

ROCKY NOW

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Fresh news every day at www.rocky.edu

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Rocky Now: Keeping our friends and supporters informed about what's new and exciting at Rocky Mountain College

National Champions

All about our students



We could devote this month's "All about our students" to any of the members of the Battlin' Bears championship team. Nate Richardson is representative of the entire team.



The Fortin Education Center gym was packed with fans who celebrated with rousing music from the Rocky Mountain College Band as the NAIA National Championship Battlin' Bears were welcomed home.

Photo by Dave M. Shumway, RMC '07

BY AUSTIN TAIT
RMC SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR

If you blink, you might just miss "Lil Nate." At only 5'6", Rocky Mountain College's Nate Richardson may be small in stature but is big in determination, skill and, most importantly, winning basketball games. The speedy point guard for the Battlin' Bears is one of the main reasons that Rocky's men's basketball team was able to capture its first ever NAIA National Championship.

In the past two seasons, the teams he has played with have a combined 63-10 record and have been crowned as champions.

In just his first season at Rocky, Nate started all 37 games for the Battlin' Bears. He led the team in assists and steals, was second on the team in minutes played, and was third on the team with a scoring average of 12 points per game. His performance on the court during the regular season earned him Honorable Mention All-Frontier Conference honors, while his spectacular play at the national tournament garnered him First Team All-Tournament honors. He also received the tournament's 'Hustle Award.'

Before transferring to Rocky last spring, Nate was a member of another championship team. His Citrus College Fighting Owls went 35-1 en route to the California state junior college championship.

As you can see, or might not see, depending on whether or not you blink, Nate Richardson is a winner.

BY JESSE MURPHY
FOR ROCKY NOW

It started as an exhausting return from an exhilarating experience for the men comprising the NAIA Men's Basketball national championship team. After ceremoniously cutting the net and receiving the associated memorabilia earned at a national championship, the Battlin' Bears had only a few precious, adrenaline-filled hours before they would return to Rocky Mountain College where hundreds of cheering fans waited to welcome their family home.

The bus rumbled down airport road with the sleep-deprived national championship team, escorted by the celebratory sirens of police cars and fire trucks. Winning was great, though the fatigue of the team permeated all conversations as the men mused about the sleep they had long sought as their ultimate reward. Just as the last bit of adrenaline was leaving, the team saw the road ahead awash in green and gold.

With hundreds of fans flowing into the street, waving signs, banners, and balloons, it was Rocky's day. Indeed, Billings Mayor Ron Tussing officially declared March 25th, 2009, to be Rocky Mountain College Battlin' Bears Day -- symbolic for sure, but special nonetheless. As the bus approached the crowd, emotion and realization of the historic feat they had just accomplished overtook many of the players. Tears of joy and exuberance were abounding for both the players and the fans. Outside, the fans demonstrated their enthusiasm by storming the bus, demanding that the players join them on the street to celebrate.

With this convergence of players and fans, fatigue and exhaustion were fading memories. For the next few hours a full-blown welcome home assembly capped this momentous event in the Fortin Education Center. The campus was abuzz with pride in our team's achieving a first for RMC, a national championship in men's basketball. In this single-elimination tournament during which a team must play five games in 6 days to be crowned champions, the Battlin' Bears entered unseeded with a history of never making it past the first round.

(Please see **National Champions** on back page)



Insider

Bright Days in a Dark Time

One of the fascinating aspects of my job is the element of constant surprise. The new experiences I encounter on all levels, from academics to athletics, alumni to making new friends, are always energizing and enlightening. Even in tough times, the rewards of this great College moving forward is one of those constant surprises.

That surprise could not have been more pleasurable than when the Rocky Mountain College Battlin' Bears men's basketball team won the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) championship in Kansas City, Missouri. No one could have predicted such a wonderful outcome for the second smallest college competing in the national championship. Think of how improbable it was. The Battlin' Bears were unseeded. They had to play five games in six days in a tournament considered to be the toughest in college sports. They had to overcome sizeable leads, and, in one game, win in overtime. When the buzzer sounded, the buzz really began. Alumni, coast-to-coast, were sending congratulation and reveling in the news. From Afghanistan came an email from U.S. Air Force Major Brady Vaira, who once played for RMC with our NAIA Coach of the Year, Bill Dreikosen. Mayor Vaira wrote, "What a remarkable school, fan base, coaching staff and team!" Coach Dreikosen received more than 500 emails with similar sentiments.

Some wonder, "Does having success in athletics mean anything?" I can testify firsthand that it absolutely bolsters what we are doing in academics, in recruitment, in building our endowment and in generating unity with our students, alumni, faculty and staff. Morale soars! And then reality sets in: with our success came a great deal of unanticipated expense. Another surprise! But, people surged forward to help with the deficit incurred by donating to the RMC Championship Fund. And sales of Rocky gear, proclaiming the championship on T-shirts and sweatshirts, have been phenomenal.

Even as this rich success came our way, more good news arrived, sending the doom and gloom of the nation's financial strife packing. For our Commencement events, including the RMC President's Dinner, we will be honoring a special guest, Ann-Margret coming (more on this enduring actress and the reception and dinner is in this newsletter). Ann-Margret will be receiving an honorary doctorate with our other celebrated honorees: Maryann Reese, the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of St. Vincent Healthcare, who will deliver the commencement address; John B. Mowell, Chairman of EMS Technologies and President and Chief Executive Officer of Mowell Financial Group, who has been a significant donor to our aviation program and is a new member of the RMC Board of Trustees; and Thorm R. Forseth, RMC's current Chairman of the Board, who has been a board member since 1992, was recipient of the 1998 Outstanding Service Award, and has been a devoted supporter of the college since he graduated in 1969 with a degree in economics and business administration. The 127th Commencement promises to cap one of RMC's brightest years. See what I mean about constant surprises?

Best regards,

Michael Mace, RMC President

RMC Men's Basketball National Championship Gear



Christa Salomon and Will Livingston model new Rocky gear commemorating the NAIA Championship. T-Shirts (short- and long-sleeved), sweatshirts (crew and hooded) and wristbands are available.

Photo by Dave M. Shumway, RMC '07

To order, contact:
Teresa Rowen
Phone: 406-657-1018
Email:
teresa.rowen@rocky.edu

All proceeds go to the Battlin' Bears Championship Fund

Coming Attractions 2009

TUESDAY, APRIL 28
Alumni Beer Tasting
Bones Brewery
15th & Broadwater
6 p.m.

COMMENCEMENT EVENTS

FRIDAY, MAY 8
President's Reception
(For graduates and their families, Hosted by President and Mrs. Mace)
Great Room, Prescott Hall
4:30 - 6 p.m.

Baccalaureate
First Presbyterian Church
2420 13th Street West
7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 9
Graduation Brunch
(For graduates and their families)
McDonald Commons
Bair Family Student Center
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

127th Commencement
Fortin Education Center
1 p.m.

Alumni Reception
(For graduates and their families, faculty and staff)
On the east side lawn
Fortin Education Center
3 p.m.

Annual President's Reception and Dinner
RMC President Michael Mace and wife Karen host special guest Ann-Margret
Tickets on sale now
Reception
Great Hall
6 p.m.
Dinner
All-Weather Tent
RMC Green
7 p.m.
(Details - back of Rocky Now)

FRIDAY, JUNE 19
Mark your calendars for
2009 Alumni Golf Tournament
Peter Yegen Golf Course
1 p.m.
(More information coming soon)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22
All Euro Car Show
Sponsored by the
Absaroka Region Porsche Club
on the RMC Green
Opened to all European sports cars and sedans,
vintage or contemporary.
*(More information, contact Fred Magers -
Phone: 406-245-6733, Email: abs.pres@gmail.com)*

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Focus on Faculty & Staff

Dreikosen: NAIA Coach of the Year

By AUSTIN TAIT
RMC SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR

Bill Dreikosen or "Billy," as most call him, has spent the past nine seasons as the head men's basketball coach for the Rocky Mountain College Battlin' Bears. Prior to his time as the head coach, Dreikosen served as the men's basketball assistant coach for five seasons, and prior to that, was a player for the Battlin' Bears from 1991-1994. It's safe to say that Coach D is the face of Rocky Mountain College men's basketball.

During his time as a player, assistant coach and head coach, Coach Dreikosen has experienced plenty of success. As a player, he was a member of Rocky's 1994 team that qualified for the national tournament. In his nine seasons as head coach, Coach D's accomplishments also speak for themselves. He has guided the Bears to three NAIA National Tournaments and has a 5-2 overall record at nationals. He has amassed an overall record 162-126, including three 20-plus-win seasons. He has coached numerous players who have been named all-conference and all-American in both the classroom and on the court. And, of course, he was named the NAIA Coach of the Year in guiding the 2009 Battlin' Bears to the NAIA Men's Basketball National Championship.

But, all of Coach Dreikosen's success on the court is nothing compared to his success in life. Coach Dreikosen cares. He cares about his God. He cares about his wife, Kally and their three children, Zoe, Peyton and Jordan.

He cares about his assistant coaches, a huge part of his success. And, he cares about the numerous student-athletes that he has been able to teach and coach during his time at RMC.

Rocky Mountain College was a great school before Bill Dreikosen arrived. RMC will be a great school long after Bill Dreikosen is gone. But there is no denying the indelible impact Coach Dreikosen makes on Rocky Mountain College.



Photo by Dave M. Shumway, RMC '07

Battlin' Bears Coach Bill Dreikosen is passionate about winning, but more so about his faith, his family and his athletes.

Focus on Alumni & Friends

Sam McDonald Understands Champions

By KEN WOOSLEY
FOR ROCKY NOW

Rocky Mountain College made it look easy in capturing the 2009 NAIA national men's basketball championship, the first ever national basketball championship for the Battlin' Bears. But getting to Kansas City to play for the title was anything but easy. Rocky is a member of the NAIA, an athletic association that provides no tournament funds to its member colleges. And, the question of how to pay \$50,000 for team travel expenses loomed large for the college.

Sports has always had a major impact on Sam E.



Sam E. McDonald, Jr. when he played for legendary Oklahoma State University Coach Henry Iba.

McDonald, Jr., and he has stepped forward to make a substantial financial commitment to help defray travel costs.

"I had the good fortune of being recruited by legendary basketball coach Henry Iba of Oklahoma State University," McDonald said in making his financial contribution. "He offered me a basketball scholarship that made it possible for me to receive my college degree. These fine young student athletes are doing the same thing at Rocky -- playing championship-level basketball and earning their college degree. They not only brought home Rocky's first-ever national championship, but they have put the college and Billings on the map. I'm delighted to help and congratulate each and every member of the Rocky men's basketball program."

Generous Support for Championship Fund

With an unexpected expense coming from the wonderful achievement of winning the NAIA national championship, Rocky Mountain College faced a budget deficit in excess of \$50,000. The unexpected surprise of the success of the Battlin' Bears entailed a longer stay and additional expenses. Rushing to help with alleviating the deficit were many generous alumni and friends. To date, they include:

Rockwood Brown
Jim and Sandy Almond
John and Darla Jones
Steve Wahrlick
Stella's Kitchen
Bill and Meryn Ballard
Barb Skelton
Mike Gustafson
Dave Kuhns
Jeff Taylor
Dr. Maurice and Margaret Johnson
Shari and Curt VanDelinder
Jon Paulson

Wally Stadfelt
Exxon
CTA
Fred Arnst
Gary McClees
Thorn and Jean Forseth
Nancy Larson
Bob Fitzgerald
Cathy Barker
Obert Udem
Steve Dyche
Greg Thompson

Bob and Shari Dayton
Pete Frost
Bill and Mary Underiner
Bertie Newton
Gail Nutting
BiometOsteo Systems
Warren Wintrose
Phyllis Roberts
Patti Morledge
Terry Steiner
US Bank
Cap Clegg

Bob Robertson
Jack Lawson
Sam E. McDonald Jr.
John Gussick
Doris Gillespie
Charlene Critelli
Bob Smith Lincoln Mercury
Ron Scario
Elizabeth McNamer
Montana Real Brokers
Bob and Audrey Jurovich
Lori Viste

Joe and Catherine Cross
Gerald & Mary Hopkins
Layne and Myra Rolandson
David Heringer
Mary L. Burkhart
Dr. Wayne Hanson
Mary and Patricia Baker
Linda Lentz
Doretta Brush
Gary Ludlum
Mark and Jill Richardson
Frank and Helen Mathew

For those who want to support the RMC Championship Fund, please contact Shari VanDelinder, 406-657-1173.

Ann-Margret Coming to Rocky

One of America's most alluring and enduring actresses will be the guest of honor at the Rocky Mountain College President's Reception and Dinner, May 9th, 2009.

Ann-Margret's career spans from the 1960s, starting with Elvis Presley, to the 1990s, starring in Grumpy Old Men with Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon, to today, with two movies currently in production. For the Rocky festivities, she will be a guest of RMC President Michael Mace and his wife, Karen.

"We're delighted to be able to have Ann-Margret join us. She has found time in her busy life to come to Billings and help our college," Mace said. The reception will be held in the Great Hall of Prescott Commons, beginning at 6 p.m. The dinner will be held under a great all-weather tent on the RMC Green, beginning at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$100 for the reception and dinner, or \$25 for just the dinner. All proceeds will go for scholarship relief, said Shari VanDelinder, RMC director of development.

Tickets may be obtained by contacting VanDelinder at 406-657-1173 or email, vandelis@rocky.edu.

Two Ann-Margret movies are in production, to be released this year and in 2010. They include "A Handful of Beans," with Peter Fonda, and "All's Faire in Love," with Christina Ricci. She appeared in "The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond," with Ellen Burstyn in 2008.

Ann-Margret has won the Golden Globe on five separate occasions; has been nominated for Academy, Emmy and Grammy Awards throughout her career; has performed in well over 50 major films and over 35 television productions, and has produced 12 albums including five soundtracks. She is famous for her fabulous Las Vegas performances, as well as live theatre performances on Broadway. She was a devoted performer for the troops in Vietnam for the duration of that conflict.

"She appeals to so many generations with her work, and is consistently regarded as one of the sweetest and most professional actresses," VanDelinder said.

Born in 1941 in Sweden, Ann-Margret migrated with her family to the U.S. when she was a child and settled in Chicago. After graduating from high school, she enrolled in Northwestern University, but, appearing with her cabaret band in Las Vegas, she was discovered by George Burns. She made her film debut as Bette Davis' daughter in Frank Capra's "Pocketful of Miracles" (1961), and released her first album "And Here She Is, Ann-Margret." In 1963, she co-starred in the film adaptation of the Broadway play "Bye Bye Birdie," alongside Dick Van Dyke. In 1964's "Viva Las Vegas," she was critically acclaimed for her performance with Elvis Presley.

By 1968, she was under contract with CBS and hosted a number of television specials. She was dubbed the "Queen of Las Vegas," and the "Swedish Meatball," by Jack Benny and Danny Thomas. In 1970, she met and married the former star of ABC's "77 Sunset Strip," Roger Smith, who doubled as her personal manager. They have been married for nearly 40 years.



National Champion . . .

(Continued from front cover)

This year was different. Coach Bill Dreikosen and the team are known for their second-half comebacks. Down by 17 at the end of the first half of the first game with Tennessee's Freed-Hardeman University, the Bears roared back to capture their first tournament win, 78-77. Second round, Rocky overwhelmed Missouri's Central Methodist University 71-62 placing our team against 12th-seeded Concordia University of California in a quarterfinal game. After a 72-64 victory against Concordia, the Bears advanced to the final four to play 8th-seeded Robert Morris College of Chicago, Ill. for yet another win, 75-70.

Not to be deterred by the vast distance between our school and our players during the championship game, a group of nearly 60 students left in the middle of the night to make the long journey from Billings, Mont. to Kansas City, Mo. Unfortunately, four hours into the trip, the disheartening news of snow-packed closed roads turned the bus around. Nevertheless a fortunate few were able to catch early morning flights to Kansas City for a chance to watch Rocky Mountain College make history. As the rest of campus painted their faces and cheered from afar, the Battlin' Bears played their best game yet with a resounding 16-point victory over Missouri's Columbia College for the 2009 NAIA Division I Men's Basketball National Championship.

