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09/19/1988 - Buckellew Back Where He Began

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news

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BUCKELLEW BACK WHERE HE BEGAN

CHARLESTON, IL--The old saying about whatever goes around comes around certainly applies to Dr. Bill Buckellew of Eastern Illinois University.

Buckellew came to Eastern in June, 1962 as an instructor and supervisory teacher of physical education in the laboratory school. Twenty six years later, after retiring from Eastern, he's back in the College of Education, advising post-baccalaureate students who would like to return to receive teacher certification.

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Buckellew, who retired May 31, says "This is a real fine opportunity for an early retiree to contribute. I would not have wanted to retire early without maintaining an affiliation with the university. It's a nice way to phase out. You still feel like you're contributing this way."

Working with students is what he's been doing. He served as chairman of the physical education department for seven years before becoming coordinator of graduate students for the college of Health, Physical Education and Recreation in 1977. He was then named acting dean of HPER in the 1985-86 school year and held that position until last August.

Under Buckellew, HPER grew to include areas such as sports administration and exercise science. Students have gone on to serve internships for professional teams, other senior educational institutions, junior colleges, high schools and city recreational departments.

"I think there is currently more interest among the students to gain work experience with their education," he said. "Eastern has always attracted quality students over the years. That reflects well on our midwestern communities and the general acceptance of EIU.

"The best part of my experience has been the close contact with the students over the years. I like to see students progress in their careers after they leave Eastern. One example of that is Mike Shanahan, who is now head coach of the Los Angeles Raiders in the NFL. I had him as an undergrad and graduate student."

Buckellew, a former football player, is a 1946 graduate of Georgetown High School, where he caught the attention of legendary EIU coach Maynard "Pat" O'Brien as a senior. Twenty four years after their initial meeting, Buckellew replaced O'Brien as chairman of the P.E. department.

"Just after graduation, Dr. O'Brien invited me to come here and look at the possibility of playing football and attending school," Buckellew remembered. "But I also had the opportunity to go in the Air Force. I was more interested in meteorology and working for the Air Weather Service. At that point in time, I wanted to make a career in the weather field. I spent a considerable amount of time operating weather stations in the Arctic, Greenland and Canada."

When Buckellew received his honorable discharge from the Air Force in 1949, he was still being pursued to play football and chose North Dakota State University. His interest in the game continued as a graduate assistant at the University of Illinois as he served as freshman football coach.

Buckellew taught and coached two years at Kankakee and six years at Lake Park in the Chicago area before deciding to come to EIU.

When Buckellew's career began at Eastern, so did his family's association with the university. His wife, Lois, employed in reference services at Booth Library, is an EIU graduate and so are their sons, Mike, Mark and Jon.

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BUCKELLEW BACK

"One of the things my wife and I wanted was a wholesome atmosphere to raise the children," Buckellew says. "We were so impressed with the city of Charleston and the university. We felt this would be a nice place to live and have a career.

"Dr. Quincy Doudna was president at the time, and he made us feel welcome. We felt it would be an excellent opportunity for us. It worked out just like we wanted it to be."

