

Winston-Salem State Thinks It's Got the Man

By LANGSTON WERTZ JR.

Winston-Salem State thinks it's got the man to replace the legend.

On April 30, the school named Ron Spry to replace Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines, the winningest active coach in college basketball and the second winningest coach of all time. Only Kentucky's Aldolph Rupp (875 wins) has more victories than does Gaines.

"You don't replace coach Gaines," Spry said. "What I have to do is stress my own individuality. Coach Gaines what coaches strive to become."

Gaines turned 70 on May 21 and North Carolina law requires that professors stand down at that age. Gaines had requested an exemption, but had met stern opposition from members of Winston-Salem State's faculty. But Gaines has repeatedly said that while he was angered by the response to his request, that people shouldn't feel sorry for him.

"Bighouse will be fine," he has said. "Don't cry for Bighouse."

So now, Spry must take over in his place. He comes with a fairly strong resume and a glowing recommendation from Dr. Arnold Lockett, Winston's faculty athletic representative, who, along with a five-member selection committee, conducted a very secretive search for Gaines's replacement.

Lockett said when he announced Spry as the new coach that the school has received more than 30 applicants for the job.

During the search, some word leaked out that the school had narrowed its list to five candidates.

When asked at the time to name them,

Lockett responded, "I won't do that. I don't do that."

Sources told BCSR that four of the five were Spry, Steve Joyner, head men's coach at Johnson C. Smith; Bobby Dandridge, an assistant at Winston-Salem State.

The fifth candidate was said, by several sources, to be Earl Monore, a NBA Hall of Fame player who led Winston-Salem to the NCAA Division II championship 1967. But of course, Lockett would neither confirm or deny any of these rumors.

What Lockett did do, though, was bring Winston-Salem a coach capable of leading the program into a brighter future.

Still, Spry must get the program from the here and now to that future.

It's not an easy task.

In the past three years, in reverse order, the Rams have gone 10-14, 6-21 and 6-17.

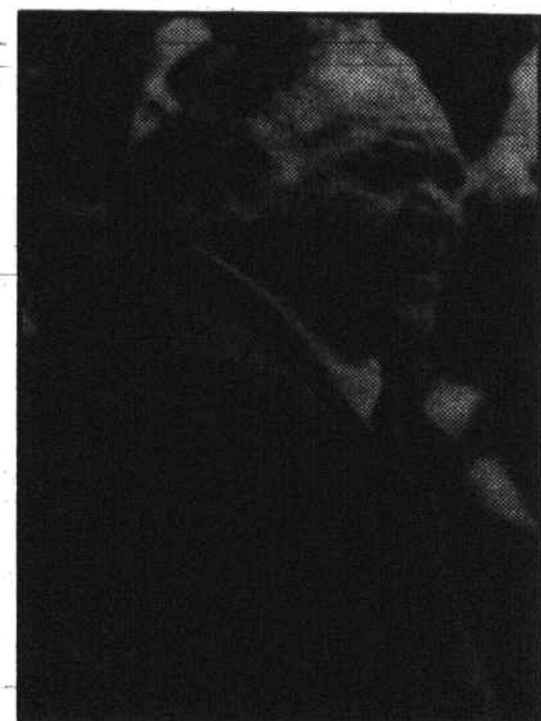
"The key to my success," Spry said, "is to evaluate the personnel on campus now." Maybe. He'll also have to hit the road and bring some talent into Winston-Salem quickly. Gaines has complained feverently that with just over \$2,000 to recruit with, he could do little. "You could spend the whole budget going to look at one kid out of town," he has said repeatedly.

The thinking here is that Winston-Salem is tired of losing so much and so often. A once proud program boasting of the CIAA's best player year-in, year-out, Winston-Salem State has fallen to the CIAA's cellar.

It's now up to Spry to dig the Rams out. One thing that seems to be in his favor — and Lockett, surprise, would not con-



Ron Spry



Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines

firm or deny this — is that many CIAA coaches feel that Winston-Salem is ready to open its pocketbook. "We are elated to bring in a person of such impressive credentials," Lockett said, serving notice that he was quite pleased the "The Man Who Replaced Gaines."

Spry is currently pursuing a doctorate in higher education administration at South Carolina and holds a master's degree in college teaching from Murray State.

In 13 years as head coach and athletic director at Paine, in Augusta, Ga., Spry led the team to a 285-146. He was the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) Coach of the Year last season, after his team finished 16-10. He was also named the league's coach of the year in 1987.

But he comes to Winston with a reputation as somewhat of an emotional guy, somewhat completely unlike the stoic Gaines. "He is a hothead. He's arrogant," said one CIAA insider. "He's a renegade who will do whatever it takes for his program to win."

But that may not be as bad, as long as Spry stays within the rules. Whatever it takes.

Sounds like a good motto to us: Whatever it takes. Spry has never been to the NCAA post season tournament, and with Winston-Salem's struggling fortunes, it's going to take a while to rebuild the program.

But Lockett feels he's got his guy. And it appears that guy is ready to do — whatever it takes.

FSU's Capel Gets Hoops Job at N.C. A&T

By LANGSTON WERTZ JR.

When Bighouse Gaines left Winston-Salem State, the CIAA lost one good coach, a legend, a man who is truly irreplaceable.

When Jeff Capel left Fayetteville State, the CIAA lost a coach who could become one.

Capel was appointed head basketball coach of North Carolina A&T State University May 6.

Capel succeeds Don Corbett, who resigned as head coach last month. Earlier this year, Capel led Fayetteville State to an NCAA Division II Tournament bid.

"This program is going to be committed to winning at the Division I level and developing, as soon as feasible, a comprehensive regional schedule in the East, Northeast and Southeast, including natural state rivals," Capel said.

Capel said he will also stress graduation as a primary goal for his players.

He has 15 players of experience in high school and college coaching.

Capel was a Wake Forest University assistant for three years before becoming the Broncos' head coach. At Fayetteville, Capel's team in 1991-92 compiled a 22-8 record, the best in that college's history. Now, continuing that program's success will fall to someone else.

Capel's record at Fayetteville was 64-51.

He began his coaching career at Pinecrest Senior School in Southern Pines, where his teams compiled a 111-61 record.

His son, Jeff III, was named Mr. Basketball in North Carolina by the *Charlotte Observer* and was also named the Associated Press N.C. player of the year.

Coach Capel is a 1977 graduate of Fayetteville State and has studied towards his master's degree at Gardner Webb College.



Jeff Capel should keep A&T competitive.