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FALL 2021

*Remembering Bruin Legend*

## TERRY DONAHUE

*UCLA's most successful football coach  
made an impact beyond the playing field*

### THE SEASONED VETERAN

*Senior Quarterback*

**DORIAN THOMPSON-ROBINSON**  
*is leading the younger Bruins by example*

### PLUS:

#### BREAKING THE MOLD

*UCLA's Women's Soccer Coaching Staff  
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#### OLYMPIC ROUNDUP

*Bruin athletes & coaches made their  
mark in Tokyo*

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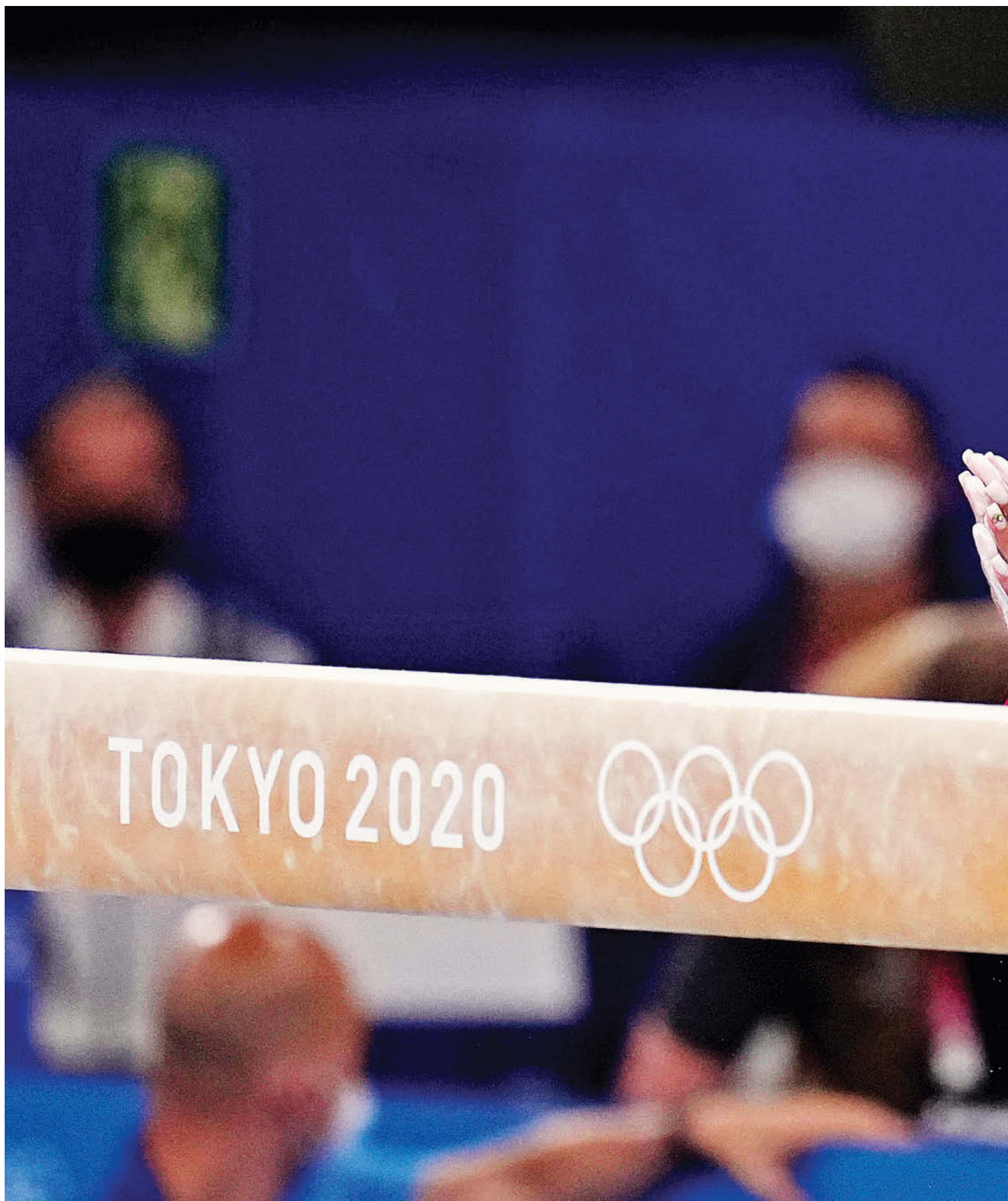
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# A PRECIOUS MOMENT

*Incoming UCLA gymnast **JORDAN CHILES** prepares to compete on the beam in the women's team final during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Summer Games at Ariake Gymnastics Centre. (Photo: Danielle Parhizkaran-USA TODAY Sports)*



# UCLA

## FOOTBALL

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8.28 HAWAII



9.4 LSU



9.18 FRESNO STATE



9.25 AT STANFORD



10.2 ARIZONA STATE



10.9 AT ARIZONA



10.16 AT WASHINGTON



10.23 OREGON



10.30 AT UTAH



11.13 COLORADO



11.20 AT USC



11.27 CAL

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# PAC-12 MEDIA DAY

***UCLA HEAD COACH CHIP KELLY** fields questions from the media during Pac-12 Football Media Day presented by 76® on July 27 at the W Hotel in Hollywood.*

***INSET:** UCLA defensive back Qwuantrezz Knight (left) and quarterback Dorian Thompson-Robinson. (Photos: Don Liebig/ASUCLA)*

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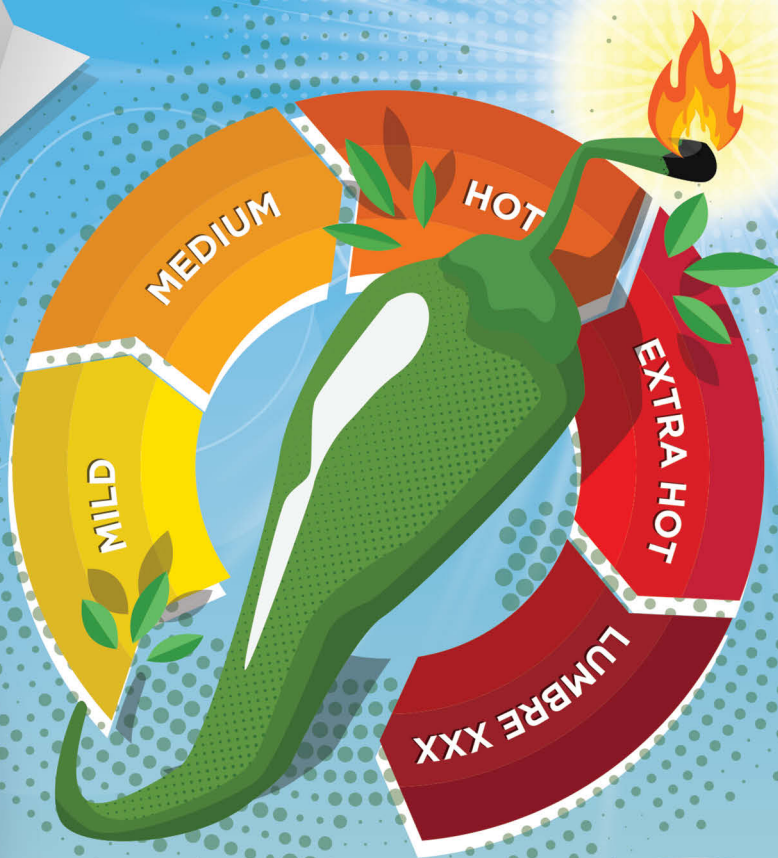


## MAKING HISTORY

Senior **RACHEL GARCIA** made history on June 28, as she was named the back-to-back winner of the Collegiate Woman Athlete of the Year Award and the prestigious Honda Cup, as announced during a televised ceremony at the CBS Studios. Garcia, a three-time winner of the Honda Sport Award for Softball, is just the third student-athlete ever to be named a two-time winner of the Honda Cup, joining Connecticut women's basketball player Maya Moore (2010 and 2011) and Florida swimmer Tracy Caulkins (1982 and 1984). Garcia and Moore are the only two to go back-to-back, as the award was not given out in 2020. Garcia is also the first to win the award outright twice, as Moore tied for the win in 2010 and Caulkins tied in 1984.

*INSET: Garcia poses with her 2019 and 2021 awards. (Main Photo: Jazmine Sosa)*

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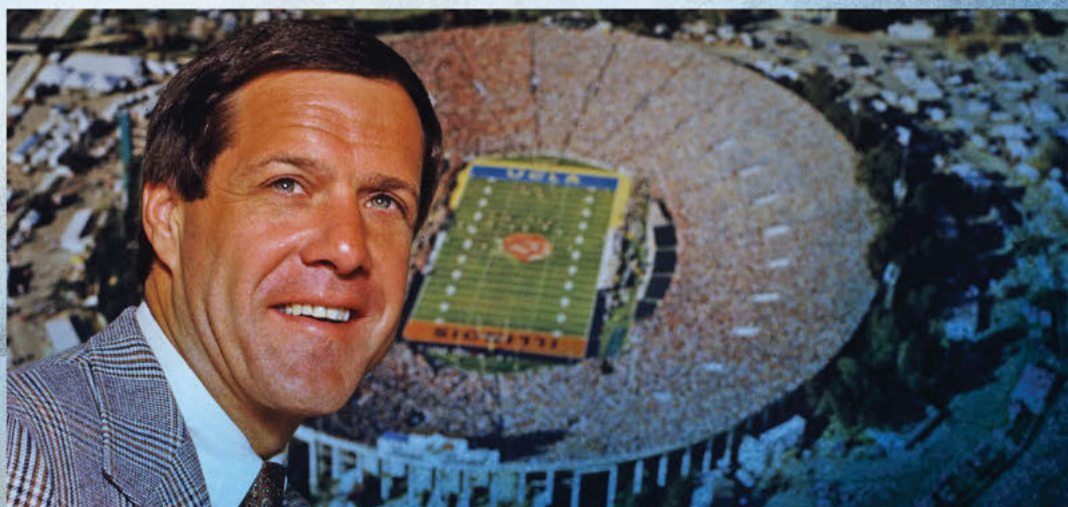
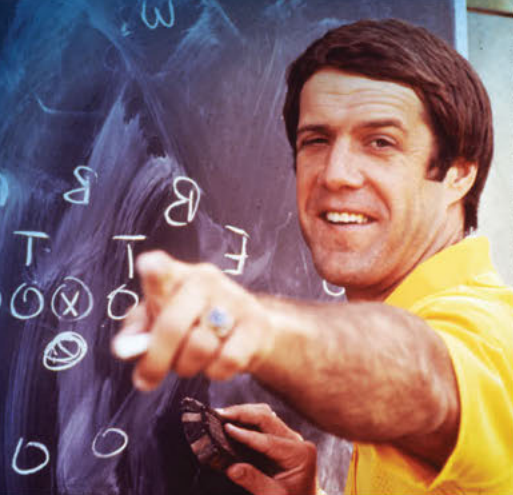


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## REMEMBERING BRUIN LEGEND

# TERRY DONAHUE

*UCLA's most successful football coach made an impact beyond the playing field*

by JON GOLD

**T**he way Frank Stephens describes it, the streets he was raised on were not the kindest.

His San Diego neighborhood was a hot-bed of gang violence, a place he says, "college coaches liked to skip." They would tell recruits to meet them at their schools or not at all. There would be no home visits.

Except in the fall of 1974, Terry Donahue dared to do what John McKay, Bobby Bowden and Joe Paterno would not.

The then-UCLA assistant coach ventured down the 405 freeway to scout Michael Hayes at San Diego High School, with the USC-bound running back considered among the best in the state. But when the Cavers were on defense, Donahue couldn't help but notice the flying terror that was Stephens. He must have had 25 tackles that day.

One day, Stephens' high school coach beckoned him to the coach's office. Donahue was there, telling Stephens that UCLA had a scholarship offer waiting for him, but that he'd want to speak to his father first.

"No one came to visit because they knew it was a rough neighborhood," Stephens said. "You know, he was the only one who met my father?"

And that's how Frank Stephens became a Bruin.

◇◇◇

Terrence Michael Donahue was a Bruin through and through.

He hailed from North Hollywood, just up the road from Westwood, prepping at nearby Notre Dame High in Sherman Oaks. Undersized as a 6-foot, 190-pound high school defensive tackle for the Knights,

Donahue nonetheless walked-on at San Jose State, Los Angeles Valley College and then UCLA. Part of the "Gutty Little Bruins" defensive line unit of the mid-1960s, Donahue blossomed into a starter and helped lead UCLA to its first Rose Bowl win in 1965.

After graduating, he quickly made a name for himself in the coaching ranks, and following a

three-year stint as defensive line coach for the Kansas Jayhawks, Donahue returned to UCLA when his head coach, Pepper Rodgers, took the Bruins' head coaching gig.

Three seasons later, when Rodgers left for Georgia Tech, Donahue was retained by new head coach Dick Vermeil. A quick two years after that, Vermeil jetted off to join the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles, and J.D. Morgan and the rest of the UCLA Athletic Department wanted to make sure the next hire would not high-tail it out of Westwood at the soonest sign of interest.

So Morgan turned to the 31-year old Donahue, fresh-faced and strong-jawed. He did so with the idea that Donahue would stick around longer than a few years.

And he did.

Two decades, in fact. Just long enough to become the most decorated coach in UCLA history.

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When Donahue died of cancer at the age of 77 in July, the outpouring was swift and resounding.

UCLA's football family had not just lost a coach, it had lost a patriarch.

Not because of Donahue's three Rose Bowl wins or 151 career wins. Not because of his conference-record 92 victories, nor his all-time best seven straight bowl wins.

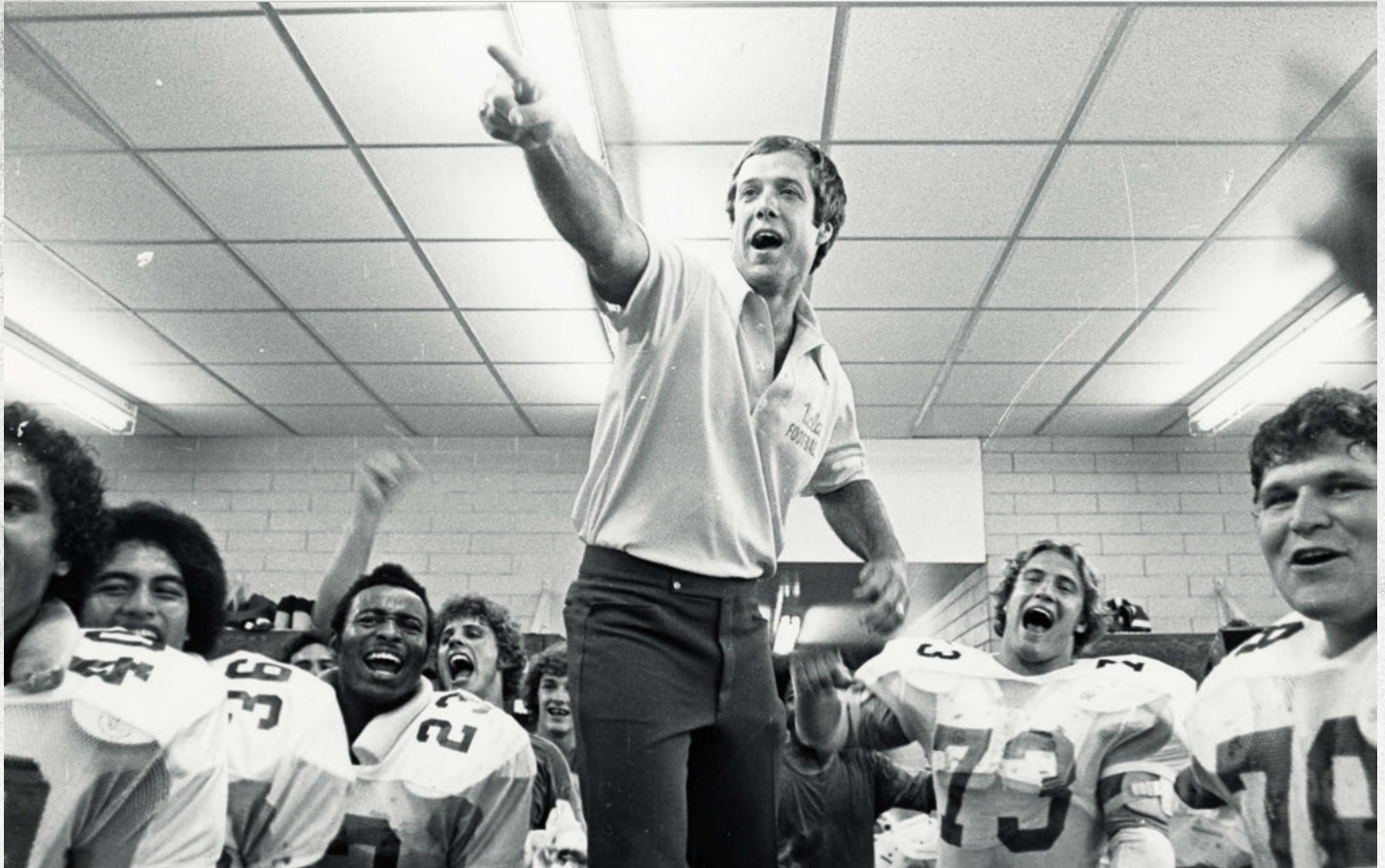
Donahue wasn't remembered so much as a great coach, but as a great man.

Former UCLA quarterback Troy Aikman, whom Donahue coached to a 20-4 record and a third-place finish in the 1988 Heisman Trophy race, wrote on Instagram that "Terry Donahue was everything I've ever wanted to be as a man. A great husband, father and friend. Although no one is perfect,



# REMEMBERING TERRY DONAHUE

UCLA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL FOOTBALL COACH



**TERRY DONAHUE'S** 151 victories more than doubles the total of anyone else in school history.



**TERRY DONAHUE** was a family man above all else, here with wife, Andrea, and daughters Nicole and Michele.

he was as close to perfect as one could get. At least in my eyes. I held no one in higher regard."

Current UCLA head coach Chip Kelly said in a statement that, "He epitomizes everything you strive to be as a coach and as a human being. Since the moment I stepped on campus, he's been an incredible mentor and one of the most authentic, humble and toughest men I've ever met. He loved UCLA with all he had, and I can't express how important his guidance and friendship has been for me."

Jolie Oliver, Donahue's long-time administrative assistant at UCLA, isn't surprised by the outpouring of love.

"I got to know the guys who played with him and all the guys who have been a part of his life," she said. "He kept them in his life."

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Wayne Cook was busted, and he knew it.

Much like Stephens, Cook was discovered by accident.

Donahue's daughter happened to be a cheerleader for Agoura High, and Donahue snuck away long enough on a fall Friday to catch a game between the Chargers and the Newbury Park Panthers. Cook was the Panthers' quarterback, and despite finishing the game in a 6-6 tie, he caught Donahue's eye with his combination of arm strength and athleticism.

Two years later, though, Cook caught Donahue's ire.

It was 1991, and Cook, a redshirt freshman now, was going down, fast. He was homesick and depressed, having devolved from a high school star to just a guy. His grades were in the toilet. He was drinking too much.

One day he got a knock on his dorm room door.

It was Donahue, asking him to go for a drive.

Cook got down to the parking lot, saw offensive coordinator Homer Smith sitting in the car and knew what he was in for. They drove up to the Cook family home in Newbury Park and Donahue made it clear: Clean up your act.

Cook took the message to heart. Two years later, he'd lead the Bruins to the Rose Bowl.

"The reason that's my favorite story about him is he cared about me as a person," Cook said. "From the first day I met him to the last time I talked to him through text — which was within the last three weeks of his life — it was always about you. He told me not that long ago, 'Cooky, if you wouldn't have gotten hurt, you would've set every record. I said, 'Coach, if you didn't save my butt on academics, I wouldn't be here in the first place.'"

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Football coaches are often measured in terms of their "coaching tree," made up of the former players and coaches who've gone on to become coaches themselves.

The problem with that is it limits a coach's success to the football field.

So back to Frank Stephens.

When Donahue first stepped foot into his house to recruit the promising linebacker and defensive back, college was just about the furthest thing from the young Stephens' mind.

He'd been raised by his father in a single-parent home, where money was tough to come by as well as any educational aspirations. Stephens' father hadn't graduated high school; at that point, Stephens only viewed school as a means to an end. He just wanted to stay eligible for football, more than willing to eke by with a 2.0 grade-point average.

When Donahue sat him down, he played it to him straight.

"He said if you want to come to UCLA you have to improve on these classes, and I paid attention for the first time. That was the first time I took school seriously," he said. "Terry helped me become a man. My father was a country boy. He didn't know about college. Terry taught me how important



**TERRY DONAHUE** with former players **WAYNE COOK** (left) and **J.J. STOKES**. Cook credits his former coach for saving his athletic and academic career. (PHOTO: Don Liebig)

education was, to the point I taught my kids."

How's this for a legacy: Stephens' son graduated from Cal State Fullerton; his daughter, Alana, just finished her Master's degree.

Better yet, Stephens not only eventually graduated from UCLA, but he went on to become the Director of Student Services for the athletic department, where, he says, "I was able to instill in those kids what Terry taught me."

"There are a hundred players who needed him to aim for the NFL, but there are a 100-fold who became successful in the workforce," Stephens said. "There are more kids who are financially set, and not because they played football, but because they learned how to become men. The valuable things in life we need to know in life to survive."

From his earliest recruits to his later ones, the refrain remains the same.

"It was like he's not your coach for four years, he was your coach for life," Cook said. "There are only so many special coaches who really exist. There are a lot of really good coaches, but there are only a few special ones."

How's that for a coaching tree?



**TERRY DONAHUE** (left) with longtime **UCLA Athletic Director J.D. MORGAN**, who hired the legendary coach in 1976.



**TERRY DONAHUE'S** streak of bowl victories included Rose Bowl wins in 1983, '84 and '86.



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by JON GOLD

# THE SEASONED VETERAN

*Senior quarterback Dorian Thompson-Robinson is leading the younger Bruins by example.*



Sorry, Jim Morrison. There is a new Lizard King in Westwood. When Dorian Thompson-Robinson was a young boy, he grew a fascination with our tiny, scaly friends.

One day he told his mother, Melva, that he wanted a lizard for a pet, and after getting over her brief repulsion, mom caved. But there were conditions.

"Understand, I'm not taking care of this lizard," she told him. "You're going to need to learn how to take care of this lizard. You better Google 'lizards,' son."

And thus began Thompson-Robinson's education into lizardry. Eventually, the family had a half-dozen of the crawly critters around. Thompson-Robinson was obsessed.

"He's always been someone who has researched things," Melva said.

Apparently, the fascination stuck: At Pac-12 Media Day, he told reporters his favorite class at UCLA was one on dinosaurs.

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And speaking of dinosaurs, around the UCLA locker room, Thompson-Robinson might as well be a pterodactyl.

Partially because he flies around the field, and partially because he's ancient around these parts.

He'll turn 22 late in the regular season, which is about 52 in college quarterbacking years. He enters his fourth season as UCLA's starting quarterback with nearly 700 pass attempts under his belt, to go along with more than 5,000 yards and 40 touchdowns. Once an eager receiver-turned-QB thrust into the starting role too early, Thompson-Robinson is now a seasoned veteran. There may be no gray in his hair, but there is wisdom in his eyes. The wisdom of having seen things. Having felt things, too, like a blitzing linebacker.

He even sounds like the old guy.

"The freshmen come in and they think they know everything, and they really know nothing," he said. "They're looking to vets, to mirror and match

what they do."

Sure doesn't sound like the precocious youngster any more. Thompson-Robinson enters his swan song feeling like a whole new person, and a whole new quarterback.

For UCLA head coach Chip Kelly, his growth is simply a continuation of the inquisitive young mind that Melva Robinson described.

"The one thing that I love about Dorian is his thirst for knowledge," Kelly said at Pac-12 Media Day. "He constantly is working on his game, whether it's the physical stuff, whether it be the weight room, speed work, film watching, decision making, how to become a better leader."

Sometimes you can measure that growth in touchdowns and completion percentage.

And sometimes you can see it in the little things.

The way he commands attention in the huddle. The way he carries himself in the locker room. The way a quarterback consoles a receiver who has dropped a pass.

But it's one thing to pick up a wideout who is down-and-out. It's another thing to pick up trash.

◇◇◇

It was mid-November last season when Fred Lovett saw it for the first time.

The Bruins had just defeated the rival Cal Bears, and Thompson-Robinson had every reason to celebrate. UCLA had throttled Cal, 34-10, and Thompson-Robinson accounted for four touchdowns just one day after his 21st birthday, three passing

touchdowns, one rushing.

As always, Thompson-Robinson was one of the last Bruins to shower and get dressed, his media obligations keeping him busy while teammates rushed to get home, even if they'd be partying amongst themselves. It's usually like this. Thompson-Robinson takes his time.

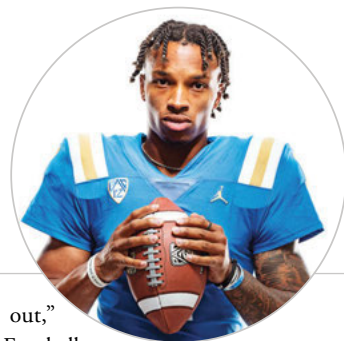
Only this time, Thompson-Robinson also took out a garbage bag, and got to work.

"On game day, we put the onus on the players to clean up the locker

*"The one thing that I love about Dorian is his thirst for knowledge. He constantly is working on his game, whether it's the physical stuff, whether it be the weight room, speed work, film watching, decision making, how to become a better leader."*

*—Chip Kelly*

# THE SEASONED VETERAN



**DORIAN THOMPSON-ROBINSON** was recently one of 80 players chosen to the 2021 preseason Maxwell Award watch list. The Maxwell Award is given annually to the college football Player of the Year. (Photo: Don Liebig/ASUCLA)

room and bring the travel bags out,”

said Lovett, UCLA's Director of Football

Equipment Operations. “He was always one of the ones to finish late. He'd come up and see me and my staff cleaning up, and he'd say ‘You all need help?’ You don't get that out of everybody.”

Lovett has seen this before, a quarterback who cares. He saw it with the Chicago Bears and Mitchell Trubisky, during the beleaguered quarterback's best season in 2018. Lovett was the Bears' equipment manager that year, Trubisky's second in the NFL, when he led Chicago to an 11-3 record in 14 regular-season starts and earned a Pro Bowl nod. He'd see Trubisky get adorned like a future All-Pro in the making, only to stick around to help clean up an NFL locker room.

“It might be a QB thing,” Lovett said. “They legit care about the people who care for them. Dorian didn't have to come back and help us. He'd just gotten done playing, and that happened. You don't find that everywhere, not just helping our team, but our support staff.”

If Thompson-Robinson learned one thing last year, it may have been humility. And not in the canned, says-everything-right way. True humility. Humbling thyself.

“I saw a video somewhere of an ex-NFL player talking about leadership, accountability and discipline within a team,” he said. “The little things — picking up a locker room, how we care after ourselves, how we treat others — reveal who you are as a football player. My teammates are who make me a good quarterback. A quarterback doesn't make all the plays, doesn't win games alone. It's a team effort. I'm pouring back into myself and pouring into my teammates, and I believe it pours back into me. At the end of the day, that's a quarterback's job, and a team is a reflection of that.”

—Thompson-Robinson

and a team is a reflection of that.”

Thompson-Robinson credits some of his newfangled neatness to good ol' Southern hospitality. He is genteel, easy to get along with.

One of his chief goals — in addition to having the cleanest locker room in all of college athletics — is to better connect with and care for his teammates in year four.

In year one, it was all about proving to them that he belonged.

In year two, it was about showing out.

Year three — abbreviated and just about the strangest season any of these players have ever had — was about growth and staying in control despite the chaos.

Now Thompson-Robinson is looking to help UCLA take a leap. After going 3-9 as a freshman and 4-8 as a sophomore, the Bruins went 3-4 last year.



# THE SEASONED VETERAN



**DORIAN THOMPSON-ROBINSON** as a youth player growing up in Las Vegas. (Photo: Courtesy Mava Robinson)

Small progress, but progress nonetheless. Thompson-Robinson believes the difference between a successful senior season and the frustration of years passed will be in the details.

“I got here last August, and when I say he’s a completely different guy from then to now, I mean it,” said Lovett, who in addition to being equipment manager has become Thompson-Robinson’s close confidant. “Obviously it’s nature — everyone matures at some point. But he’s taken on a leadership role that I didn’t personally see coming. A lot of starting quarterbacks, their job is to make sure the receiver catches the ball.

“But it’s the things off the field that we notice.”

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Where did he get this from? This humility? This inquisitiveness.

It helps to have been raised by a long-time college professor who specializes in the field of social and behavioral health.

Melva Robinson taught her son how to communicate with players from all backgrounds and of all personality types. She knows what it means to connect with a community.

It helped that Thompson-Robinson came up at Las Vegas’ Bishop Gorman High School, which, despite its status as one of the preeminent private schools and football factories in Nevada, if not the country, boasts a very diverse roster.

“He understood there that some of the guys he played football with were working class like everybody else, and he also had teammates over the years whose parents couldn’t afford to send them anymore,” his mother said. “He was also a few years behind some of the Fertitta kids. He

really got to see across the spectrum that everyone is a little different.”

If there was diversity of socioeconomic background among the Gaels football roster, there was little diversity of thought. It was simple: Win, win, win. He’s had to learn that his formative football years were unique.

“Not everyone he’s playing with comes from that kind of background,” Melva said. “You have to show them, I know what it’s like to win, so this is what we’ve got to do.”

“Being able to understand them and learn their feelings and being able to relate, to really connect to my teammates, a word that comes to mind is together. All-in, really,” Dorian Thompson-Robinson said.

“That resonates to us. We’re going to go through trials and tribulations, some growth spots, and it’s about being able to lean on each

other in all of those moments.”

Those words are music to a mother’s ears. But they’re not at all surprising.

Last April, after UCLA’s spring football campaign was cut short because of the pandemic, Thompson-Robinson logged into a virtual meeting of the Bruin quarterbacks, only to be surprised by a visitor. The Seattle Seahawks’ Super Bowl-winning quarterback Russell Wilson was on the call, beckoned by former UCLA quarterbacks coach Dana Bible, who’d coached Wilson at North Carolina State.

“I asked him, ‘Were you like OMG, it’s Russell Wilson and having a moment, or did you ask him questions?’” Melva Thompson-Robinson said. “He said, ‘No, I asked him how do you get your players to rally around you as a leader?’ It’s something he’s been thinking about.”

That, and lizards, of course.



**DORIAN THOMPSON-ROBINSON** with head coach **CHIP KELLY** at the 2021 Pac-12 Media Day in Hollywood on July 27. (Photo: Courtesy Pac-12 Conference)

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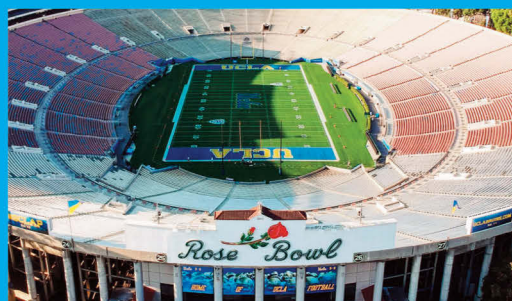


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# 2021 WOMEN'S SOCCER *CHAMPIONS*





by JON GOLD

# BREAKING THE MOLD

*UCLA's women's soccer coaching staff is challenging the status quo.*

**S**itting in her Transformative Coaching and Leadership class along with a host of other UCLA student-athletes, Marley Canales surveyed the room, and she liked what she saw.

Some of the brightest minds and most athletic bodies in the country sat with their attentions rapt as legendary former UCLA women's gymnastics coach Valorie Kondos Field explained the ins-and-outs of composure and supervision.

And get this: About half the class was made up of women.

It was enough to make Canales want to do a back-flip.

And with Miss Val's guidance, now she can.

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In some women's college sports, it would not be a surprise to see a room full of women at a coaching clinic. Softball, women's basketball, women's volleyball — the NCAA coaching ranks are chock full of former players.

But women's college soccer has somehow become a boy's club. Or, more accurately, it remains one.

Except at UCLA, that is.

The Bruins are one of the few teams in the history of women's college soccer with an entire staff composed of women: Head coach Amanda Cromwell, assistants Sam Greene and Jane Alukonis and volunteer goalkeeping coach Saskia Webber. Additionally, the team's athletic trainer and athletic performance coach — Nikki Briones and Paige Schober — are women.

"I think it's huge," Greene said. "When you say, 'You can see it, you can believe it, you can do it,' it means something. I'm a firm believer when you see things happen, you believe anything is possible. They see these strong, independent women who can also work together. They can be led in a way they've never been led before."

In addition to Cromwell, there are now three other female head coaches in the Pac-12, with two hired just this year (Oregon State's Lauren Sinacola and Arizona's Becca Moros, who joined Cromwell and Washington's Nicole Van Dyke). That, for Cromwell, feels like progress.

For her younger coaches, those who've grown up to challenge the status quo, it feels like measuring by inches.

"Why am I calling it progressive when this is how it should be?" Alukonis said. "I was honestly shocked — Amanda would tell me when I got into coaching, you will be treated differently as a woman. Then you come up to the field and someone says, 'Oh, the trainer's here. One of my boys is injured,' and I'm like, 'I'm a coach, dude.'"

This is something Cromwell has been battling for decades.

"It's not surprising, but it's crazy we're still here," Cromwell said. "It's fatiguing, really. It is shocking to look at the numbers."

Here are some of the numbers.

# BREAKING THE MOLD

UCLA'S WOMEN'S SOCCER COACHING STAFF IS CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO.



Head coach **AMANDA CROMWELL** led UCLA to its first NCAA title in women's soccer in 2013.

Three: In 2013, the Bruins helped make Cromwell just the second female coach to lead her team to a national title. Just one other female coach (Penn State's Erica Walsh Dambach in 2015) has done so since.

Two: This staff is just the second all-female staff to win a Pac-12 title, joining UCLA in 2001 (under Jill Ellis, Kat Mertz and Lisa Shattuck).

One: The coaching staff earned Pacific Region Coaching Staff of the Year honors this past season. They were the only all-female staff in NCAA Division I or II to be honored.

Here's one more number, though this is a repeat: Two, as in the number of male head coaches UCLA women's soccer has employed in its nearly 30-year history. Only Todd Saldana (1998) and B.J. Snow (2011-12) have been at the helm aside from Cromwell, Ellis and program pioneer Joy Fawcett, who coached from 1993-97.

For UCLA, women coaching women is the norm.

Even if for the players, sometimes it's not.

"A lot of women coming up, they never came up with a woman coach," Cromwell said. "They say, 'I don't know if I want a woman coaching me.' There's some education with that, because they have so few experiences."

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Just how rare is it to encounter a female coach coming up in the soccer world?

Canales said in her nearly two decades in the sport, she had one female coach prior to attending UCLA. Cromwell said she was lucky – her high

school soccer and basketball coaches were both women, and she played for the legendary Lauren Gregg at the University of Virginia.

These days, she concedes, she might not have been so lucky.

Women's club soccer at the youth level is dominated by male coaches; so, too, are the assistant ranks at the college level.

Greene says that when she goes on the road to recruit, she feels like she sticks out like a sore thumb.

"I battle to get into the boys club and to get into conversations," Greene said. "But I've found my footing. I've had a few No. 1 classes, which gives me confidence."

Of course, it shouldn't take top-rated recruiting classes just to gain some equality.

OK, then: So what will it take?

That's the problem, UCLA's coaches all agree – there's no easy answer.

And there's no easy explanation for the dearth of qualified women coaches, either.

Greene said that it will take more male athletic directors to step out onto a limb to even the playing field.

Alukonis points out that many of her coaches coming up were born internationally and raised with soccer as their top priority in youth sports.



Volunteer assistant coach **SASKIA WEBBER** enters her second season in Westwood, working primarily with UCLA's goalkeepers. She was a member of U.S. Soccer's legendary 1999 World Cup championship team and was also teammates with Bruin head coach Amanda Cromwell on the 1995 World Cup squad and 1996 Olympic team. (Photo: Jesus Ramirez)



*A former standout with the Duke Blue Devils from 2006-09, **JANE ALUKONIS** enters her fourth season as assistant coach at UCLA in 2021. (Photo: Jesus Ramirez)*

Many, after playing professionally overseas, come stateside to coach.

“It might be because soccer is so international,” Alukonis said. “My coach was English, all my coaches in club were English. That might be the difference.”

But it’s not just the top players across the pond who bypass some of the beginning steps to college coaching. American men benefit from robust professional playing options compared to the meager professional opportunities that exist for women.

“It’s not just international – it’s a fact men are playing a lot longer and then they go straight into coaching,” Cromwell said. “For women, unless you were on the national team, there was no career past college.”

In fact, Cromwell guarantees that she would not be a college coach right now if she wasn’t a national team player.

“I stayed at Virginia to train,” she said. “I didn’t want to be a coach.”

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At some point, though, Cromwell caught the bug.

She’s now two decades into her head-coaching career, having served at the helm of Central Florida from 1999-2012.

She loves being out on the field, teaching, leading. Cromwell is the youngest of five children, born to a mother who was vice president of a university and a father who worked on Capitol Hill. She’s always known what it means to elbow for position.

“I come from hard-nosed people who know how to grind,” she said. “I know what it means to show strength and confidence. I was blessed with people around me showing me the way, telling me don’t be apologetic for who you are. I’m one of the most competitive people you’ll meet. I’m never going to apologize for it.”

That, above all, is what Cromwell is trying to instill in her players.

That being a woman doesn’t mean you can’t be assertive and strong, steadfast and passionate.

That message is hitting home.

“Now it’s becoming the norm that women can be strong and intense, that we can be leaders and outspoken,” Canales said. “That’s the only way we’re going to change anything. We’re not going to change the way society sees women if we stay silent and conform to what society thinks is acceptable. Being soft, being warm, being comforting — that’s what a mom is for. When I have a bad day, she’s there for me and gives me a hug.

“When it comes to soccer, I don’t need that.”

What she needs is a coach. And she has one. Four, really, and all of them strong, powerful women.



*Former Northwestern standout **SAM GREENE** enters her second season as Associate Head Coach and her fifth season on the coaching staff after being elevated from Director of Soccer Operations to Volunteer Assistant in 2017. (Photo: Liza David)*



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Australia **BRONTE HALLIGAN**



## OLYMPIC ROUNDUP

*Bruin athletes and coaches made their mark in Tokyo.*

**U**CLA won a total of 16 medals at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo - seven gold, seven silver and two bronze. Of the 50 Bruins representing their respective countries at the Games, 15 athletes won medals, and an additional five Bruins were coaches of medal-winning teams. UCLA was well represented internationally in Tokyo, with Bruin players competing for 17 different countries.

### *Final 2020 Olympic Games Medal Count*

- **Gold** — 7 (Rai Benjamin, Track & Field 4x400m Relay; Rachel Fattal, W. Water Polo; Jessie Fleming, W. Soccer; Jrue Holiday, M. Basketball; Zach LaVine, M. Basketball; Maddie Musselman, W. Water Polo; Alys Williams, W. Water Polo)
- **Silver** — 7 (Rai Benjamin, Track & Field 400m; Ally Carda, Softball; Jordan Chiles, W. Gymnastics; Eric Filia, Baseball; Rachel Garcia, Softball; Bubba Nickles, Softball; Delaney Spaulding, Softball)
- **Bronze** — 2 (Abby Dahlkemper, W. Soccer; Sam Mewis, W. Soccer)
- UCLA's all-time medal count now stands at 270 medals - 136 gold, 71 silver and 63 bronze.
- Overall, 410 Bruins have combined to make 611 Olympic teams since the 1928 Games. UCLA, which was founded in 1919, has had at least one competitor in every Olympics since 1928, and Bruins have won a gold medal in every Olympics in which the U.S. has participated since 1932.





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## FIVE QUESTIONS

*with Men's Tennis Olympian*

## MARCOS GIRON

1

**HOW DID YOU FIND OUT THAT YOU MADE THE U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM?**

I knew that the top four Americans were going to get in. Around the time of selection I was really around the sixth or seventh ranked American so I definitely didn't expect it. But, whether it was injury or just not wanting to travel due to Covid, a few Americans pulled out. So I got a call and was asked if chosen, would I still be interested. I absolutely jumped at the chance. I knew it was maybe a once in a lifetime opportunity.

2

**DO YOU REMEMBER TELLING PEOPLE YOU WERE GOING TO BE AN OLYMPIAN?**

Oh everyone was super stoked. My parents and my grandparents were able to brag to their friends about it. It's funny because I could win a big tournament on the ATP Tour and people who don't know tennis that well would be like, "that's kinda cool." But you tell them you are an Olympian and it's like "okay, this guy can play tennis." The Olympics just resonates with the general public a little bit more.

3

**WHAT WAS THE BEST PART ABOUT BEING IN TOKYO?**

Well it was my first time in Japan so that was cool. Just being in the Olympic Village and going to the Opening Ceremony was so cool. Getting all the gear and representing Team USA was just amazing in itself. Being around the most elite athletes in the world is special. Meeting these other athletes and hearing about their stories and how they train, it was just wonderful. One downside was not being able to go to any other events. We weren't allowed to. I would've loved to check out some swimming, basketball and track & field. So that was a real shame.

4

**HOW DID IT FEEL TO REPRESENT YOUR COUNTRY?**

Tennis is such an individual sport. Fortunately, I already had the experience of being on a team and representing UCLA. There is nothing like it. It's way more special being on a team. Now representing the USA, it's on another level. It gave me strength. I wanted to play my best and represent the country and my family in the best way possible.

5

**YOU'VE HAD GREAT SUCCESS ON THE ATP TOUR RECENTLY. WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE THAT TO?**

A big part of it is just mental to be honest. There are definitely things I have improved in my game, but the mental side is the biggest part. I had a year not that long ago where I just couldn't finish off matches. I'll never forget playing (Juan Martin) del Potro, a guy who was top 5 in the world and has won a slam, and I'm like 400 in the world at the time and serving for the first set. I remember thinking 'my tennis is there. I can play with these guys.' It just comes down to being there mentally week in and week out. I've been able to do that and I think it's showing in my results.





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# EMILY LERNER

UCLA'S UNSUNG HERO IS RETIRING AFTER 34 YEARS IN WESTWOOD



**EMILY LERNER** (center) was presented with a custom UCLA football jersey recognizing her years of service for the athletic department at a going away party on June 15.

by **JON GOLD**

**Y**ou work for an institution like UCLA Athletics for long enough, you're bound to have a few brushes with greatness.

But in Emily Lerner's case, we're not talking a few brushes. We're talking an entire canvas.

When she was tasked with corralling former Bruin student-athletes to attend the memorial ceremony for iconic coach John Wooden in Pauley Pavilion, her first email was from Gail Goodrich. Not even minutes later, her first phone call came from John Stockton. And he's not even a Bruin.

The day of the event, Lerner was called upon to escort both NBA legend Jerry West and former Yankees manager Joe Torre to their seats.

She was hired in 1987 in part to help launch the very first fundraiser for the UCLA Athletic Department. The goal was \$25 million. At the kickoff for the drive, she worked closely with Annie Meyers-Drysdale and Jamaal Wilkes. Dick Vermeil spoke; Lerner was asked to drive Vermeil back to the airport.

"So I had to take Vermeil to the airport in my little 1980 Corolla," Lerner said. "I was a little embarrassed."

At times, it was an embarrassment of riches.

From 1987 to 1995, her office was inside Pauley Pavilion, and one day in 1992, as she headed to the bathroom, she noticed loud music coming from the arena. It was the sound check for the MTV Music Awards.

"I just sat there watching Eric Clapton and Nirvana. It was crazy," Lerner said. "I was just on my way to the bathroom!"

One perk ruled them all.

"Going to basketball games, that was the best for me," she said. "We were already parked."

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That's not what she'll miss, though.

She'll miss spending her lunch hour over at Los Angeles Tennis Center, taking in a women's tennis match. She'll miss those nights when she was on her way to her car, only to see the familiar glow from Spieker Aquatics Center for a water polo night game. She never made it to her car. Her legs just seemed to draw her to Spieker. She'll miss watching the next generation of UCLA student-athletes, wondering who will be the next one to become a professional superstar, if not the next one who'll change the world.

And what will UCLA miss?

"Emily is one of the most underrated, unappreciated people here at UCLA," said her 22-year colleague and close friend, Gina Garrett. "She's not a pot-banger. She never steps up the podium and says, 'This is what I did.'"

With Lerner's retirement from her role as Director of Communications and Donor Relations, UCLA loses along with it nearly four decades of

institutional knowledge, as well as one of its most valuable Bruin brand ambassadors. Many outside of the realm of UCLA Athletics don't know her impact, but it's fair to say that Pauley Pavilion is still standing in part due to her efforts. Same with the Spieker Aquatics Center, and every other Bruin fundraising effort over the last three-plus decades.

Before Lerner's arrival, the UCLA Athletic Department was "like a mom-and-pop store." The world of big-time college athletics looks nothing now like it did then. Forget the arms race of today, which sees multi-million-dollar facilities become obsolete almost before ground is broken. In 1987, most departments were just lucky to have a slingshot.

In the years since, the world of college sports has become big business, with UCLA boasting some of the preeminent facilities in all of athletics. Not everyone realizes this, but it takes money to accomplish such lofty ambitions, and the money has to come from somewhere.

And that's where Lerner came in, glad-handing with the best of them. It takes a certain charm to woo the jet-set, a certain flair. A New Yorker with a New Yorker's wit, Lerner found her way courting some of the most important people in Los Angeles.

It takes a certain level of trust, too. During Lerner's tenure, the UCLA Athletics Fund added \$25,000 and \$50,000 annual levels. That's a lot of trusts.

"I have a friend who started at \$100 dollars and is now at \$50,000," Garrett said. "That's the kind of relationship that lasts, and you can't get that when there is a turnstile of new people."

It takes charm and flair and trust, but most of all, it has taken a deep, unyielding love for all things UCLA Athletics. And that Lerner has had in spades.

She's had a front-row seat for 54 national championships, almost half of the school's history. Later in her career, it got to the point where anything other than a hulking trophy was almost blasé. Ho-hum.

"I hate to say that working there so long makes you jaded — but you take for granted the greatness of UCLA," she said. "When you don't win the whole thing, at UCLA, it's like second isn't good."

For years, Lerner had a second-place NCAA trophy from the Bruins water polo team in her office.

"... and no one cared," she said. "The first place one is in the hall of fame, so give me a break."

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The one constant amongst a sea change in college sports has been this: That special quality that every UCLA student-athlete carries with them.

The world of college sports has turned from fun and games into dollars and cents, but the players haven't changed themselves. At least not much: Lerner said they sure are a lot more poised and composed now.

"The constant is that these guys work their butts off in every sport," she said. "I just didn't realize it at the beginning, how much they have with practice and training and weights and travel. Their dance cards are full. These are, and not just the famous ones who go off to the pros, exceptional athletes. The vast majority, they don't even know it. They don't know how good they are."

Neither, it seems, does Lerner.

"She's never known her true impact," Garrett said.



**EMILY LERNER** with former UCLA standout and current Minnesota Vikings All-Pro linebacker **ERIC KENDRICKS**.

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