

Cardinal Athletics

Remembering Franny Murray

For 70 years, Francis E. “Franny” Murray, Class of 1950, was part of the Catholic University family. His career included various roles in the Department of Athletics, such as refereeing, managing facilities and teams, and running the intramural and sports information operations. He even spent one year as acting athletic director. But for most alumni he will always be remembered as equipment director. His service to the University came to an end when Murray passed away on Aug. 4 at the age of 94.

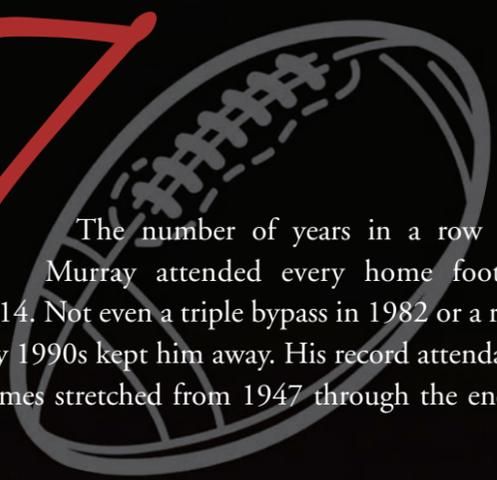
Franny’s engaging personality made him a confidant to many. His ability to remember names was legendary. He could connect with people of all ages. Students, staff members, athletes, and University presidents felt his warmth and kindness.

University President John Garvey called him “an institution within an institution.”

Murray was born in Washington, D.C., on July 7, 1922. He grew up in the northeast quadrant of town and attended



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The number of years in a row that Murray attended every home football game from 1947 through 2014. Not even a triple bypass in 1982 or a right knee replacement in the early 1990s kept him away. His record attendance at home men’s basketball games stretched from 1947 through the end of the 2014–15 regular season.

Catholic schools all his life. Shortly after the United States entered World War II, Murray joined the Army Air Corps. He served as a B-25 gunner on combat missions in the Pacific. He remained overseas until shortly after V-J Day.

Murray took advantage of the education provisions of the G.I. Bill and enrolled at Catholic University in 1946. There he met Eileen Krug, whom he married in June 1947.

Needing a job to help support his wife, Murray worked as a student helper in the athletic department. He also boxed for the Cardinals for two years. The boxing matches were so popular that as many as 4,000 people would cram into Brookland Gymnasium to see them. By the time he finished school in 1950, he was firmly entrenched in his lifelong love affair with Cardinal Athletics.

In addition to ensuring that all 21 varsity sports teams were outfitted and ready for practices and games, Murray helped countless student-athletes through the transition to college and adulthood. He possessed an uncanny ability to learn and recall names, toss out a joke, or offer a hug or handshake. With no plans for retirement, he continued his work as equipment director into his 90s. He could often be seen on the sideline at games, wearing his yellow cap and rooting for his beloved Cardinals.

“I called probably 12 to 15 alums [the morning he died] because I wanted them to hear it from me before they saw the press release,” Meghan McDonogh, women’s lacrosse coach, said. “It was heartwarming to hear them reflect on Franny and what he meant to them and our program. He just really cared and he took care of us. He had a really big heart.”

“Franny was a very caring and loving person,” said Bill Leahy, a basketball All-

American who graduated in 1964. “He truly had the interests of the students at heart. He left a profound influence on my life. I always admired him and had the utmost respect for him.”

Murray was inducted into the University’s Athletics Hall of Fame in 1988. He received the University’s highest honor, the President’s Medal, when the basketball court was named for him in 2009.

Tom Young, who coached Rutgers to the 1976 Final Four and finished his career as an assistant with the Washington Wizards, remembered Murray with fondness. Young got his first head coaching experience at Catholic University, where he led the men’s basketball team from 1958 to 1967.

“He was the first trainer and the first equipment man that I had, a jack of all trades,” Young said. “To me he was great because he was just a regular guy. He didn’t baby the athletes and most students at all. As a result, they were better. They became better men and better athletes.”

“Franny was a great guy, the best CUA man ever,” former Cardinal football coach Tom Clark said. “He’ll be treasured in the memories of thousands of CUA athletes.”

Following Murray’s funeral on Aug. 10, the University hosted a reception in the Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center. Approximately 200 staff, faculty, students, and alumni gathered to celebrate Murray’s life.

Murray is survived by a brother, sister, eight children, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

This article was adapted from a longer story written by Chris McManes for the Department of Athletics website. To read the full story, visit cuamagazine.cua.edu.

SPORT SHORTS

Athletics Launches New Website

The Catholic University of America relaunched cuacardinals.com, completely overhauling the official website of Cardinals Athletics. The new site was designed to engage users while providing ease of use as the department continues to promote its student-athletes, coaches, staff, and all of the University. The overall design of the site has been completely remodeled, with an emphasis on visual elements. A new storyboard section features the best stories about Cardinal Athletics, while also providing important news and notes for fans. Social media and video are also incorporated.

Two Cardinals Spend Summer in Marine Corps Training

Seniors Matt McMahon (football) and Emily Merkel (women’s lacrosse) dedicated nearly their entire summers to an exclusive service program that prepares college students for potential entry into the U.S. Marine Corps through Officer Candidate School. The program’s mission is to educate and train officer candidates in Marine Corps knowledge and skills within a controlled, challenging, and chaotic environment. They are then evaluated and screened for the leadership, moral, mental, and physical qualities required for commissioning as a Marine Corps officer. The 10-week program was filled with physical training and classes on subjects such as warfighting tactics, Marine Corps history, and land navigation. Both McMahon and Merkel hope to continue their military trajectories and plan to attend the Marines Corps Basic School after graduation.

