



Hickory Public Schools
432 4th Avenue, SW
Hickory, North Carolina 28602

PRESS RELEASE

TO: All Area Media
FROM: Beverly E. Snowden, Public Information Officer
Hickory Public Schools, 828.322.2855
SUBJECT: JOHN WORLEY, HHS Athletic Director and Head
Football Coach, to RETIRE
DATE: December 30, 2011



John Worley

John Worley, HHS AD and Coach, to Retire

HICKORY... Since 1983, John Robert Worley, the current athletic director and head football coach for Hickory High, has been immersed in the development of successful athletic programs for Hickory Public Schools.

During these 28 years of dedicated service, Worley, 51, has led young athletes to more than 445 collective wins in football, softball, and basketball. The achievements have been continuous through the years with recognition for conference titles, state playoffs, sectional and regional championships, and Worley's selection as Conference Coach of the Year.

It's this extraordinary career success that contributes to mixed emotions for Worley as he announces his plans to retire from Hickory Public Schools, effective February 29, 2012.

“Hickory Public Schools has been very good to me,” said Worley. “This is not a career change—it’s simply time for me to retire. I am young enough to enjoy life and try other things. I could possibly continue to work in the coaching field, but any new venture will be fewer hours versus the current 65-plus weekly hours that align with being a head coach. I look forward to spending more time with my family,” he said.

“Coach Worley has given many years of service to the Hickory High students and community,” said Dr. Walter Hart, superintendent, Hickory Public Schools. “His record as a winning coach is topped only by the care that he demonstrates for the many students he has worked with through the years. I wish him much happiness in his retirement and thank him for the positive impact he has made on the lives of young people. He may retire, but he will always be a RED TORNADO!” said Dr. Hart.

Graduating from Lenoir-Rhyne University in 1983 with a bachelor’s degree in history, it was Worley’s intent to teach history. That never happened. “Not one day,” he said. “I really enjoy history—but that opportunity never came my way. I was hired as a drop-out prevention counselor at Hickory High and I also worked as an athletic trainer while serving as an assistant coach for the women’s basketball team,” he said.

Through the years at Hickory High, Worley worked for five principals and several coaches. As for coaches who truly served as professional and personal mentors, Worley is quick to acknowledge David Craft, Troy Washam, Frank Barger, and Larry Wittenberg. While he respects the leadership of all principals—in particular, he has fond memories of working under Dr. Dan Massey’s leadership; and Worley believes that current HHS principal, Ann Stalnaker, is off to a strong start.

“Over the years, the HHS principals and coaches have entrusted me with a huge responsibility,” said Worley. “Anytime someone takes a head coaching job, there’s ‘unknowns’ with regards to the school’s traditions—and in the case of HHS, it’s a winning tradition. Hickory High’s athletics are very rich in tradition—the coaches, the players, the community. A coach must please several people in the journey. Coaches work hard for season results, but we can’t predict or guarantee the outcome. It’s a matter of jumping in and giving it your all,” he said.

Giving his “all” to HPS athletics has certainly paid-off. As head football coach for the past nine years, Worley’s record includes: 72 wins, 39 losses, one tie, two conference titles and nine trips to the NC State playoffs with selection as the Conference Coach of the Year.

As a former women’s head softball coach at HHS, Worley’s career record includes: 182 wins, 78 losses, two conference title wins, and three trips to the NC State finals.

Additionally, as a former men’s head basketball coach at HHS, Worley’s career record includes: 191 wins, 60 losses, five conference titles, five sectional and regional championships and the team twice earned NC State runner-up.

Reflecting on his best memories as a coach, Worley shares that he will always remember serving as assistant coach for David Elder, head coach—when the HHS football team won the 1996 NC State Championship, 3A Division. “I’ve been very fortunate to be around such great athletes during my career,” said Worley.

Worley's top memories include: the men's basketball team making it to the NC State finals in 1996 and 1997; the HHS women's softball team making it to the NC State finals in 1996 and 1997; and coaching two All-Star games during the summer of 2010 including the East-West All-Star and the All-America All-Star games.

Worley also shares with great pride that one of his former football players, Ryan Succop (HHS 2005) is today, a well-known NFL player serving his third-year as kicker with the Kansas City Chiefs.

The son of the late W.H. and Marie Worley, John Worley is a product of Hickory Public Schools. He attended Jenkins Elementary, College Park Junior High and graduated from Hickory High before attending Lenoir-Rhyne.

"My childhood was filled with athletics and outdoor activities—as my parents were very supportive of recreation football and basketball held at the local Foundation Center (now the YMCA) and team sports at College Park and HHS. My dad also shared his passion for hunting and fishing—outdoor activities that I still enjoy," said Worley. For several years, Worley worked as a lifeguard during summers at the Foundation Center.

Sports have always been a strong focus for Worley, but during his college years, he managed to step away from the football field to a different playing field, as he met his future wife, Jill Bertolami Worley. Married for nearly 20 years, the Worleys are the proud parents of one daughter, Jane Marie, who attends Northview Middle School.

"Retiring is a major decision," said Worley. "I wanted to be sure that I was making the right decision—for me—but also for my family. Jill and I have discussed this decision at great length and prayed. I know that I am moving forward while I am young enough to try other ventures in life," he said.

Perhaps John Worley will finally get his chance to teach history. If not, he has surely made historic contributions to the successful athletic programs of Hickory Public Schools.

We wish you the very best, John Worley, and thank you for your service to Hickory High School—and Hickory Public Schools!

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