux Award in 2001 for her contributions as an organizer.

Along with serving as the head coach and director for the indoor/outdoor women's track and field team, Deanne Vochatzer had a role with the UC Davis cross-country teams as an assistant coach.

While at UC Davis, Vochatzer led the women's track program to 11 straight conference titles: six in the former Northern California Athletic Conference and five in the California Collegiate Athletic Association. She was also a five-time CCAA Coach of the Year honoree.

In addition to numerous All Americans and all-conference performers who have achieved success under her guidance, three UC Davis track standouts – middle distance runner Jamila Demby, hurdler Kameelah Elarms, and sprinter Tanisha Silas – have been named as finalists for the prestigious NCAA Woman of the Year award. Demby won the award in 1999, and Silas captured the honor in 2002. Elarms advanced to the top ten in 2001. Vochatzer's women's teams featured NCAA indoor champions with

Suzy Jones, who won the mile in 1996, and with Jennifer Swanson in the pole vault in 2000, the latter an event which Vochatzer was instrumental in getting added to the NCAA track championships.

Jon Vochatzer (Coach V) *(posthumously)*

Davis

Honors:

Assistant Coach , U.S. Men's Team, IAAF World Championships in Seville, Spain (1999)

Olympic Development Committee, U.S Olympic Team (1996)

Assistant Coach, World University Games (1997)

Assistant Coach, U.S. Olympic Festival (1995)

Competition Manager, Olympic Trials (2000)

Field Competition Manager, Olympic Trials (2004, 2008)

Fourteen Conference Championships

Thirty-Seven Coach of the Year Awards, Coached 80 All Americans including nine individual national champions



Jon excelled in sports of all kinds throughout his life. He was a standout football and track athlete at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School in Stockton, at San Joaquin Delta College (1966-68), and at Cal State Hayward (1968-70) where he earned both Bachelor and Master's Degrees in Physical Education. Jon taught and coached at James Logan in Union City (1970-72) and American High School in Fremont (1972-1974) and then accepted an overseas assignment at Bibburg American High School in Germany where he was head coach for both track and football from 1974-1978. Jon Vochatzer joined the UC Davis athletics staff in 1979 as head track coach and assistant football coach under Jim Sochor until 1985. In 1987 he returned to Germany at Nurnberg American High School for two years as head track and football coach. He returned to Davis in 1987 and took over the men's track & field reins from John Pappa in 1992. Jon developed an array of physical education programs for mentally and physically challenged athletes. Since 1990 he has served as a track and field consultant for the California Special Olympics. He also served on a number of administrative committees at Davis.

In his career of thirty years at the UC, Vochatzer earned 11 conference Coach of the Year awards plus 12 West Region Outdoor Coach of the Year awards, six in the indoor season, six in the outdoor season. Nine Aggie men won NCAA individual championships during his tenure, headlining a list of 80 All-American awards bestowed upon the program in the Vochatzer era. His teams placed among the top five at either the NCAA Division II indoor or outdoor championships four times shortly before the university made a transition to Division I.

Jon and Deanne Vochatzer jointly ran the two track & field teams throughout the 1990s and 2000s, although department listings officially distinguished them as the men's and women's head coaches, respectively.

However, when it comes to his proudest achievements, the awards and medals may take a back seat to the connection Vochatzer made with his student-athletes. He cultivated an environment that matched his own positivity and enthusiasm. Shortly before his retirement after the 2010 season, Vochatzer reflected on what he would miss about coaching: "Every day, two or three of the student-athletes will walk in, come by the office and just start talking," he said. "Not so much about technique or about jumping -- just personal stuff. I'll miss talking about moms and dads, their personal lives, their thoughts about graduating and moving on."

Vochatzer's energy had an immeasurable effect on the Aggie student-athletes, according to Jamila Demby, an All-American and UC Davis' first winner of the prestigious NCAA Woman of the Year award. "Coach V was a lot of things: life, love, caring, energy, dedication, definitely all heart, and a role model all wrapped up in a package of silliness that just made you shake your head

sometimes," she said. "He brought us all smiles daily while making sure that we were healthy and happy as individual people first and athletes second. You can't ask for a better human being than that. We were truly blessed to have had Coach V touch our lives. Truly. He will be missed but I know a lot of us will carry on the life lessons that we have learned from him."

Upon retirement Jon said, "I've enjoyed bringing a recruit into the program, watch them mature and develop into an Aggie. Success isn't all about winning but it's about being part of the Aggie family. Watching student-athletes develop has been the most important part of my experience."

Appropriately, both Vochatzers entered the Cal Aggie Athletics Hall of Fame as a husband-and-wife tandem in 2013; each enshrined for their respective individual accomplishments.

After retiring from coaching, Jon became a certified official and developed into a sought after National level referee. He worked as both a field referee and a track referee at UC Davis, San Francisco State, Sacramento State, Sacramento City College and American River College. He was first certified in 2012.

In his spare time Jon liked to fly fish. In fact, he taught a popular UC Davis course in fly-fishing, specifically designed for women.

Jon died on Monday, February 22, at the age of 71.