

MoATA Hall of Fame Spotlight

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Eric McDonnell, ATC/R

Hall of Fame Inductee 2003

By Rochelle Hamm, ATC

Career Beginnings

Eric became interested in athletic training after the football coach at his high school sent him to a Cramer Camp his freshman year. He was charged to learn more about athletic training in order to better help out the athletes. Since the first Cramer Camp, Eric knew athletic training was where he was called to be. After graduating from high school, Eric attended the University of Missouri and received his Bachelor's degree in 1982 and Master's degree in 1986. He was hired as the Assistant Athletic Trainer at the University of Missouri in 1982 and has continued to work there ever since.

Mentors

There are a couple of people who stand out to Eric when it comes to mentors. John Baxter was the head athletic trainer at Emporia State and ran the Cramer Camp, and Porky Morgan taught Eric a lot about athletic training.

One of the most influential people for Eric was Fred Wappel. Fred taught Eric not only the basic athletic training skills but also the importance of being a people person and how to work with coaches and athletes. Eric said, "Fred had this ability to father players" and teach them about life. Fred also taught Eric the importance of family and spending time with your family. Eric got to witness how Fred intertwined time with his six children with his demanding job. Fred and another mentor, Dr. Glenn McElroy, always preached the importance of being involved with your profession, not only on the local level but also the district and national levels.

When Rex Sharp took over at the University of Missouri, Eric was able to enhance his rehabilitation skills even further.



Advice for Young Professionals

Eric would love for students to take their time and make sure athletic training is really something they want to do. Athletic training requires a lot of hours and then more hours. Students need to be aware of and have an understanding of what it takes to be an athletic trainer.

He wants students to be happy with their decision to be an athletic trainer and to know if you choose to not go that route after school, no one would be mad at you.

Eric emphasized the importance of being involved in your profession. Make sure you're giving back to the profession you are in on all levels. See where you can help to advocate for your profession to grow.

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Memorable Moments

It was hard for Eric to pick only a couple memorable moments throughout the years. You can always pick out your favorite moments of athletes succeeding.

The 2013 University of Missouri volleyball season was one of Eric's favorite seasons. Ending the year 35-1 with the program's best record definitely stuck out with some great moments.

Eric also remembered a specific football player with an injury on the road. The linebacker had a closed tibial-fibular fracture. They decided to have surgery back home which required spine-boarding the athlete for a flight. After surgery Eric worked on rehabilitating the athlete and getting him back to play.

A day before football practice began, Eric was preparing his athletic training students by taking them through a neck injury. He told them to load up the brand new golf cart (with no governor) with a back board and scoop stretcher. He instructed the students to go slow and use the breaks while going down the hill to the field. When Eric arrived at the field, the steering wheel was bent, the scoop stretcher was broken, and the seats were bent back. They told Eric they didn't see the wire and were going way too fast (30-40mph) and crashed the golf cart. None of the students were hurt and Eric took care of getting everything else replaced.

Contributions to the Profession

Eric has been very involved in the athletic training profession throughout his career. Eric has served as the MoATA Secretary/Treasurer as well as the President for a two-year term.

Taking it a step further, Eric went on to serve on the Board of Directors for MAATA (NATA District V), was the president of the MAATA and was the district director.

Eric was on the NATA Board of Directors from 2011-2015 and has been involved with the Governmental Affairs Committee on all levels of the profession.

Not only has Eric been involved on the state, district, and national levels of the profession; he gives his time to being on committees such as the Substance Abuse Advisory Committee, helping out with Show-Me State Games, and being an instructor at the University of Missouri.

He has always stressed the significance of getting involved with your profession and has modeled that for future athletic trainers.



Are you a Young Professional Athletic Trainer in Missouri? Join our Facebook Group at [MoATA Young Professional Athletic Trainers](#) to engage with peers about the transition to practice and professional socialization. Also follow us on Twitter [@MoATA_YP](#) for information on upcoming events and relevant news!