

# THE DECREE

since 1960 “of, by, and for the Wesleyan community.”

NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

## Charlie Long Moves from Dugout to Development Post

Charlie Long has retired from coaching and moved into the Wesleyan Office of Advancement.

The Rocky Mount native, 51, came to Wesleyan in 1991 to serve as a women's volleyball coach and an assistant baseball coach under John Fox (now the head coach at UNC-Chapel Hill). Long is a 1989 graduate of Mt. Olive College, where he majored in history and political science and played second base on the baseball team.

He and his wife, Tammy, are the parents of five children, Zachary, 24, Holly, 22, Justin, 20, Colin, 18, and Savanna, 16. The oldest two are Wesleyan grads, Long noted.

In 20 seasons as head coach, Long compiled a record of 475 wins, 416 losses and 5 draws, and led the Bishops to the Division III World Series title in 1999.

The Decree interviewed Coach Long about his career and his new position.

**Q.** What made this the right time to retire from coaching?

**A.** The time was definitely right. I want to finally catch up with my family and give them the full attention they deserve. It's nice to have weekends free (so far).

**Q.** Let's go back to the beginning of your Wesleyan career. What were you doing just before you came to NCWC in 1991. What attracted you to the position and the school?

**A.** I was a graduate assistant at Campbell University and was coaching in the Valley League in Front Royal, Virginia. Coach Fox called me and said they were looking for a full-time assistant. I had always followed Wesleyan and admired the success Coach Fox had at the school. He didn't have to ask me twice if I wanted the job. It was a dream come true to coach in my hometown.

**Q.** How did you like coaching volleyball?

**A.** I enjoyed coaching volleyball. We did struggle quite a bit in the three years I had the program, but we made small strides each year with recruiting and wins. When I took the team, we only had seven



Charlie Long Photos by SI and G. Wallace

players so the struggle was real without any depth. The toughest part involved juggling practices. I coached baseball in the afternoon and volleyball at night. I would get home around 10 every night, so the days were long. I didn't think the dual role was fair for the volleyball players. They deserved better and I was excited for the program when athletic department decided to hire a full-time volleyball coach.

**Q.** Your first baseball position was as an assistant coach. Describe what it was like to serve as Coach Fox's assistant?

**A.** Coach Fox was the most prepared coach I've ever been around. His detailed practice plans displayed his incredible organization skills. Coach also instilled traits in our teams that made every game a fight until the last out. We never quit.

**Q.** Characterize your first few years as head baseball coach. What were you doing well; what were you not doing so well?

**A.** The first few years were fun. We had a great deal of talent on the mound. When you pitch well, coaching is overrated. My only tough decisions was when to take out one power arm to replace it with another one. We were blessed with Sean Fleming and Jayson Sigley during that time. They're still numbers one and two in career strikeouts. With those guys starting and Buddy Hernandez coming in to close, we racked up the numbers and took the pressure off of the offense. In response to the second question, I would sometimes over-coach. I learned that preparation before games was much more important than in game decisions. Well prepared players usually controlled the results in our favor.

**Q.** How has coaching changed since you came here in 1991?

**A.** Coaching hasn't really changed much. It's still about relationships. Our better teams have had good senior leadership and have communicated well with the coaching staff. Our poorer teams have experienced roadblocks that were a result of poor communication on both sides. Division-III athletes are the same today as they were 27 years ago when I began. They all have something to prove to all of the DIs and IIs that may have overlooked them. That's the main reason I love DI/II so much.

**Q.** In what specific ways have the student-athletes changed during that period?

**A.** The biggest change is that the current student-athletes have so many more things occupying their time now.

**Q.** And what changes did you make over the years to adapt?

**A.** I became less rigid with my practice length and looked for ways to keep the guys engaged with the team. We moved around the schedules, sometimes scheduling two or three different practice times and doing more work with smaller groups.

**Q.** You were known by some as a disciplinarian. Is that a fair characterization?

**A.** I tried to always put the team above the player. I guess this is what made me a disciplinarian. Our punishments were consistent and spelled out for the players so that they clearly understood consequences for their actions.

**Q.** What was the highlight of your career?

**A.** There are many, but the one that comes to mind was the final out of the 2006 NCAA Regional Championship game. That team was amazing in their drive and determination to get our program back to the College World Series. I can still see Rob Johnson stepping on the third base bag in the bottom of the tenth for the final out.

**Q.** Describe that 1999 championship season, that group of guys. What stood out about that season and that team?

**A.** I'd say it was the team chemistry. I know you hear that all the time, but those guys really fed off of each other. After starting

1-2 in Atlanta, we reeled off 19 wins in a row. During that time, we had contributions throughout the lineup. The pitching staff was phenomenal. The team played amazing defense during our title run and came up big when needed. The biggest win came in game 1 of the regional tournament when we scored 2 in the ninth to tie after being down to our final out. Seniors Andy Jones, Jeremy Stewart, and David Capobianco refused to lose. Seven wins later, we were national champions.

**Q.** A lot goes into shaping a Wesleyan student. But how did you want to influence every player that went through your program? What did you want to see in your seniors by the last month of their final season?

**A.** My goal has always been to prepare our players to be good husbands and fathers one day. My coaching philosophy was based more on what our guys could do for each other and their community than what they could do to put their names in our record books. I also wanted to teach the guys respect for the game itself. There is no other game like it. And I wanted to impact on their spiritual lives. I hope that the players always knew where I stood when it came to my faith in Christ.

**Q.** Let's turn to lighter subjects. What was your philosophy when it came to dealing with umpires?

**A.** I liked to let the umpires do their job. This was a great lesson I learned from Coach Bauer and Coach Jerry Carter way back when I played American legion in Rocky Mount. There were times when it was necessary to protect our guys and then the lessons I learned often went out the window. I could always tell when an umpire could

be “worked” that day just by the lineup exchange. It's amazing during the course of going over ground rules how you know whether to give your team a heads-up or not about the umpires. I don't recall a time that I went out with the intention to get tossed to fire up the guys. Some things can't be staged because the players are smart enough to know better.

**Q.** Explain the art of giving signs while coaching third base.

**A.** That's a tough question. Our signs were very simple, but could be as complicated as needed if we thought someone was picking them up. Even now, I feel guarded about sharing too much information. The main thing is practice and then it becomes second nature.

**Q.** Can you think of a funny story that happened when a player missed a sign?

**A.** We've had a few hit-and-run signs that we got right. The intention of the hit and run is to get the ball on the ground. I remember a game at Averett when Mark Wooten decided to hit a ball about 425 feet for a homer—Nice hit-and-run. We've had several candidates over the years that just couldn't get it, but I'd like to withhold the names to protect the innocent. The penalty tended to be a glare from a teammate. Sometimes additional sprints were done at practice.

**Q.** Let's go into your new job. Tell us your title and describe your responsibilities. What do you most like about this position?

**A.** My title is Assistant Athletic Director/Community Relations and the Director of Athletic Alumni Advancement. I'm responsible for the fundraising aspect of our Battling Bishops Club. I also promote our teams and future games in the community. We're doing

all we can to get our community to more of our athletic contests. I also reach out to as many former student-athletes as possible to keep them engaged with Wesleyan. The best part is the people. I have an opportunity to share with our alumni and our community all of the good things going on with our programs. In my job the ultimate goal is to enhance the student-athlete experience with additional funds that make a real impact on their programs. I also want fans in the seats. The students work hard and deserve that.

**Q.** What does your family think of your new job?

**A.** There was an adjustment period because they've been around the ballpark so long. But overall, they're happy to see me more. At least I hope!

**Q.** Will you be watching more or less Major League Baseball on TV?

**A.** It all depends on the A's (the Oakland Athletics). This year, yes. When they trade everyone away, no. I will watch more. The love I have for the game will never go away.

**Q.** What will you miss most about coaching baseball here at NCWC?

**A.** The day-to-day grind. I don't mean that in a negative way. There was always something different and challenging every single day. I'll miss the daily relationships with the players and coaches. That's hard to put into words. I always felt like God had called me to be there for the student and blessed me with the opportunity to learn from them as well. The great part is that even though my ministry location has changed, the calling to make a difference in a student's life is still just as strong as ever.

## NC Wesleyan Storm Stories

In mid-September, Wesleyan canceled classes for a week as Hurricane Florence hammered the Carolinas, dumping record rainfall and causing devastating floods.

While the Rocky Mount campus escaped serious damage and injury, many students and staff were still affected by the storm.

Decree writers compiled stories from that week; here are three:

### Wilmington: Brooke Bayse

When you live at the beach, the word hurricane is not a scary word. I grew up never thinking hurricanes were bad and that they would ever be too serious.

I was raised in Wilmington and still live there whenever I'm not in school. My house is right off of Interstate 40 and about 10 minutes from the coast. I live back home with my mother, father, and my two dogs, Maggie, a 13-year-old beagle/lab mix; and Bella, a 1-year-old pit-bull/boxer mix. We've had so many hurricanes before—Floyd, Fran, Irene, and Ernesto. We've lost power for days and seen floods, but this time was different. Hurricane Florence came in like nothing I had ever seen before.

In every storm we'd encountered, I was able to sit in the house with my mother and father, but this time I wasn't home. I was so nervous for them. I had people telling me that they needed to leave the area, and one friend even told me, “If your parents don't leave, they're going to die. They better give you their life insurance information.” Of course I was very anxious when I found out they were finding ways to stay at home with the dogs and the house. If something bad happened to the house, they wanted to be there to fix it.

On Thursday, September 13th, they lost power at 5 a.m. and that was just the start. Not only did they lose power, they soon ran out of food and gas for the generator, and there were lots of trees that fell around our house, though none fell on the house.

Saturday morning, while waiting out the hurricane with relatives in Youngsville, I got call from my mom. She told me about my father's ordeal. It began when he was

See Storm on pg 2

## Wesleyan's Enrollment Hits All-Time High Percentage of Freshmen Athletes Dips

Wesleyan's enrollment continued its steady rise, as the college attracted 463 new students for the fall 2018 semester.

Total enrollment stood at 1,115 in the day program as of mid-September, college officials reported. That represents an overall increase of 88 students from the reported total of 1,027 in mid-September 2017. President Dewey Clark has set a goal of 100 new students each year until the college reaches enrollment of 2,000 in the traditional-day program.

Interviewed during the first week of classes, freshmen offered a range of reasons for selecting Wesleyan—from the small size and “family-like atmosphere,” to the availability of scholarships, to recommendations from family and friends.

Danielle Barnes was attracted by a host of features, including the college's biology department and biomedical science program, as well as the financial aid package she was offered. “I felt at home on this campus,” she added. “It's pretty diverse.”

Braxton Bland said a childhood friend helped persuade him to attend Wesleyan, while Dylan Gainey found the faculty-to-student ratio and the small and “kind” campus appealing. Lizbeth Gonzalez likes the college's Christian orientation and the fact that campus is close to her home in Wilson.

Megan Mackey was impressed by the women's soccer program. “Wesleyan was the first school to watch me play. I love the team here and the coach is great,” she said, referring to Beverly Biancur. “It seemed like a good fit for me.”

Besides 415 freshmen, Wesleyan's new students include 48 transfers.

In recent years the college has sought to improve the gender breakdown on

campus. The freshmen class includes 251 males and 164—almost 40 percent—females. Last year, 133 females made up 38 percent of freshmen.

According to VP Judy Rollins, transfers include 11 males and 37, or 77 percent, females.

Here is a profile of the new students, based on data provided by the college:

- Number of North Carolina residents: 291 (248 freshmen, 43 transfers), or 63 percent
- Number of other states represented: 11 (South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan and Tennessee, as well as Washington, DC.)

- Number of students from Nash and Edgecombe counties: 50. “We've been cultivating relationships in local markets for years and it's paid off in a big ways,” Rollins said, adding that Wesleyan attracted 26 students from Wilson and Halifax counties. “Some local high schools are starting to become feeders for us.”
- Number of international students: 62.

- The total includes freshmen and transfers, bringing the number of foreign students on campus to 136. Among the group are the first Wesleyan students from Morocco, Saint Lucia, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.
- Average high school grade point average (for freshmen only): 3.27.
- Average SAT score (for freshmen): 988.

That represents a substantial jump from 2017, when the reported average was 909. But Rollins pointed out that the test was changed in 2016 and most students perform better on the new version. Last year, some incoming freshmen had taken the older test, she explained.

Rollins said that the college has tweaked its scholarship process, allowing it to secure 15 more high-achieving students. Each was



From the class of 2022: Lizbeth Gonzalez (l-r), Danielle Barnes, Andrew Bryant, Dylan Gainey, Megan Mackey and Braxton Bland. B. Grattan photo

granted a President's scholarship, which comes with a \$20,000 award, up \$2,000 from the previous year. She explained that each of the 15 had interviewed for the Heritage or Trustees scholarship, but were not selected for the awards. “It's a very effective strategy, as we typically lose most students who are not awarded the Heritage of Trustee,” she said.

(The Heritage covers tuition, books, and room and board while the Trustee pays for full tuition and books.)

- Median SAT (for freshmen): 970 (Median SAT information was not provided in 2017).
- Total number of athletes: 167, or a little more than 40 percent. That total is in sharp contrast to last year's class when 67 percent of freshmen (231 of 350) came to play a sport. Five transfers student are on a team.

Rollins said that as the college continues to bring in more freshmen, it will see a decline in the percentage of student-athletes. She noted that, in recent years, coaches have recruited around 100 football players and 80-100 athletes from all other sports. “We all want football to begin reducing their number of players,” she said. “We believe we'll see that in fall 2019.”

Here's a breakdown of new students from selected sports teams and campus organizations:

- Football players: 96 freshmen (or 38 percent of total first-year males) and five transfers
- Lacrosse: 7
- Men's cross country: 12
- Women's cross country: 4
- ROTC: 7
- Cheer: 7
- Music (Wesleyan Singers, pep band, Spectrum): 9
- Dance: 0

Citing preliminary data, the college reported that 63 percent of last year's freshmen (209 of 329) returned for fall 2018. Scott Marsigli, analyst in the college's Institutional Research Department, said that 329 was the number of freshmen enrolled after last fall's drop-add period.

Provost Evan Duff reported a total of 854 students in the college's ASPIRE program. That number is down from 1,001 students last year. ASPIRE has lost 360 students in the past two years.

Dr. Duff attributed the decline to a stronger national economy, among other factors.

(Editor's Note: The Decree will provide additional coverage of the ASPIRE program in upcoming issues.)

See Enrollment pg 2