The college football world suffered a huge loss Sept. 27, 2005, when Missouri Southern Head Coach John Ware ('87) died of a heart attack at the age of 46.

The shock of his death was especially felt at Truman, where Ware had spent nearly his entire coaching career.

Ware was a Bulldog almost all of his life, starting with his high school career at Ottumwa (Iowa), where he was an all-state lineman.

Next, he was a Drake Bulldog during his college playing days. Ware was a three-year starter during an all-American career at Drake. He helped turn the program around there, including two upset victories against Colorado.

Ware had a few more playing highlights in him after Drake, participating in the Blue-Gray All-Star Classic and trying out with the San Francisco 49ers. He played in four exhibition games for the 49ers, who would win the Super Bowl that year, before being cut.

Ware, also an academic all-American, graduated from Drake in 1981 with a psychology degree. He would later earn his master's in psychology from Truman in 1987.

Ware began his coaching career at his old high school, coaching the line at Ottumwa for one season. In 1985, he took a graduate assistant job for a team that he would end up being a part of for the next 19 years, the Bulldogs of Truman State University.

Ware was named a full-time assistant coach the next year and served in that capacity through the 1994 season.

Truman went 65-44 while Ware was an assistant coach. Among the highlights in those years were the Bulldogs winning the 1988 MIAA championship and advancing to the NCAA Tournament in 1990, 1992 and 1994.

While an assistant coach at Truman, Ware continued his other passion of weightlifting. He was a five-time U.S. Senior National Powerlifting Champion and was the 1989 world record holder, lifting a total of 2,427 pounds. He was also the 1991 World Powerlifting Champion. His best lifts in the three powerlifting events were 1,000 pounds in the squat, 630 pounds in the bench press and 840 pounds in the deadlift.

In 1995, a new chapter began in Ware's career when he was named the 19th head coach in Bulldog history. Ware would stay the head coach of Truman from 1995-2003, tying for the third-longest tenure in school history, and also compiling the third-most wins among Bulldog football coaches. Ware went 54-43* while coaching at Truman, with six of those losses coming against NCAA Division I-AA programs.

In MIAA action, his Bulldog squads were 49-32 and the team finished third or better in the competitive conference in five of the nine seasons. Ware's teams had seven winning seasons, including the 2001 squad which went 8-3 on the year.

Ware coached four offensive linemen to all-American status and helped recruit five other all-Americans to Kirksville. One of the players that Ware coached was Jarrett Anderson, who earned the Harlon Hill Trophy in 1996 for being the NCAA Division II Player of the Year. Ware and his offensive line helped Anderson rush for 2,140 yards and 27 touchdowns in his award-winning season.

Over his years at Truman, he and his wife, Melissa (Thomas) Ware ('87), the school's former athletics media relations director, touched the lives of not only hundreds of Bulldog football players, but also countless other students, faculty and staff.

Ware was one of the rare collegiate head coaches who truly cared about the entire athletics department, not just his own program. Even after he left Kirksville, those who talked with him could tell that he still bled purple and deep down, he would always be a Bulldog.

Following the 2003 football season, Ware made the difficult decision to leave Truman and his years as a Bulldog. He took over the head coaching job at Missouri Southern and along with it, was handed a major rebuilding process.

The Lions went just 1-10 the year before Ware arrived, and they did not even have enough players to field a complete team during his first spring practice.

The turnaround in Joplin came quickly. With a roster comprised of over 50 percent freshmen, Ware led the 2004 Lions to a 5-6 record, including a 4-5 mark in the MIAA. That squad remained in the hunt for a Mineral Water Bowl berth until the last week of the season. Following the 2004 campaign, Ware was named the national coach of the year by collegesportsreport.com.

This season, Missouri Southern was off to a 2-3 start at the time of Ware's tragic death. All three of the losses came against teams that were nationally-ranked during the year.

The casual Division II college football fan will remember Ware's fiery desire on the sidelines and his ability to always field a competitive team in one of the toughest conferences around.

Those who were fortunate enough to know him, however, will remember that there was so much more to him than that.

Ware cared a lot about collecting wins on the football field, but he cared more about the athletes that were out on that field playing for him.

No one in the Kirksville community who got to meet John will ever forget one of the biggest Bulldogs in the history of Truman football.

* Ware’s record includes one win that was forfeited by Missouri Southern in a 1997 contest.

JOHN WARE (1959-2005)

I would like to thank all of the Truman faculty, staff and students, as well as all the former Bulldogs, who were so kind to me during the last few months following the death of my husband, John.

I especially appreciate how thoughtful President Dixon, Coach Currier and the football team were during the week following his death.

We spent the best years of our lives as Bulldogs, and I will never forget the time we spent on the campus of Truman and in Kirksville.

I would love to hear from anyone who would like to share stories of John, or just wants to say hello. My e-mail in Joplin, Mo., is: me_lil_ware@hotmail.com.

Go Bulldogs forever,

Love,
Melissa

A John Ware Scholarship Fund has been established. In the vision of his wife, Melissa, the scholarship would go to an incoming football player at Truman, Missouri Southern or Drake, or to an inspiring college football player from Ottumwa High School. Donations to the fund can be sent to the Bank of Joplin.
A new coaching staff that didn’t have the benefit of a spring practice, a squad that lost four all-conference players, including one first-team all-American, another brutal schedule that started with four teams ranked in the top-11 in the country, these were the obstacles that the Truman volleyball team faced when it opened up the 2005 season. None of them fazed the team, however, as the Bulldogs put together another memorial year.

The biggest highlight was once again winning the South Central Regional Championship, the team’s fourth title over the last five years.

This year’s victory was arguably the most impressive, as the region included four of the top teams in the country. Truman breezed through the tournament, though, dropping just one game and sweeping nationally-ranked foes in Washburn and Central Missouri.

The regional title sent Truman to the Elite Eight once again, where it unfortunately had a bad draw. The Bulldogs had to face the host school and number one team in the country, Nebraska-Kearney, in the NCAA Quarterfinals. In front of a 4,412 people, Truman fell by a 3-1 score to the Lopers. Nebraska-Kearney won the first two games and had match point in game three. The Bulldogs refused to give up, though, coming from behind to win the third game. Truman led early in the fourth game, but Nebraska-Kearney proved to be too much as it ended the Bulldogs’ season.

Truman’s season concluded with a 32-6 overall record. It marked the third straight season and sixth time in school history that the Bulldogs hit the 30-win plateau. It was also the 16th straight year that the Bulldogs finished the year with a winning record.

Truman did all that despite having a schedule that included 16 matches against a nationally-ranked teams. The team won 11 of those matches, including eight against teams ranked 11th or better in the final national poll.

The Bulldogs went 13-3 in conference play and finished second in the MIAA standings. A three-match skid midway through the conference schedule cost the team a conference crown.

However, the team did win the MIAA Conference Tournament for the third straight season. The Bulldogs defeated rival Central Missouri in the semifinals and then went on the road to knock off Washburn in the finals.

Truman’s status among the nation’s elite was shown throughout the year in the AVCA national poll. The Bulldogs were ranked in the top 10 in every poll this year. Truman has now been ranked in the top 10 for 44 straight polls during the year. It ran its regular season winning streak to an unbelievable 49 matches before finally suffering a setback. The Bulldogs also had a school-record, 32-match MIAA winning streak that was finally snapped during the season.

Another school first in 2005 was that two Bulldogs were named first-team all-Americans. Sarah Shearman led the team with 3.84 kills and 4.00 digs a game. Other honors for her during the season included being named first-team all-MIAA, CoSIDA second-team academic all-district, MVP of the Minnesota-Duluth Tournament and being named to the all-tournament teams at the NCAA Regionals and NCAA Elite Eight.

Wackerman was the MIAA MVP this year after having all-around numbers of 3.19 kills, 6.26 assists, 0.33 aces, 2.90 digs and 0.63 blocks per game. For the season, she recorded 15 triple-doubles, by far the most in NCAA Division II. During the team’s postseason run, Wackerman was also named to the South Central regional all-tournament team.

Both of those players were just juniors this year, making next year’s prospects very bright. The team returns its key players at every position except for one. Truman will have to replace its top three middle hitters, where it will lose three seniors.

Micaela Walter ended her career by being named an honorable mention all-American. Megan Remley was a three-time all-MIAA pick, and Tiffany Graham was a two-time selection for the Bulldogs. All three rank among the top-10 blockers in Truman history.

The Truman men’s soccer team, loaded with 15 returning letterwinners and nine returning starters, proved why they were one of the best teams in the NCAA during the 2005 season.

The Bulldogs went 17-3-2, earning the number two seed in the Great Lakes region at the NCAA during the 2005 season. None of them fazed the team, however, as the Bulldogs put together another memorial year.

The biggest highlight was once again winning the South Central Regional Championship, the team’s fourth title over the last five years.

This year’s victory was arguably the most impressive, as the region included four of the top teams in the country. Truman breezed through the tournament, though, dropping just one game and sweeping nationally-ranked foes in Edwardsville and Central Missouri.

The regional title sent Truman to the Elite Eight once again, where it unfortunately had a bad draw. The Bulldogs had to face the host
TRUMAN ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME HAS A HOME

After 22 years, the Truman Athletics Hall of Fame has a home. This past summer, a project was completed in the entryway to Pershing Arena to publicly display all 195 outstanding student-athletes of the University.

Each inductee is recognized by an individual plaque, detailing the year of induction, sports and highlights of their career. Truman staff member Roger Johnson assisted with putting together the display, which was funded by donations to the Hall of Fame Foundation. Instead of inducting new members into the Hall in 2005, the Athletics Department celebrated the establishment of the physical display by re-dedicating the Hall.

LONG-TIME TRACK/CROSS COUNTRY COACH RETIRES

Head men’s cross country and track and field coach Ed Schneider (‘65) (’70) recently retired following his 31st season as Truman's cross country head coach.

"I have enjoyed the chance to work with the cross country and track athletes all of these years," said Schneider. "The opportunity to teach and coach at this university has been a privilege."

"Ed’s done a tremendous job leading our men’s cross country and track programs at a national level for many years," said Truman Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering. "We are extremely grateful for his 30-plus years of exemplary service to Bulldog cross country and track."

Schneider first came to Truman as a student in 1961, and he put together an all-American career in both cross country and track. He had three top-10 finishes at the NCAA Cross Country Championships and is the only Truman cross country runner to win a national title. He captured the 1964 NCAA crown and helped the Bulldogs finish as the NCAA runner-up that year. Schneider also finished second nationally in the outdoor mile race at the 1964 national track meet.

After graduating from college, Schneider coached at Riverview Gardens High School in St. Louis. Two of his track teams and three of his cross country squads at Riverview placed in the top 10 at state meets for class 4A schools. In 1974, Schneider returned to Kirksville as Truman’s men's cross country head coach, and he was also an assistant coach for track and field. In 1983, Schneider took over as the men’s track and field head coach.

Schneider is best known for his successful cross country teams at Truman. His squads have won four MIAA championships, three regional titles and advanced to the NCAA championship meet 12 times. Both his 1994 and 1995 cross country teams finished third in the nation and his 2001 team was fourth in the country.

Fourteen of his cross country athletes have earned all-American honors. Schneider was named MIAA cross country coach of the year in 1983, 1992, 1994 and 2001, and he has also received five regional coach of the year honors.

In track and field, Schneider twice had squads finish as the MIAA runner-up in the 1983 indoor meet and the 1998 outdoor event. He also led Truman to six third-place showings and 16 fourth-place finishes at MIAA indoor and outdoor competitions. Schneider received MIAA track coach of the year honors in 1983 and in 1998.

Since 1983, 28 different Bulldog athletes have won all-American honors at NCAA Championship meets, including James Walton, the 2004 national champion in the outdoor long jump. At the national level, Schneider's best finishes were 11th at the NCAA indoor meet and 16th at the 1990 national outdoor meet.

The most famous athlete on one of Schneider’s squads is Ray Armstead, who finished his Truman track career in 1984. He went on to win a gold medal at the 1984 Olympics as a member of the United State's 1600m relay team. Another former athlete of Schneider, Brian Dzingai, competed in the 200m at the 2004 Olympics for Zimbabwe.

Schneider is a member of three athletic Hall of Fames. In 1986, he was inducted into the Truman Athletics Hall of Fame. In 2000, he was a charter member of the NCAA Division II Cross Country Coaches Association Hall of Fame. And in 2002, he was inducted into the Missouri Track and Cross Country Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Another honor for Schneider was being named the honorary referee at the 1988 Drake Relays.

In his final season this fall, his Truman squad nearly earned another trip to the NCAA Championship, finishing fourth at regionals, one spot away from advancing. Eli Klimek did go to nationals as an individual, finishing 66th overall.

MARK GOLE SELECTED AS NEW SWIMMING COACH

Over the summer, the Truman Athletics Department named Mark Gole as the new men’s and women’s swimming coach. Gole replaces Colleen Murphy, who resigned in June to become a high school athletics director in Arizona.

Gole will lead a Truman State University team that has won five straight NCAA titles on the women’s side and has been in the top 16 the last five seasons on the men’s side.

Gole is familiar with success at the national level, winning three straight Division II national titles as a member of the Oakland University swim team from 1995-97. He was a part of three national champion relay squads and is a 16-time all-American honoree. In 1998, his Oakland team was in the first year of a transition to Division I status. As a sophomore in 1996, Gole was named the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletics Conference swimmer of the year.

“I am extremely excited to join the Truman swimming program and look to continue to keep the men’s program on top and help the women’s program achieve that same national success,” said Gole.

Gole has been the assistant coach at Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich., since 2000. The men’s program at the Division II school had its highest national finish ever this past year with an eighth-place showing and claimed the 2003 and 2004 GLIAC titles. The women’s program finished 22nd at the national meet and achieved their highest showing in the GLIAC with a third-place finish. Also during his tenure at Wayne State, the swimming teams broke 35 of the 38 school records.

VISIT THE BULLDOGS ONLINE @ gobulldogs.truman.edu

for online info and sports schedules for all Truman’s varsity athletics

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Men's and Women's Cross Country
Football / Men's and Women's Golf
Softball / Men’s and Women’s Soccer
Volleyball / Men's and Women’s Swimming
Wrestling / Men's and Women’s Tennis
Men's and Women's Track and Field