



A Career Told in Gold

“Go Panthers!” For most, it’s the gameday cheer you’ll hear ringing through the stands at any Florida Tech sporting event.

For Athletics Director Bill Jurgens, it’s a daily mantra that can be used in greeting, in farewell, in passing or in general conversation.

But with 50 years’ worth of steadfast dedication, proud achievements and irreplaceable memories, it’s no surprise that Jurgens’ Panther pride is brimming over.

“From day one, when Bill Jurgens first came to Florida Tech, his passion for the sport he coached, as well as his desire to grow the athletics department, was evident,” says women’s basketball Head Coach John Reynolds, who has been at the university for 32 years. “I do not think anyone can mention Florida Tech athletics and not mention Bill Jurgens in the same sentence. His ability to communicate with coaches, student-athletes, the general student body, faculty and staff effectively is impeccable because of how much he cares about this university.”

In May, Jurgens will transition to a new role as vice president of university relations. As he looks forward to this new chapter in his career, we’re honoring his golden anniversary in the athletics department with more gold.

For what better way is there to tell the story of a man who has lived and breathed athletics for more than half a century than through his trophies? Or rather, the hard work, accomplishments and history they represent. Because to Jurgens, athletics have always been about more than winning.

Integrity. Discipline. Persistence. Teamwork. Compassion. It is on these values that Jurgens has built a career, a life and a close-knit family that has inspired many.

“I have no greater satisfaction than seeing our student-athletes and coaches succeed, whether it is on the field, in the classroom or in life,” Jurgens says. “I am proud of everything I have been a part of during my time at this university.”

1 JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME

Before he championed the athletic careers of others, Jurgens established his own, rowing in the varsity eight for all four of his years at Jacksonville University. He served as team captain his senior year and went on to row with various teams in major worldwide competitions, such as the Grand Challenge Cup at the Henley Royal Regatta in England and the World Rowing Championships in Switzerland.

2 DAD VAIL REGATTA OAR

This is one of many oars in his collection. As a Brevard County native, Jurgens grew up on the local waters. But in his hands during the early days, more often than an oar, you would find a fishing pole. He nurtured his love of being on the water in places like the Indian River Lagoon, but it wasn’t until college that he took up competitive rowing—breaking a lot of rental paddles from Honest John’s Fish Camp while he learned.

3 COACH OF THE YEAR

“They did everything wrong, but they did it together.”

When young Jurgens provided this feedback to the fledgling Florida Tech rowing team’s advisor



at the Florida State Rowing Championships for which he was the official, he offered Jurgens his first head coaching job. Jurgens, who had never considered coaching, accepted the position in 1969. Having gone on to coach for 17 Florida Tech rowing national championships—not to mention a fourth-place World Lightweight Rowing Championship win outside of Florida Tech—it's safe to say, he made the right choice.

4 A KEUPER ORIGINAL

Jurgens is one of few—including facilities technician Hank Hughes; see page 7—who have worked at Florida Tech under all five of its presidents, including university founder Jerome P. Keuper. When Jurgens and the rowing team won the 1974 Florida State Championship, Keuper was so thrilled by the program's first state title in the varsity eight that he awarded each team member a small trophy.

5 INAUGURAL FOOTBALL

When Jurgens transitioned from coach to athletic director in 1976, the university had only nine varsity sports programs. Under his leadership, Florida Tech has added programs like football, swimming, lacrosse and women's soccer to the roster, today numbering 19 varsity teams and serving more than 520 student-athletes.

6 SSC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

When Jurgens became athletics director, there was no women's basketball team. In fact, rowing was the only women's athletic program at Florida Tech. One of Jurgens' key values from the beginning has been the growth and success of the university's women's sports. He has helped create nine women's varsity sports programs, today totaling 10 programs that have accounted for 24 of Florida Tech's 38 Sunshine State Conference Championships.

7 SERVICE AWARD HOURGLASS

Jurgens was awarded this hourglass specifically for his service on the NCAA Division II Women's Rowing Committee. But the sand could have passed through it a couple thousand times for the amount of time Jurgens has donated to various community boards and committees throughout his career. The organizations ranged from athletics-related—USRowing Board of Directors, U.S. Olympic Rowing Committee, Dad Vail Rowing Association Board of Directors, Melbourne Chamber of Commerce Sports Committee, Sunshine State Conference Athletics Directors Council (of which he was chair)—to community-building—Boy Scouts of the Riverside District of the Central Florida Council and the Melbourne Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

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