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Dr. John Milton Strahl: His Life and Professional Contributions to Physical Education and Athletics at Greenville College

John Andrew Holak  
Eastern Illinois University
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Dr. John Milton Strahl: His Life and Professional Contributions to Physical Education and Athletics at Greenville College

BY

John Andrew Holak
B.S. in Recreation
Greenville College, 1976

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Science
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1980 YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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ABSTRACT OF
DR. JOHN MILTON STRAHL: HIS LIFE AND PROFESSIONAL
CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND
ATHLETICS AT GREENVILLE COLLEGE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
Eastern Illinois University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Science in Physical Education

by
John A. Holak
August 1980
ABSTRACT

by John A. Holak

Dr. John Milton Strahl: His Life and Professional Contributions to Physical Education and Athletics at Greenville College

Advisor: Dr. William Buckellew

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study was to collect and arrange information leading to a compiled history that would accurately record the life and professional contributions of Dr. John M. Strahl to physical education and athletics at Greenville College. Another intent of the thesis was to bring into focus the significant effect of one man on an institution of higher education, a national organization, and numerous students and colleagues.

Procedure: The historical method of research was used to compile the biographical information necessary to complete the study. The primary source of information was Strahl; however, extensive use was made of questionnaire responses and personal interviews. The study depended heavily on information gathered from the 1949 through 1979 issues of *The Papyrus* and *Vista*, both publications of the Greenville College Student Association. Related information from Olivet Nazarene College and Taylor University was also read.

Findings: John Strahl has taught and coached at Greenville College for thirty years. During those years, Strahl served his institution by developing both the physical education and athletic departments into two
of the largest on campus. He coached all seven of the men's varsity sports and made a lasting impact on the lives of his athletes and students.

Strahl's contributions were not limited to Greenville College. Early in his career he involved himself in the groundwork of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and became the president of that organization after serving in every position of the structure of the NAIA. His leadership in the NAIA was recognized by his selection to the United States Olympic Committee.

The investigation revealed that the majority of Strahl's former athletes and his peers agree that he had a positive influence on the growth of physical education and athletics and on the lives of those people with whom he taught, coached, and worked.

Conclusions: A significant influence of one man on his particular profession and on higher education in general has been made by John M. Strahl. One of the most successful individuals at Greenville College, he has also been one of the more influential and popular figures in the ranks of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer expresses his most sincere appreciation to Dr. John Milton Strahl for his unselfish contribution of the personal information from which this thesis was constructed.

Appreciation is also extended to the staff of the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Eastern Illinois University, particularly Dr. William Buckellew, Dr. Walter Lowell, Dr. Dorothy Hart, and Dr. Tom Katsimpalis, for their constructive criticism and helpful analysis in the preparation of this study.

The writer is grateful to those individuals who gave their time and suggestions during the data collecting portion of the project, and also to Miss Brenda Fisher for her part in typing the study.

He is most indebted to his wife, Margene, for her unyielding confidence and support in the completion of this endeavor.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to collect and arrange information leading to a compiled history that would accurately record the life and professional contributions to physical education and athletics at Greenville College of Dr. John Milton Strahl. Another intent of the thesis was to bring into focus the significant effect of one man on an institution of higher education, a national organization, and numerous students and colleagues.

Need for the Study

It is rare for a man of humble beginnings to exert such a strong influence over a great number of people as has John Strahl. Coming from the oil fields of New Philadelphia, Ohio, he began as a youth to learn about the meaning of life and death in the battlefields of Europe during World War II. He took these lessons to heart, applying them to a career of teaching and coaching, and to leading young men and women into lives that have made a contribution to the good of society.

Strahl recently completed thirty years of service to Greenville College as a teacher, coach, and administrator. During those years he developed both the physical education and the athletic departments into two of the largest on campus. He coached all seven of the men's varsity sports and made a lasting impact on the lives of his athletes.
His accomplishments in the world's largest national college organization of athletics for college men (National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics -- NAIA) and his leadership contributions to the governing body representing the largest participating group of athletes in the Olympics (United States Olympic Committee -- USOC) were notable and deserve recognition.

Strahl's peers and athletes have admired his easy-going style as one to be emulated. Charles C. Carroll commented, "Dr. Strahl is basically the same person regardless of where you meet him. I have had student teachers from Greenville College say they wish they could be exactly like Coach Strahl."\(^1\)

The need for this study was aptly expressed by Robert Briner in his written presentation when John Strahl was conferred the honorary doctorate of education degree on September 2, 1976, during the eighty-fifth convocation of Greenville College.

It is no accident that the physical education department is one of the largest on campus, that its graduates are among the institution's most illustrious, and that many of these graduates serve Greenville College in key roles. It is no accident that Greenville College is internationally known and respected in intercollegiate athletics, professional sports, and physical education circles. No, these things did not happen by accident. In a very large measure, John Strahl made them happen -- encouraged and assisted by his wife and early colleague, June, and under the divine guidance of our Lord.\(^2\)

This study was completed as a vehicle to honor Dr. John Milton Strahl and for the benefit of the future generations of students,

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\(^1\)Personal correspondence between Charles C. Carroll and the writer, July 30 to August 8, 1979.

\(^2\)From the text of "Citation to Present John Milton Strahl for the Conferral of an Honorary Degree," written by Robert Briner, read by Dr. Robert E. Smith on September 2, 1976, at Greenville College in Greenville, Illinois.
faculty, and staff who will be affected by his contributions to Greenville College.

**Scope of the Study**

Over the course of thirty years of service to Greenville College, John Strahl contributed substantially to the development of the physical education and athletic departments. The study was limited to those contributions and to his achievements in both the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the United States Olympic Committee. The background and influences of John Strahl have been reviewed in this study.

**Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited in data gathering because it was an historical thesis. The primary source of information was Strahl; however, extensive use was made of questionnaire responses and personal interviews. (See Appendixes A and B.) The study depended heavily on information gathered from the 1949 through 1979 issues of *The Papyrus* and *Vista*, both publications of the Greenville College Student Association.

**Method of Research**

According to Clarke and Clarke, history brings together information about past events and relates a true account of what happened. 3 The historical method of research was used to compile the biographical

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information necessary to complete the study. The problem was defined, the data gathered, evaluated, and synthesized into an accurate chronicle of the subject, according to the expectations of the historical method. Clarke infers that two sources exist for collecting historical data -— primary and secondary. Both types of sources have been utilized.

Much of the data was amassed from personal interviews with the subject. Questionnaires were mailed to 133 of Strahl's former athletes and peers. (See Appendixes A and B.) Responses were received from sixty-seven individuals. Personal letters which provided additional insights were included in eight of the returned questionnaires. A thorough search for related material was made of The Papyrus and Vista, years 1949 through 1979. Also researched were the 1946, 1947, and 1948 editions of The Aurora, the yearbook of Olivet Nazarene College and the 1949 issues of the Olivet Glimmer Glass, and the 1949 Taylor University Gem. Two extensive telephone interviews were conducted with Jean (Strahl) Goble, John Strahl's twin sister. A review of Greenville College newspapers and yearbooks from the years 1948 through 1980 was successful in locating valuable data. The individual sports rosters and records were located in a search of the sports record files of the college's athletic department. The subject's personal biographical collection was a valuable resource to the data gathering process.

The ability to present accurate data is judged by the proper interpretation of the data. Information was examined by the use of external and internal criticism to determine both the authenticity and accuracy of information.

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Definition of Terms

The following expressions included in the study are defined in detail to afford the reader a clear understanding of their usage within the study.

NAIA

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics is an organization consisting of four-year colleges of small and moderate enrollments. The main purpose of the organization is to develop intercollegiate athletic programs as an integral part of the total educational program of the college rather than as a separate commercial or promotional adjunct. Seventeen national championships are sponsored to provide national competition for schools of like financial standing and philosophy of athletics.5

I.C.C.C.

The I.C.C.C. is the Illinois Church College Conference. Greenville was affiliated with this conference from December 1, 1952, until it disbanded in May, 1953. Conference members were McKendree, Shurtleff, Principia, Eureka, and Greenville Colleges.6

P.C.C.

The Prairie College Conference was Greenville's athletic conference affiliation from November 24, 1952, until it disbanded in


6The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), December 5, 1952, p. 4, col. 1.
May, 1977. Charter members were Greenville, Eureka, McKendree, Shurtleff, Principia, Blackburn, Concordia Seminary (Springfield), and Rose Poly Technical Institute. Others holding membership at some point before disbanding were Illinois College, Iowa Wesleyan, Olivet Nazarene, and MacMurray Colleges.

**Greenville College**

Greenville College is a four-year, fully-accredited, co-educational, Christian liberal arts college located in Greenville, Illinois, fifty miles east of St. Louis, Missouri. "Greenville College is open to all qualified students of any faith who seek a liberal education taught and interpreted within the context of an evangelical Christian persuasion."\(^7\)

According to the institution's catalog the expectations of the college are established by Biblical principles. The criteria set by law also apply as does the general philosophy of the college.

Concurrent with the expectations, guidelines, and regulations is the "whole student" approach of the college toward its constituency. "The academic program, the participation in co-curricular activities, and all of the enriching informal experiences on campus are designed to emphasize that man's recognition of his religious dimension lies at the core of a sound liberal education."\(^8\)

**NAIA Hall of Fame -- Meritorious Service**

The basic aim of the NAIA Hall of Fame program is to honor men

\(^7\)Greenville College Catalog, 1980-81, (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), p. 4, col. 1.

\(^8\)Ibid.
who, by reason of outstanding service to intercollegiate athletics over a period of years, deserve the accolades of their fellow men. Those selected in the "Meritorious Service" category must have, over a period of years, exhibited a dedication and loyalty to intercollegiate athletics which is in keeping with NAIA's philosophy. Their work must have made concrete contributions to the welfare of intercollegiate athletics and be so recognized by their fellow coaches.9

_{United States Olympic Committee}_

The United States Olympic Committee is a federation of amateur sports governing bodies and college conferences constituting the governing body in the "representation" of the United States in the competitions and events in the Olympic and Pan American Games. Objectives of the committee are to organize, select, finance, equip, transport, house, and feed team members. The group also provides the facility for organizing and managing the games when awarded to the United States.10

_{Strahlism}_

A "Strahlism" is a statement recognized to have been uttered by Dr. John Milton Strahl at some point in time. The statement usually occurred under adverse or stressful situations. Although the statement did not always necessarily originate from Strahl, it has become closely associated with him and his unconstrained philosophy of life.

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10Ibid, p. 1087.
Summary and Directions

This study was completed in order to indicate the professional contributions of Dr. John Milton Strahl to physical education and athletics at Greenville College. The vast resource of material and possible interviews caused a problem of selectivity and some valuable sources may have been unintentionally omitted.

A written account of Strahl's accomplishments and a list of his contributions will benefit both present and future Greenville College students, faculty, and staff. See Appendixes C and D for listings of positions, awards, and honors. During his thirty years of service, the physical education and athletic programs have grown to be two of the largest on campus. As evidenced by his numerous awards and by the large number of his former athletes and students who have moved into professional positions in both fields, he has exerted a significant influence on the young people with whom he had contact.

Since the study is an historical thesis, the author utilized personal interviews, letters of correspondence, questionnaires, telephone interviews, newspapers, yearbooks, and department and personal records as tools of research. The school years of 1950 through 1980 constituted the time limits of the study of Strahl's contributions to physical education and athletics at Greenville College.

The remaining chapters will be structured as follows:
Chapter 2, The Backgrounds, The Beginnings: John Milton Strahl;
Chapter 3, Greenville College Receives John Strahl: His Coaching Years, 1950-1980; Chapter 4, Professional Involvements in Athletics; Chapter 5, What Others Say About Dr. John Milton Strahl; Chapter 6, "Strahlisms" — A Philosophy of Life; Chapter 7, Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations.
A selected bibliography follows Chapter 7. Appendixes A and B contain the questionnaire cover letters and a copy of the questionnaire. Appendix C contains the positions Strahl has held in both the NAIA and the USOC by year. A year-by-year review of his awards and special honors is found in Appendix D. Appendixes E and F list the recipients of the June Strahl and the John M. Strahl Awards. A chronological listing of important department events is contained in Appendix G. Appendix H indicates Greenville College coaching staffs by sport and year. Strahl's sports teams' records and rosters are found in Appendixes I through V.
Chapter 2

THE BACKGROUND, THE BEGINNINGS: JOHN MILTON STRAHL

The Strahl Family

The birthplace of John Milton Strahl was New Philadelphia, Ohio. The date was July 1, 1924, and Dr. W. Shanley delivered John twenty minutes before the unexpected arrival of John's twin sister, Jean. The only son of Theodore Dover and Mary Wilma (Plants) Strahl, John grew up in his first home at 354 Front Street in New Philadelphia, sandwiched between one older and two younger sisters.

Ruth Olive (Strahl) Peffer, John's older sister, was born on June 26, 1921. Mildred Jean (Strahl) Goble and Clarice Marie (Strahl) Brady, John's younger sisters, were born on July 1, 1924, and September 6, 1930, respectively.

John's father, Theodore, was born in McConnelsville, Ohio, on July 31, 1892, and was a self-employed welder when John was attending school in New Philadelphia. A good balance of strict discipline and love were two characteristics of Theodore Strahl, as John recalled. Theodore was a World War I veteran, and the destruction of war helped him develop a deep Christian faith and a strong belief that all of his children should attend college. John remembers that the family was very important to his father. The "Golden Rule" was the standard his father set for dealing with people and his family members.

The importance of religion in John's life may have initially been set by an experience his father had when John was a young man.
Theodore Strahl bought a three acre farm in Roseville, Ohio, and drilled what he hoped would be an oil well on the farm. According to John, his father prayed and fasted for a full week that the well would be successful -- it was. For that particular area of southern Ohio, it was a very large well and it came in on Jean's wedding day, December 17, 1949.

Mary Wilma Plants was born on September 10, 1895, in Philo, Ohio. Wilma always impressed upon her family that the church, school, and family were most important. A school teacher at age 17, Wilma Strahl set high standards for her family and expected them to attend school and church with regularity. Her abilities as a educator were put to the test early by John. He started school in September, 1930, but contracted a case of scarlet fever after only four weeks in attendance. The entire family was quarantined for five weeks because of the illness. However, when John returned to school, he was ahead of his class. Wilma Strahl had seen to it that John did not fall behind in his studies.

In serving as the church treasurer, Wilma was very organized and each of her children were "on time" for both church and school each week. Reading was a high priority in the Strahl family, especially for Wilma who was an extremely avid reader, making weekly trips to the Public Library for a fresh supply of books. The importance she placed on total family involvement might explain why John's first attempt at a basketball game was held in the family's dining room. John's aim was good at an early age and his first shot put the ball right in a bowl of dark cherries sitting on the table.

Wilma Strahl's strong influence relative to religious and educational values carried with her family even after her death at age seventy-seven. Three of her children, John, Jean, and Clarice, went on to college to become educators.
A formal education root ran deep within the family trees of both the Strahls and the Plants. In addition to Wilma (Plants) Strahl's teaching experience and graduate work at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, her father, John Plants, was a superintendent of schools in Philo, Ohio. John's great-grandfather, Christian Plants was also an early educator. Wilma's father, John Plants, authored an arithmetic textbook for use in the public schools of that day and was the family's strict disciplinarian. C. C. Strahl, John's paternal grandfather, was a great mathematician and civil-engineer. He built bridges in Ohio and several are still standing in Morgan and Tuscarawas Counties.

In order for Wilma Strahl to teach at such a young age she successfully passed the Boxwell Examination at the County Courthouse in 1912. She taught in a small country school for one year. She then taught at the Westview Elementary School in Zanesville, Ohio, until her marriage to Theodore Strahl on June 12, 1920. She resumed her teaching career for four years from 1942-46 as a fifth grade instructor in the Roseville, Ohio, Elementary School while John was overseas.

During their childhood, Ruth, Jean, and Clarice took the brunt of John's taunting. Jean recalled that, "John was great at teasing and testing us, it seemed he would always get away with pulling our pig-tails!" ^1

John's leadership potential surfaced rapidly. He was a master at breaking a task down into simple terms and then making sure it was done, usually by some incentive. "Somehow he had us girls convinced that we should help with his paper route; we did, too." Jean continued,

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^1Statement by Jean Goble during a personal telephone conversation with the writer, June 18, 1979.
"Ruth, Clarice, and I always had his papers folded for him to make his deliveries when he got home. Every once in a while he would give us a nickel for our help."²

An impressive note about John's consideration for his family is the fact that with his first payment from the paper route, he brought home a sack of flour for his mother.

Gayle Sanford, John's best friend in Roseville, recalled that, "Eating was a favorite pastime of John's, which brings to mind the times we used to double date girls who, fortunately, lived on the same street. After the usual evening of high school dating, we would drop the girls at their homes and stop at 'inlaws' for cheeseburgers. The girls were never invited."³

John Strahl and June Starr met on the campus of Olivet Nazarene College in January of 1943 and corresponded during the war. When John re-entered Olivet in January of 1946, they began to see each other regularly. One of their first dates was to play tennis, a game both young people enjoyed. Jim Holden, John's roommate wagered that John would not challenge June to a tennis match. John did and won the wager, but June won the match.

John Strahl and June Starr were united in marriage at the home of the bride's parents in Springfield, Illinois, on June 14, 1947. The Reverend Roy V. Starr, June's father, performed the ceremony. The John Strahls reared three children: Jill, born July 25, 1953; Judy, born May 24, 1955; and John Jr., born December 28, 1957.

²Ibid.
³Letter from Gayle L. Sandford to Sharon Mayhew, April 2, 1963. Permission to quote secured.
Educational Background

John Strahl may have taken the opportunity to develop leadership qualities from his junior high school physical education teacher, Woody Hayes. However, Hayes, former Ohio State University football coach, taught John in only one gym class and was not as yet noted for his outstanding accomplishments in athletics. The teacher who influenced John most was his high school Latin instructor at Roseville, Miss Clark. John fondly remembers her love for her students and how she came to influence him and the other boys in the class through her consistency in how she taught and lived. "Miss Clark was a great teacher of life and Latin. We knew that because we boys all got C's in her course. She loved athletes as well. However, she made the career of teaching the highest goal of life."^4

John shared a love for sports with a great many of his friends and classmates. In New Philadelphia, he and the boys would play baseball until dark and then regroup under the street light on the corner by John's house for hours-long basketball or stickball games. Organized athletics, which would play a major role in John Strahl's later life, were very important in high school as well. A tall and outstanding basketball player, John co-captained the team at Roseville High School to a sixteen and five won-loss record and also participated in track and tennis.

His high school head mentor, Coach Rose, greatly influenced John in his choice of physical education and coaching as a career. John recalls, "He showed the influence a coach has on students and I also

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^4Statement by John Strahl during personal conversation with the writer, February 22, 1980.
enjoyed people, games, and just plain fun."  

John assumed other leadership roles in the form of senior class president, Honor Roll, and the 1942 class play, Miss Adventure, in which he played Albert Brown, the "eligible young farmer." His sister, Jean, recalled that, "It killed him to learn the lines for the play, but he didn't seem to mind kissing the girl."  

As senior class president John presented the "Lamp of Knowledge" to the junior class president during the Roseville High School Commencement. In the Class Will he said, "I, John Strahl, leave to the incoming president my ability to call the class to order and the promise that when I grow up I will try to quiet the Senate or some equally austere assembly." That equally austere assembly later turned out to be the national membership of the NAIA. John graduated from Roseville High on May 22, 1942. 

As his mother and father had always intended, John enrolled and entered Olivet Nazarene College in Kankakee, Illinois, in September of 1942. After one semester, World War II reached into the ranks of colleges across the nation and many young men enlisted in the Armed Forces. John enlisted in the Army reserves in November, 1942, and went to boot camp at Camp Roberts, California, on March 4, 1943.

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5 Ibid. 
6 Letter from Jean Goble and Mary Wilma Strahl to Sharon Mayhew, March 16, 1963. 
7 Excerpt from the Roseville High School Commencement Exercise Program, May 22, 1942. 
8 Letter from Jean Goble and Mary Wilma Strahl to Sharon Mayhew, March 16, 1963.
Following a thirty-two month stint in the Army, John returned to Olivet in January of 1946 and re-entered school. It was then that he more actively pursued his educational goals under the tutoring of Dr. Ronald Jones, professor of education and physical education. Dr. Jones, Strahl remembered, was another great influence and John considered the professor a good friend.

John was active in PHI-TAU-OMEGA, Olivet's chapter of Future Teachers of America, during both the 1947 and 1948 school years. He was also the successful business manager of the Glimmer Glass, the student's bi-weekly newspaper in 1947. An example of his ability to manage and remain flexible under duress occurred when John and the rest of the Glimmer Glass staff continued to publish the paper on their regular bi-weekly schedule even after the printer's establishment had been destroyed by fire.\(^9\)

John competed for the athletic society, "The Indians," for three years and served as secretary-treasurer of Olivet's "0 Club" in 1948. The Aurora, the college yearbook, also received the services of Strahl as sports editor during the 1948 school year.\(^10\)

A tennis enthusiast, John won Olivet's 1947 men's tournament and took advantage of an opportunity to teach the sport to large classes of beginners and advanced students during this school year. While at Olivet, June Strahl taught physical education classes as well.

With a strong desire to major in physical education, John transferred to Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, to complete his college


\(^10\) Ibid.
degree. At Taylor, June again taught and John went to school. Don Odle, John's coach at Taylor, put his confidence in Strahl and allowed John to coach the men's tennis squad. John was also the number one player and was undefeated in all the matches that year. John graduated from Taylor University on June 6, 1949, with a bachelor's degree in Physical Education.

Coach Odle's respect for John was high. In a letter to Luella Monday, secretary of the 1963 "This is Your Life" program honoring Strahl, Odle termed Strahl an outstanding Christian man who was an effective educator even as a senior in college.

He [John] came here to Taylor as a married man. His wife was teaching in the P. E. program. He quickly established himself in our athletic program and won the respect of all the students here on campus even though he was the husband of one of our teachers....I have a lot of respect for him as a coach, as a Christian, and as a friend.

Following Strahl's selection to the NAIA Hall of Fame in 1976, Don Odle wrote to John in a congratulatory letter, "As your college coach I was always impressed by your willingness to work, your cooperation, and your tremendous spirit. It was contagious then and is contagious now."

Strahl moved directly to Tolono, Illinois, and pursued a masters of science degree at the University of Illinois in Champaign. June taught in the Tolono Public Schools that year while John successfully completed his studies.

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The years at Olivet College, Taylor University, and the University of Illinois not only molded the educational and spiritual values of John Strahl but also provided for the growth of several very special friendships.

At Olivet, John and June shared a new duplex house with Bob and Betty Quanstrom. One interesting item about the house was that the bathrooms, which shared a common dividing wall, also shared a rectangular hole in the wall where two back-to-back medicine cabinets were to be installed, but were not. The "hole" made for very interesting conversations and, of course, helped develop a special trust between the two couples. Bob Quanstrom mentioned the specialness of the Strahls in their lives, "John and June are great people, and we count them among our best associates in good fun. I believe the hole in the bathroom wall was the greatest. We depended upon each other's integrity and we never were embarrassed, as we both had confidence in our friends."\(^{13}\)

At Taylor Coach Don Odle, initiator of The Venture to Victory Crusade to the Far East, openly shared in the lives of John and June. John credits his coach for setting a personal standard for teaching by example.

The year of graduate work at the University of Illinois was enhanced by the friendship of John's classmate from Olivet, Urey Arnold and his wife, Jane (Starr). Jane was June's twin sister and the two couples each had an apartment on the same floor of a large, old house in Tolono. Jane recalled the exceptional relationship that the two couples shared that year.

\(^{13}\)Letter from Bob Quanstrom to Sharon Mayhew, April 23, 1963. Permission to quote secured.
We shared the kitchen so we ate our meals together. To save money, Urey and John ate their lunches at the apartments. When John did the cooking he always prefaced his meal with the remark, "Excuse me, Stomach." On the Saturdays of the Illini home football games June and I really got a lot of work from our husbands, then we would all sit for the afternoon games. Those were exceptional times indeed.

After thirty-two months of service in the military, four and a half years of undergraduate school, one year of graduate work, and two college degrees, John Strahl began his teaching career at Greenville College in September, 1950. In 1957, Strahl was granted a sabbatical leave from Greenville. John began the course work for a doctoral degree at the University of Illinois. That degree was never completed because as John said, "I got busy and didn't get the time to finish it."15

Although the University of Illinois degree was not completed, Greenville College honored one of its own on September 2, 1976, when it conferred on John Strahl the honorary degree, Doctor of Education. The conferral read by Greenville College president Dr. Orley Herron accurately described the educational wellspring of John Strahl:

John Milton Strahl, keystone of solidarity, for the continuity you have given this institution; for your genius of common sense; for your deep abiding faith; for your truly Christian example -- I confer upon you the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION, honoris causa...

Military Experience

After one semester of course work at Olivet Nazarene College in


16Excerpt from the Citation to Present John Milton Strahl for the Conferral of an Honorary Degree, September 2, 1976.
1942, John Strahl's college education was interrupted and replaced with a completely different type of education: war. World War II reached into the college ranks across the country and plucked out many young men who were destined for greatness. John Strahl was one of those men. "There was a great call for college students to join the Armed Forces and we responded in large numbers."17

In November of 1942 Strahl joined the Enlisted Reserve Corps of the United States Army. On March 4, 1943, the Army called John to Fort Sheridan in Chicago and then to boot camp at Camp Roberts in California. As a member of the Oklahoma 45th Infantry Division, 189th Battalion, Field Artillery Service Battery, Strahl was sent to the European Theatre in September of 1943. Strahl served a total of twenty-five months in the European Theatre, including eighteen months in combat. Private First Class John M. Strahl served his country in four different invasions. His tour of combat began in Africa and as an eighteen year old soldier, and the youngest member of his battalion, John earned the nickname "Junior".

In the spring of 1944 the 189th Battalion accompanied the 45th Division to Anzio Beach in Italy. The conditions at Anzio were appalling. The infantry men lived in dug-out mudholes for three months under constant barrage from the enemy and the natural elements. Soon after the Allied Forces took Italy, Strahl was in the midst of the southern invasion of France. During the lengthy engagement in France, the Service Battery of the 189th Field Artillery Battalion played a major role and on March 3, 1945, received recognition for its service. From the

17 Statement by John Strahl during a personal conversation with the writer, June 20, 1980.
headquarters of the Forty-fifth Infantry Division, Major General
Frederick gave the command to award the Service Battery, 189th Field
Artillery Battalion, the Award of Meritorious Service Unit plaque. The
citation described the conditions under which the Service Battery
responded:

...for outstanding devotion to duty in the performance of exception­
ally difficult tasks, from 15 August 1944 to 31 January 1945 in
France. Although distribution points were left far behind in the
rapid advance of the 189th Field Artillery Battalion through
Southern France, roads were difficult, and the demands for ammu­
nition and fuel heavy, Service Battery maintained an adequate flow
of supplies to all units of the battalion at all times. Despite
limited facilities, the men of the battery, by improvising and con­
structing tools and parts, using their ingenuity to extricate and
salvage damaged trucks, trailers, and howitzers, provided the bat­
talion with a maximum of operationally fit vehicles and guns. When
crucial items seemed unobtainable, the men often made long and
hazardous trips to procure the needed supplies. To deal with the
dangers of icy roads, the battery welded and installed cleats on the
tracks of its tractors. Standards of morale and discipline have
been high and throughout the campaign in France the members of
Service Battery have displayed an efficiency and initiative which
were significant contributions to the successful operations of the
189th Field Artillery Battalion and reflect credit upon the men and
their organization.18

A portion of Strahl's time in France was spent at a convent in
Epinal where the sisters were eager to help by cooking the food since
one of the men in the battalion knew a relative of one of the sisters.
Strahl's young age and friendliness drew the attention of one of the
nuns, Sister Catherine. After the war, John received several letters
from his good friend at Epinal, Sister Catherine. Each letter began
with the salutation, "My Dear Junior,"19 Strahl's service nickname.

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18 Citation naming Service Battery, 189th Field Artillery
Battalion recipients of the Meritorious Service Unit plaque, March 3,
1945. Permission to quote secured.

19 Letters from Sister Catherine to John Strahl, December 23,
1947, and July 17, 1949. Permission to quote secured.
Even during the strife of war John kept alive his interest in sports. He recalled taking advantage of an opportunity to play tennis at an abandoned country club near Grenoble, France. The club's caretaker brought out two rackets and several old tennis balls that he had hidden away and encouraged the soldiers to stop and enjoy themselves for a break from the war.

Eventually the Forty-fifth Division invaded Germany and by the close of the war in 1945, Strahl had seen action in four major combat areas.

Strahl was awarded the Good Conduct Medal on May 19, 1945. He received an honorable discharge from the Army in October, 1945, with the rank of corporal.

In a brief comment on his military encounters John Strahl spoke of what the results of his experiences had revealed to him. "I became more sure that war is bad. I wanted to be a teacher of sports -- at least to work within the framework of Christian service."  

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**June Starr Strahl**

Phyllis June Starr was born on February 7, 1923, the twin sister of Jane Starr. Her parents were the Reverend Roy V. Starr and Louisa (MacDonald) Starr. She was originally from Lansing, Michigan, and attended the public schools there. She graduated from Central High School in Lansing in June, 1941, and enrolled as a freshman at Olivet Nazarene College in January, 1942.

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20 Statement by John Strahl during personal conversation with the writer, April 9, 1980.
John Strahl actually knew June's twin sister Jane first. Following several casual dates with Jane, John was surprised to find out that Jane was trying to discourage him. Jane (Starr) Arnold recalls, "During one of our 'walks' I told John that I had a twin sister (June) who would be coming to Olivet the second semester and that he would probably like her better anyway."21

June Starr graduated from Olivet College in 1946 with a major in English, and minors in Social Studies and Physical Education. She returned to Olivet following summer graduate work at the University of Illinois and taught at Olivet Academy for two years while John attended classes at the college. Although her main responsibility was teaching social sciences at the high school academy, she also taught physical education and handled the women's society sports clubs for the college.

In 1947, John transferred to Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, and June was employed as an instructor in the Division of Social Sciences. She also was in charge of the women's physical education program that year.

The Strahls made their home in Tolono, Illinois, for one year. John completed his masters degree at the University of Illinois while June taught in the Tolono Public School system.

By the spring of 1950 the Strahls began searching for teaching jobs for the fall. Although John had never heard of Greenville College prior to a friend's suggestion, John and June nevertheless applied for teaching positions there. In May 1950 they received a long distance telephone call from Greenville's president Dr. H. J. Long asking them to

come for an interview. Dr. Long addressed the Strahls in a tribute letter for a "This Is Your Life" ceremony held for John Strahl on April 26, 1963.

John, I consider you as one of the greatest discoveries I ever made for Greenville College. I may not be correct in my dates but I believe it was thirteen years ago when you and June decided to cast your lot with us and join the Greenville College Staff.

Without doubt you have trained and sent out more young coaches to high schools and colleges than any other coach in the history of Free Methodist higher education. My hat is off to you for this important fact alone.

I think that one of the reasons you have been nice to work with is the fact that you have believed that in a well-organized Christian College, there are other areas of importance besides the athletic program. While you have coached many winning teams, you have always insisted on sound academic standards as well as the other high moral and spiritual ideals of the institution.

The transparency of your life as lived before the student body in your home and community as well as in the classroom and on the gym floor has been a real challenge to many, both girls and fellows. Your overall contribution to the program of Greenville College has been most wholesome and really outstanding in your own fields of physical education and athletics.

At Greenville College June Strahl taught service classes in physical education from 1950 to 1960. She was also in charge of the intramural program and coached the women's varsity sports programs.

Three children entered Mrs. Strahl's life beginning in 1953, and subsequently in 1955, and then 1957. She re-entered the working world when she became the Dean of Women at Hillsboro High School in Hillsboro, Illinois, in 1970. June Strahl is currently Dean of Students at Hillsboro. In 1975, Greenville College honored June Strahl by instituting the June Starr Strahl Outstanding Senior Women's Athletic Award. Appendix E records the year by year recipients of that award.

\[\text{22Letter from Dr. H. J. Long to John Strahl, April 13, 1963. Permission to quote secured.}\]
Summary

John Milton Strahl was born in New Philadelphia, Ohio, on July 1, 1924. He was born just twenty minutes before his unexpected twin sister, Jean. The only boy of Theodore and Mary Wilma Strahl's four children, John attended school in New Philadelphia, Ohio, until his senior year. John's father, Theodore Strahl, bought a welding shop in Roseville, Ohio, and moved his family there in 1941.

Although it was a small high school, Roseville provided John Strahl with numerous opportunities to take leadership roles. He participated in the class play, served as senior class president, and was a starting member and co-captain of the varsity basketball team that won sixteen of twenty-one games that year.

Strahl's parents set the high standards for the religious and educational emphases which John accepted for his own life. His mother died in 1972. His father is retired and resides in Kankakee, Illinois.

Following his graduation from Roseville High School, Strahl entered college at Olivet Nazarene College in Kankakee, Illinois. He attended classes one semester before he and many of his male classmates enlisted in the Army. On March 4, 1943, John entered boot camp and served his country in the Oklahoma 45th Infantry Division, 189th Battalion Field Artillery Service Battery. Strahl served in the European Theatre for twenty-five months, eighteen of which were under intense combat conditions. He left the Army in October, 1945, having earned the rank of corporal and the Good Conduct Medal. His Battery received several citations for Meritorious Service while in combat.

Strahl re-entered Olivet College in 1946 and married June Starr in 1947. Strahl credits Dr. Ronald Jones for influencing him to pursue
a career in physical education. John transferred to Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, to earn a degree in Physical Education. In college he was active on the newspaper and yearbook staffs and was a top-flight tennis player. Coach Don Odle of Taylor University also exerted a great influence on Strahl.

After graduating from Taylor University in 1949 Strahl entered the University of Illinois and completed his master's degree in 1950. His military service and life in college helped set high expectations for a career in teaching and serving people. In the fall of 1950, John Strahl began what was to extend to over thirty years of teaching and coaching at Greenville College in Greenville, Illinois.
Chapter 3

GREENVILLE COLLEGE RECEIVES JOHN STRAHL: HIS COACHING YEARS 1950-1980

John Strahl served his first coaching assignment as the player-coach of the Taylor University men's tennis team in the spring of 1949. Following graduation from Taylor and the completion of a master's degree at the University of Illinois, John applied for his first teaching and coaching job at Greenville College. Dr. H. J. Long, Greenville's president, hired John and June Strahl after a day-long interview. John would teach physical education and coach the three men's varsity sports, tennis, basketball, and baseball. June would also teach in the physical education department and direct the intramural program.

The present superior physical education and athletic facilities at Greenville College must be credited to the hard work, determination, and the commitment to excellence of John Strahl.

In 1950, there were less than one dozen physical education majors at Greenville College and that major had been offered for only two years. Men's athletics consisted of three varsity sports and women interested in athletics were able to compete only in basketball on the club level. Strahl credits Dr. H. J. Long, Greenville's fifth president, with the great foresight to want and to plan for a creditable program in physical education and athletics.

Strahl took the approach that athletics was just a part of the total picture in education. His science background kept him from going
over-board on just coaching athletics; he was able to keep the total picture in view because of his strong educational background. ¹

Intercollegiate athletics had begun at Greenville College on December 7, 1943, when basketball coach Homer Cunningham led the then-named Gremlims to a twenty-eight to twenty victory over McKendree College. Greenville went on to post five wins and four losses in that first season. The first home basketball game was played during the 1945 season and was recorded in the win column as the Gremlims beat Eden Seminary by a forty-one to thirty-four score on December 1, 1945, in Burritt Gymnasium.

From an initial offering of three men's sports, the athletic program continued to grow under Strahl's leadership. In 1952 Greenville began a varsity track program and became a member of the I.C.C.C., the Illinois Church College Conference. The I.C.C.C. was disbanded in May 1953 when eight area college representatives met in Springfield, Illinois, and formed a new conference, the Prairie College Conference. Greenville was a charter member of the P.C.C. and John Strahl was elected vice-president of the organization.

A golf team was officially begun in 1954 and cross country started in 1956. Soccer had its first season in 1957. The five women's sports were also introduced during Strahl's tenure as athletic director. Women's teams in basketball, volleyball, tennis, softball and field hockey have been fielded by Greenville College with basketball beginning in 1953. In 1978, track and field replaced field hockey as the fifth women's sport.

¹Statement by John Strahl during personal conversation with the writer, November 23, 1979.
Following his first year of teaching and coaching at Greenville College, Strahl's students were already recording his contributions in the 1951 *Vista*.

In his first year as athletic director and basketball coach at G.C., Coach John Strahl instilled in his fighting Panthers the three A's of basketball, Alertness, Aggressiveness, and Ambition; good sportsmanship, and most important of all the right Christian attitude at all times.²

As Strahl continued to teach and coach in a manner that had a positive influence on young people's lives, more students spoke out in his favor. The 1952 *Vista* again listed his contributions to the overall educational process at Greenville.

Coach Strahl, a calm-determined six-footer, stands for fair play, honesty, and sportsmanship both on and off the gym floor. His players mean more to him than the winning of a game or trophy. Strahl not only guides the athletic teams, but he also shapes Christian young people into tomorrow's Christian citizens. As a friend, Coach Strahl rates high among students and faculty. This combined with Christian spirit rates him as one of the best liked "profs" at G.C. Coach Strahl, with his Christian interest in the individual, is always available to help and encourage all students.³

Strahl continued to set an example of leadership for both students and faculty. The National Christian Physical Education Association was chartered in 1957 on the campus of Greenville College under the direction of John Strahl. That group met again on the Greenville campus in 1964.

Athletic facilities expanded greatly during the Strahl years. In 1959 construction began on a new 1600 seat gymnasium. This fine facility, featuring, at the time, the world's only infra-red heated gym, was later named the H. J. Long Gymnasium in honor of Greenville's fifth

² *The Vista*, Greenville College Yearbook, 1951, p. 64.
³ *The Vista*, Greenville College Yearbook, 1952, p. 79.
president. When Coach Strahl overturned the last spade of dirt at the
ground breaking in 1959, he spoke of the proposed use of the new build-
ing. "The motto of Greenville College Athletics has been, 'Sports for
all -- within the walls.' This building will continue to uphold that
tradition."4

H. J. Long Gymnasium was completed in the fall of 1960 and the
Panthers hosted Blackburn College at the dedication game in December,
1960, which Greenville won 84-71.

The Scott Burgess Tennis Complex was built as a memorial to
Scott Burgess, a Greenville student-athlete who died following an acci-
dent during a practice session in 1972. The complex consists of four
all-weather surfaced lighted tennis courts and a memorial sculpture in
his memory. Strahl directed this project and saw to it that the complex
was appropriately constructed and equipped.

Francis Field, located one mile south of the campus, contains
the varsity soccer, baseball, and softball fields. The baseball stadium
has permanent bleachers, and the softball diamond is fully illuminated.
The soccer field has one of the largest and finest natural playing
surfaces in southern Illinois. Intramural softball and football fields
are also located within the fenced thirty-three acre Francis Field
complex.

Strahl recalled that the original thirteen acres of Francis
Field were acquired in 1962. The Panther teams had been using the
Greenville Legion Field located southeast of campus. The college rented
the field for $225.00 per year. When the rent jumped up to $225.00 per

4The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois),
November 6, 1959, p. 4.
month, President Glen Richardson opted to look for a new field. Strahl developed the baseball and soccer fields first; the softball diamond is the most recent addition. Land there is also set aside for the construction of a running track.

Strahl was also instrumental by his encouragement and foresight in the development of two other intramural fields available to students. The S. W. Andrews Field, one-half mile south of the campus, and Scott Field, nestled in the heart of the campus adjacent to the gym, are both used frequently for numerous student activities.

The intramural program, directed by June Strahl in the early years, was the highlight of out of class activity for most students. The values stressed in the organization of these programs were closely related to those Strahl established for intercollegiate athletics. The Papyrus reported that, "The main objectives of the intramural program were the building of Christian character and the development of good sportsmanship in each individual participating."

Strahl was a well organized administrator for the physical education and athletic departments. Gary Ahler, a student reporter for the college newspaper, presented an outline of the goals of Strahl's departments in an article published on November 14, 1958.

As stated in the catalog, "Since its founding, Greenville College has conducted its athletic program for sports, recreation, and educational values rather than for prestige, publicity, or financial return." The athletic program of the college is divided into three categories: professional, intramural, and intercollegiate. The professional aspect is expressed in the Department of Health and Physical Education of the college, under the Division of Teacher Education. Its objectives are:

1. To provide an environment and opportunity for the improvement of

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5The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), May 22, 1953, p. 4.
student health and for the establishment of sound leisure time skills, attitudes and interests in physical education.
2. To acquaint students with modern principles of personal hygiene.
3. To aid the prospective teacher of physical education in acquiring a satisfactory background.

Strahl has worked closely with students to provide a quality education, based on sound Christian principles, and a lifestyle that sets a consistent example for living. These intangible but important values were reflected in each level of his responsibilities as athletic director, educator, and coach. The standards he set for his students and athletes were high, but not above what he expected of himself. For this reason he was and remains one of the most respected and admired individuals at Greenville College, in the NAIA, and with his associates in the world of sports. A reflection of his coaching years follows. A complete year-by-year listing of Strahl's team members and results are in Appendixes I through V.

In 1976, Greenville College recognized John Strahl by naming a physical education award in his honor. The John M. Strahl Outstanding Senior Physical Education Major Award was dedicated to Strahl as an expression of admiration of his peers and students. Appendix F records the recipients of the award by year. The inscription briefly describes John's contribution to physical education and athletics at Greenville College.

\[\text{John M. Strahl Outstanding Senior} \]
\[\text{Physical Education Major}\]

In appreciation for his unselfish dedication to the preparation of Physical Education Majors.

Whose life has exemplified the balance of athletic competitiveness and academic superiority.

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6The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), November 14, 1958, p. 4.
Whose teaching and leadership has left an indelible mark on the many students he so wisely encouraged and nurtured in the skills of Physical Education.

At the end of the 1978 school year John Strahl stepped down as Director of Athletics at Greenville College. In the fall of 1978 he began new duties at Greenville as the Associate Vice President of Development for Alumni Affairs, a position that would best utilize his strengths of warm personality, friendliness, organizational abilities, and administrative expertise.

Tennis/1950 to Present

John Strahl's association with the game of tennis has spanned forty years. He began playing the game at the age of sixteen in 1940. His collegiate tennis coaching career began in the fall of 1950 when he led Greenville's varsity squad to a seven and three won-loss record. That winning season set a pattern that has made the name John Strahl traditionally associated with the words "winning tennis."

After twenty-seven years as tennis coach for Greenville College, Strahl has amassed an outstanding record of 211 wins and 106 losses. During those twenty-seven years, his teams have recorded twenty-three winning seasons and one undefeated season. The 1971 squad posted a perfect twelve match win streak to capture the first of eight Prairie College Conference titles and Strahl's second P.C.C. Coach of the Year award in tennis. Strahl's 1959 squad won the first conference title in tennis for Greenville and Strahl's first Coach of the Year honors. His tennis squads of 1971 through 1978 displayed tremendous talent and depth

7Citation from the John M. Strahl Outstanding Senior Physical Education Major award plaque, Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois.
and swept the P.C.C. title all eight years. This feat gave Strahl an unprecedented eight straight P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year awards, and an eight year record of sixty-seven victories and thirty-seven defeats.

Greenville's Dan Cunningham and Steve Miller, two of Strahl's players, were NAIA District 20 doubles champions and Cunningham also captured the singles title during the 1971 season. Both athletes went on to participate in the NAIA National Tennis Championships in Kansas City.

Nelson Blount, a member of that undefeated team, commented on his impression of Dr. Strahl from the viewpoint of an athlete.

You always wanted to play hard for him. He never put anyone down but gave constructive criticism which was aimed at building. He helped you feel better about yourself even when you put in a bad performance. He was more interested in developing responsible and mature people for life than in winning a game. Because of this ideology he succeeded in producing both mature people and winning teams.

In 1966 Strahl's team presented him with his 100th tennis coaching victory. Eleven years later, the 1977 team defeated Southeast Missouri State University by a six to three score to give Strahl his 200th career coaching win. Only thirteen schools out of the thirty-six that Strahl's teams have faced hold a winning edge over the Strahl net-men in total matches won.

Coach Strahl will begin his twenty-eighth year as head mentor of the Greenville College tennis team when the 1980-81 school year begins.

Basketball/1950 - 1965

A coach that is able to win over two hundred games in a fifteen

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8Personal correspondence between Nelson Blount and the writer, July 30 to August 12, 1979.
year span in small college basketball has made a significant accomplishment. Strahl coached the varsity basketball team to thirteen winning seasons out of fifteen. His record of 220 wins and 140 losses makes him the "winningest" coach in Greenville history. Appendix Q records complete basketball team results.

Strahl's teams of 1964 and 1965 won back-to-back Prairie College Conference championships and brought Coach of the Year honors to their head mentor. The 1965 team played in the NAIA District 20 playoffs, the only Greenville College men's basketball team to attain that peak of excellence. A final season surge of ten straight victories gave the 1956 Panthers a 25-5 final won-loss record and Strahl's best winning percentage for a single season.

"Unique" is a word that best describes Strahl's basketball coaching philosophy. Calm, self-controlled, and always the gentleman, Coach Strahl was, as Papyrus writer Don Stewart described, "A Sedate Boss". 9

If all P.C.C. (Prairie College Conference) coaches were like John Strahl, the P.C.C. would be much closer now. Besides a 5-1 record, Coach Strahl leads his league colleagues in having the fewest technical fouls! While other mentors stamp their feet, throw towels, fling clipboards and call officials "big meanies," Strahl remains in silent repose. 10

Basketball teams at Greenville have never been blessed with exceptionally tall players. Strahl's 1956 team that recorded a 25-5 season started a six foot, two inch center. Average to good players responded extremely well under the Strahl "personal" coaching method. Delbert Maroon, a member of that 1956 team, brought to light the

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9The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), February 19, 1965, p. 4.
10Ibid.
players' opinion of their head coach. "I valued his ability to keep calm under all situations. His attitude of 'there's always tomorrow' took off pressure. Winning wasn't top priority, however, we as a team wanted each game for him." ¹¹

Basketball was one of the "loves" of John Strahl as a coach. Basketball, however, never stood in the way of the welfare, education or moral growth of his student-athletes. Numerous other basketball players commented on Strahl's uncompromising standards and human relations method of coaching:

He was honest and fair in all his dealings and contacts. He would never take or make an advantage to win a game or a contest. In fact, he would concede a victory if it meant being dishonest. The value and the place of competitive athletics was always kept in perspective. ¹²

As a coach, educator or friend, he was the same man one day to the next. "He was consistent all the way through. I've heard opposing coaches say they could never take the kids from Greenville too lightly because Strahl didn't pressure them into playing. They were playing out of love for the sport and coach." ¹³

Strahl's consistency had a positive effect on his fellow coaches and faculty members. Phillip Storer, Greenville's soccer coach from 1969 to 1971, tells of one special technique Strahl utilized to help his players maintain a strong self-image.

He is an unflappable man with a great love for young people which involves concern for them in their attempts to break into a difficult adult world. He once told me he never took a player out of a game after the player made a mistake! If a substitution was in

¹¹Personal correspondence between Delbert Maroon and the writer.
¹²Personal correspondence between Steve Kimery and the writer.
¹³Personal correspondence between Roy Yarbrough and the writer.
order he would wait until the player had stolen the ball, made a
basket, or experienced some sort of a gain.  

The position of secretary to the athletic director gave Bonnie
Tidball an opportunity to notice Strahl's soothing personality.

John has so many good qualities that have earned him many
friendships. He has a way of making everyone feel important. He is
almost always optimistic -- very seldom does he get uptight. I have
observed from my vantage point of secretary, that when faculty
members, even the administration or friends were uptight over tense
situations they would find their way to John's office for an
optimistic word and would usually leave in a calmed relaxed manner.
Sometimes even laughing! His easy going style puts everyone in a
good mood.

During the 1965 school year, Strahl planned a special season for
his last as Greenville's basketball coach. The season included a five
game road trip to California, complete with sight-seeing stops en route
to the West Coast and on the return leg. Strahl's Panthers won only one
of those games but, as usual, winning was not the most important part
of the trip. See Appendix Q for complete basketball team results by year.
Larry Henry, staff writer for the Decatur, Illinois, Herald and Review,
reported on the significance of the trip in a December 26, 1964,
article.

Greenville College Cagers In Unique Trip

Greenville College is probably the only small school in the
Midwest which has sent its basketball team on a 4,500 mile trip as a
reward for participation. Basketball coach John Strahl explains it:
"We can take $1,000.00 and make one boy happy or we can take
$1,000.00 and make ten boys happy." He added, "You can do a lot of
things in sports if you're not lazy."

The $1,000.00 figure referred to the fact that Greenville College has
never awarded athletic scholarships.

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14Personal correspondence between Phillip Storer and the writer.
15Personal correspondence between Bonnie Tidball and the writer.
In college basketball, the coach is the figure-head for the team in the public's eye. As the coach's temperament goes, generally speaking, so goes the temperament of the team. An article by Don Stewart in the November 6, 1964, issue of The Papyrus gives a clue as to why Strahl's basketball teams were so successful.

Amid the hysteria and clamor of tomorrow night's game, when the cheerleaders are yelling, the players are running and the mob standing, the most prominent member of our athletic team will sit, almost devoid of emotion. With his chin nesting in his hand John Strahl will patiently, calmly, coolly, and collectively observe the unfolding scene as he has for many years without blinking.

Letting nature run her course and accepting her mandates is the code by which our congenial athletic director lives...with each campaign, Strahl has grown in stature and respect by his colleagues. The success Strahl has injected into our physical education program is better suited for an epic than a column.

Some know him as President Strahl, others as Coach Strahl. His older friends might know him as Black John or Chief. The most recent alumni remember him as John McDonalds Strahlestein. But all of those who have come in contact with him and shared in his rich humor are just glad they know John Strahl. 17

Perhaps the greatest tribute one can receive in the field of coaching would come from an opposing coach. Following the final regular 1965 season contest in which Greenville defeated Principia College 74-62, Strahl's last season as basketball coach, he received the following letter from Jim Crafton, the opposing coach in that game.

PRINCIPIA COLLEGE
ELSAH, ILLINOIS
62028

Mr. John Strahl, Director of Athletics
Greenville College
Greenville, Illinois

February 7, 1965

Dear John,

I am writing to put into words -- on paper -- to you, my most sincere congratulations on your victory Saturday night. It was a well

17 The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois) December 6, 1964, p. 4.
played game and your team deserved the victory. In my opinion, your coaching was excellent. But, John, your team was simply superb! Your men displayed great poise and stamina while taking advantage of every opportunity to score, particularly in the second half! Each man's sportsmanship throughout was magnificent! To me, one of the greatest thrills in coaching is to watch a team come from behind and to win, all the while playing with courage, unity, knowledge, and true sportsmanship. Your team had such a moment last Saturday night. Your facilities are fine and most adequate -- you have improved them since we were there last -- with the dressing room enlargement and with the use of the classroom. We appreciated the drinks at the half! Your scoring table people were very good sports and quite competent. All of you at Greenville College -- coaches and players -- displayed to me a real high class outfit. I would be honored if you would pass on my congratulations to your players.

John, I have enjoyed my association with Greenville College and with you. I appreciate your sense of values about athletics. See you soon. Best wishes to you.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Crafton
Director of Athletics

Track and Field/1952 - 1953

A sport that John Strahl started and coached for two years at Greenville is track and field. While compiling only a two and three won-loss record in dual meets, Strahl's track teams established a tradition of total team effort, large team size, and total participation. Appendixes R and K, respectively, list complete track and field team results and track team membership by year. His no-cut policy in track was continued throughout the years and remains standard procedure for that sport today at Greenville. Two school records from that first season in 1952 remain as the current top marks on the college track record board. Jim Staff established the record in the 220-yard low

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18 Letter from Jim Crafton, Director of Athletics at Principia College, to John Strahl, February 7, 1965. Permission to quote secured.
hurdles. His time of 24.4 seconds still stands in that event although that race is no longer run. Rich Stephens set the school record in the 220-yard dash with a clocking of 21.5 seconds. As the current president of Greenville College, Dr. Stephens has watched many challengers attempt to topple his long-standing standard.

Although Strahl valued the team concept very highly, he knew the importance of individual accomplishment and its benefit to a healthy, well-rounded person. Stephens first sensed as a track athlete, then as an assistant coach from 1959-1961, and still later as Greenville's eighth president, that Dr. Strahl possessed that knowledge.

Sports were first for one's all around growth with John. Lessons of life on the field would and should be learned. He valued teamwork, not the lonely star. Enjoyment as leisure was also an important outcome of sports. He urged that we remember the wins and don't cry over the losses. Sports were a means of getting people together, which he loved.

Baseball/1955 -1958

Six individuals previous to John Strahl had overseen the coaching duties of the varsity baseball program at Greenville College. John Strahl took over baseball in 1955. The experience turned out to be favorable for both the players and the coach. Greenville athletes were experiencing the unique coaching techniques of Strahl and were continuing in their winning tradition; and John Strahl, as he so honestly put it, "learned a little bit about baseball."  

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19 Personal correspondence between Dr. W. Richard Stephens and the writer.
20 Statement by John Strahl during personal conversation with the writer, June 1980.
Strahl coached the Panthers to a four year total of thirty-one wins and nineteen losses. That record was good enough for a .620 winning percentage, second best among all of Greenville's ten baseball coaches. Appendix H records Greenville's coaching staffs.

Strahl's "batmen" were known for their high scoring games. His baseball teams scored in double figures fourteen times and were shut-out only once in four years. They had a four year total of 403 runs scored against their opponents 243 runs.

The 1957 team won seventy-one percent of its games, posting a ten and four won-loss record. The 1956 team finished in third place in the conference and recorded a season of seven wins against six losses.

In baseball, as in all the sports he coached, Strahl led his teams by example. The October 1, 1954, Papyrus gave this account of a Greenville double header.

The Greenville College baseball team took the first game of a double header at McKendree College on September 23 by a 6-4 score but lost the second game 5-0.

Coach Strahl, in keeping with Greenville's spiritual emphasis, called his boys together for a moment of silent prayer before the game. 21

The Papyrus also reported on some curious activities in regard to Strahl's reactions to the the Panthers victories by big margins. Following an 18-1 win over Eureka College: "Saturday morning rumor has it that Coach Strahl had his arm in a sling -- it was so tired from waving baserunners around the diamond." 22

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21 The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), October 1, 1954, p. 4.

22 The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), April 29, 1955, p. 4.
This excerpt appeared in an article by Papyrus writer Walt Schofield after Strahl's Panthers downed Springfield Concordia 20-2. The antics described show Strahl's unique approach to athletics.

At the start of the ninth frame Coach Strahl was in a sentimental mood and so he allowed the team to switch positions as they so desired, and instituted a new concept in pitching theory. That concept is: a new pitcher to every new opposing batter. Coach Strahl spent the inning on the bench signing Vistas.23

Bill Staff, one of Strahl's early athletes, summed up how he analyzed his coach's techniques. "I'm sure Coach Strahl enjoyed winning, but other things were just as important. Things like character building, sportsmanship, an interest in his athletes...."24

Cross Country/1957-1960

John Strahl coached the Greenville cross country squad for four years. The sport had been initiated the previous fall with an excellent dual meet record of four wins and one loss. Strahl's runners were able to duplicate that same record in 1957. The 1958 team was not as lucky and Strahl's "thinclds" went through the season without a victory against three dual meet losses. They did manage a second place finish in a triangular meet in which they competed.

The 1958 and 1959 teams were led by hard running Ted Comden who saw something special in his coach. "I really liked him as a person as well as a coach. I appreciate his 'low-key' yet disciplined approach to athletic participation."25

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23 The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), May 30, 1955, p. 4.
24 Personal correspondence between Bill Staff and the writer.
25 Personal correspondence between Ted Comden and the writer.
Strahl developed a rugged cross country course at the Greenville City Park to give the sport a true home course and to promote the sport. The idea paid off as his 1959 Panthers improved to two wins and three losses and his 1960 squad bettered the 1959 record with a five and four won-loss record for a winning season.

Freshman Steve Kimery led the 1960 Panther harriers and recalled Strahl's personal coaching effects on the team.

He cared for the athlete and was a "straight-talker." Yet, he allowed for growth and maturity. He rarely talked about rules. He was able to communicate with the athlete by testimony, example, and making one feel good about himself. He would talk to the athlete about his feelings, his family, his girlfriend, his studies, etc. He took time! He is, has, and always will be Coach!

The ability of the 1960 Panther runners to win five meets while losing only four gave Strahl a four year cross country coaching career of an even eleven wins and eleven losses. Appendix T contains a record of cross country results.

In 1963 Strahl teamed with cross country coach Bob Blume to initiate a small college cross country invitational championship meet. This meet, later named after Blume, has been hosted successfully by Greenville College since 1963 and continues to be one of the top small college invitationals in the midwest.

Soccer/1961 - 1970

Strahl's ten-year soccer coaching record was thirty-two wins against fifty-seven defeats and six ties. From a won-loss point of view, one might judge that particular coaching as unsuccessful. From the players' point of view, those wins and losses were not as important.

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26Personal correspondence between Steve Kimery and the writer.
as the lasting friendships they made with their coach, John Strahl.

Soccer, reported to be America's fastest growing sport, was relatively new in the midwest and practically brand new when John Strahl took over the coaching chores. In the fall of 1957 Athletic Director Strahl announced that the Greenville College Soccer Club, made up almost entirely of the college's international students, would be a varsity team and play a varsity schedule that season.

Many American athletes began showing up for practice to learn about the "new game" and it was through Strahl's unparalleled coaching techniques that further success came to the athletic department through soccer. With numerous "foreign" players on the team, many coaches would have had a real communication gap. Strahl's simple coaching philosophy broke through the language barrier as the following 1965 Papyrus article indicates. Entitled "Multi-Nation Soccer Team Scores," the article relates an incident involving Strahl's approach to a particular foreign athlete: "Big Steve (Balogun) plays a solid game and makes few mistakes. Coach Strahl, wanting him to pass out to the wing more often, promised him an ice cream cone every time he would do so." 27

Winning was not everything in soccer or any sport for Strahl-coached teams. Participation was the key. He made each game, each day's practice, each one-on-one situation a real learning experience about humanity, his most vested interest. Roy E. Yarbrough, one of Strahl's "local boys made good," has a strong recollection of playing soccer for Strahl. "Our soccer trips were a real pleasure and with Coach Strahl participation was a key thing. One thing in particular I

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27 The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), November 12, 1965, p. 4.
recall was that if your parents, or your wife, were at the game, you could pretty much count on being in the starting line up."28

Doug Tkachuk's partially true, partially tongue-in-cheek rendition of his experience as an "on the bench" reporter for the Papyrus documents Yarbrough's memory.

Sitting next to Coach John Strahl at a soccer game can be quite an experience. Strahl needs no introduction to Greenville students—he's the man who developed the athletic department from two footballs and a softball to its present big time scale. As a coach, he has to be classed as an individual. He's the kind of guy who doesn't say much, but when he talks, people listen.

Strahl's constant calm, cool, collected manner is a legend. This personality prompted one soccer player to remark that after a Strahl pep-talk, you felt like going to bed. Equally legendary is Coach Strahl's method of choosing starters before a game. A typical monologue goes like this: "Let's see, Whiteman—your mother's on the faculty, yeah, you'll start. Wilson—your parents here today? Okay, you play. Let's see, we need some halfbacks; Versluis—I knew your mother, get in there. Rocourt, you're pretty far from home, you need something to cheer you up, you play."29

Those person-concerned mergers sometimes paid off with upset victories or great scoring combinations. More often they helped form a bond of alliance between the team and the coach, and between teammates. In 1965 the soccer team developed into the first Prairie College Conference soccer champions as Greenville College clinched the first-ever title "...in a thrilling 4-2 Homecoming win over Principia."30 The win gave the Panther booters the Prairie College Conference crown, a five-four-one won-loss record, and Strahl a new Coach of the Year award.

A group of returning lettermen helped lead the 1966 Panthers to four wins, three losses, and two ties and an unprecedented repeat

28 Personal correspondence between Roy Yarbrough and the writer.

29 The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), September 30, 1966, p. 4.

30 The Vista (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), 1966.
conference title, giving Strahl another P.C.C. Coach of the Year award. The Vista boasted that, "...upset victories over powerful Eastern Illinois University, 3-2, and a tough Rockford team, 1-0, were highlights...."\(^{31}\)

Strahl and his soccer Panthers almost earned a third P.C.C. championship in succession during the 1967 season but fell short. They dropped the final conference game of the season to Principia, who took the crown and left Greenville runner up. Four of the season's ten games were overtime contests; two ended in one-to-one deadlocks and the other two were exciting last second two-to-one victories over Southern Illinois University--Edwardsville.\(^{32}\) Appendix U lists a complete record of soccer results.

Strahl had the foresight to develop a maximum size playing field for soccer when the Panthers moved from the Legion Field to the Francis Field complex in 1962. It is a full regulation size field with a hardy "athletic grass" that Strahl had transported in from out of the county. The size of the field contributed to numerous Greenville victories. When the Panthers could not beat a better skilled team by finesse, they could and did simply outrun them on the big field. The soccer team is currently a member of the Illinois-Indiana Collegiate Soccer Conference.\(^{33}\)

**Golf/1965-1969**

Golf at Greenville College has been a self-motivating sport whereby an individual who had some interest in the game would be given

\(^{31}\)The Vista (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), 1967, p. 134.

\(^{32}\)The Vista (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), 1968.
the opportunity to play. Although played on a "club" basis since 1949, golf was officially recognized as a varsity sport in 1954. Unfortunately there are no results available from that year's competition.

John Strahl organized a team to play in the Prairie College Conference match in 1965 and it finished fourth. In 1966 his squad played one match before the conference and lost to Illinois College by an unknown score. The team again placed fourth in the P.C.C. tournament.

Appendix V records the golf team results.

Strahl added four more contests in 1967 with the prospect of the sport beginning to claim a permanent place in the annual scheduling of events. The 1967 squad lost the first four meets before ending the season with a close nine-and-one-half to eight-and-one-half win over Blackburn College. Another fourth place conference finish ended the season.

Greenville managed to post a three and five won-loss record for the 1968 season. Although the team was playing with more consistency in dual matches, it finished fifth in the conference. Strahl's last year of coaching golf, 1969, saw the Panthers score just one victory against seven defeats. A sixth (and last) place conference standing culminated the unsuccessful season.

Last place, or a five year coaching total of five wins and seventeen losses, did not dampen the spirit of Coach Strahl. Neither did he allow those statistics to be of any major concern to his players. Bob Burtch, who captained four of Strahl's five golf teams, recalls that he and his teammates still have fond memories of those years with Strahl. "He always wanted us to have a good time and to enjoy ourselves. He would kid us about our performances. There were only two or
three of us who had really played much golf so he knew our limitations but still got the best performances."33

Summary

John Strahl began his teaching and coaching career at Greenville College in the fall of 1950. Over a span of thirty years, his effective administration and leadership has resulted in the growth of both the physical education and the athletic departments into two of the largest on campus.

The men's athletic department grew from three varsity sports to seven. The women's program was conceived and established and now fields five varsity sports teams. During that thirty year span, Strahl has coached every men's sport at one time or another.

Greenville College has been a member of two athletic conferences, the Illinois Church College Conference and the Prairie College Conference. Both organizations achieved charter status due in large part to the ground work laid by Strahl.

As athletic director and head coach, Strahl set leadership examples for both faculty and students. He organized the National Christian Physical Education Association that was chartered at Greenville College in 1957. He and his staff continued to be involved in that organization and it met again at Greenville College in 1964.

Athletic facilities expanded greatly during the Strahl era. In 1959 work on a new 1600 seat gymnasium was begun. At that time, this facility was the only one in the nation to have an infra-red heating

33Personal correspondence between Bob Burtch and the writer.
In 1962 the Francis Field complex, now encompassing thirty-three acres of land, was acquired through Strahl's careful planning. This complex is the site of the Panthers' home baseball and soccer fields, the Lady Panthers' lighted softball diamond, and two intramural fields. The Scott Burgess Memorial Tennis Complex came into being in 1972. It was built in memory of a Greenville student-athlete who died following an accident during a practice session.

The Greenville College athletic department's motto has been, "Sports for all -- within the walls." Strahl saw to it that time and space were available to both varsity athletes and intramural athletes. Besides providing for a first-rate intercollegiate program, Strahl developed two other intramural fields and an extensive program of intramural sports and activities. All of Strahl's programs were designed within the framework of building Christian character and the development of good sportsmanship.

Strahl set high standards of moral conduct, self-discipline, and unity for his athletes, students, and fellow coaches. He was always the first to show, by example, that those high standards were within reach. The physical education and athletic departments honored Strahl in 1976 by naming a major award for him.

In 1978 Strahl stepped down as Director of Athletics and began new duties as Associate Vice President of Development for Alumni Affairs at Greenville College. He remains active in the athletic department as head tennis coach and is often called upon to lecture at physical education majors' seminars.

In the twenty-seven years as tennis coach for Greenville College, John Strahl-coached teams amassed an outstanding won-loss
record of 211-106. His tennis teams have recorded twenty-three winning seasons and one undefeated season. Strahl earned nine Prairie College Conference Coach of the Year awards, eight in a row between 1971 and 1978. Strahl begins his twenty-eighth year as tennis coach in the spring of 1981.

Basketball was a favorite sport of Strahl's to coach and he coached it well for fifteen years at Greenville College. Between the years 1951 and 1965, his teams won 220 games and lost only 140, making him the "winningest" coach in Greenville history. Strahl's teams of 1964 and 1965 won back-to-back Prairie College Conference championships and brought Coach of the Year honors to their head mentor. The 1965 team has been Greenville's only representative to compete in the NAIA District 20 playoff. A record of twenty-five wins and five losses by the 1956 Panthers was Strahl's best team.

Famous for a coaching philosophy that kept him cool and collected while his counterparts ranted and raved on the ball courts, Strahl was deeply loved and appreciated by his student-athletes. He prided himself in taking time to get to know each player thoroughly. He was concerned with the total worth of each of his players and during his fifteen seasons of coaching basketball, all but four of his players graduated from Greenville College. Two of those four went on to graduate from other four-year institutions.

In 1965, his last year as basketball coach, Strahl took his team on a five-game road trip to the West Coast as a reward for its participation. Strahl was highly respected by opposing coaches. Almost without exception, his closest friends in his profession were the coaches he faced year after year on the ball court.
Strahl established a tradition of total team effort, large team size, and total participation when he began and coached the varsity track teams in 1952 and 1953. Two records from that first season of competition still stand: Jim Staff's 220-yard low hurdle record of 24.4 seconds and Rich Stephens 220-yard dash record of 21.5 seconds. Strahl valued the team's efforts but also found significance in the performances of the individual. He encouraged participation for enjoyment as well as for competition.

From 1955 to 1958 the varsity baseball team was coached by Strahl. His teams were famous for high scoring games and were shut-out in only one game in four years. Strahl's baseball teams put together a four year total of thirty-one victories against only nineteen defeats. Along with establishing winning records, his baseball players remember him for helping them to build their personal characters and concepts of sportsmanship as well.

Strahl coached cross country at Greenville College from 1957 to 1960. During that time he brought prestige and self-respect to the program by establishing a rugged home course at the Greenville City Park and by publicizing the efforts of the team to the students on campus. Later he teamed with Coach Bob Blume and together they established an annual small college invitational that remains one of the best organized races in the midwest. Strahl coached the Panther harriers to an even four year record of eleven wins and eleven losses.

Strahl recalled that he enjoyed coaching the soccer team so much because he knew so little about the game when he started. 34 What he did

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34 Personal conversation between John M. Strahl and the writer, June 1980.
not know, he learned quickly from the many international students at Greenville College who for the most part made up the early teams.

Strahl's ten year soccer coaching record was thirty-two wins against fifty-seven defeats and six ties. His athletes valued their personal friendships with the coach more than the games they won, however. Perhaps one reason for his players' dedication to him was due to the fact that he was not afraid to learn from them and with them about this new game. Strahl also made a point of seeing that participation was emphasized, win or lose. Players could count on seeing action in the games and, hence, his teams played hard for him. They were able to defeat traditionally strong soccer teams through sheer determination and love for the sport and their coach.

The soccer Panthers won the first two Prairie College Conference soccer championships in 1965 and 1966. Strahl utilized the strengths of his teams to beat opponents. He knew his players were possibly weaker in the skills of soccer, but he also knew they could, and would, literally run a team into the ground. The varsity soccer field is a full regulation size, one of the largest and most beautiful playing surfaces in southern Illinois. That factor contributed to numerous Panther victories. Strahl earned P.C.C. soccer Coach of the Year awards for his 1965 and 1966 team's efforts.

The golf teams Strahl coached were characterized by individuals who had great desire but minimum talent. Most years a team was organized only to compete in the conference tournament. Strahl's four teams from 1965 through 1969 did play twenty-two dual matches, however, and came away with victories in five on those contests.

Simply viewing the won-loss record of a coach does not give the total picture of his success. For a coach who stressed participation,
high moral conduct, and standards of self-discipline, John Strahl was successful. He well deserves the highly respected title: COACH.
Chapter 4

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENTS IN ATHLETICS

Professional involvement in athletics began for John Strahl in 1948-49 as a senior at Taylor University. During that season he starred as the number one singles player and coached the men's varsity tennis team as well. The following year he earned his master's degree at the University of Illinois in Champaign, Illinois. In 1950-51, Greenville College's president Dr. H. J. Long hired John Strahl to coach the athletic teams and teach physical education.

Strahl's close, professional relationship with athletics continues to date. He presently is representing the NAIA on the United States Olympic Committee for the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games. He also completed his thirtieth year as tennis coach for Greenville College. He has coached every men's sport at Greenville.

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics

John Strahl's relationship with the NAIA began in the early 1950's when he attended numerous District 20 meetings on a regular basis. In 1957, he was elected secretary-treasurer of District 20 and served in that position until 1962.

In 1957, Strahl was selected as membership chairman of the NAIA Coaches Association (NAIAC). He served on that executive committee for nine years. He has served terms as membership chairman, secretary, vice-president, and president of NAIAC. During this tenure he has also
participated in several national committee assignments.

Strahl's District 20 colleagues elected him District Chairman in 1963 and he served admirably for three years. During this time, District 20 was one of the best-organized districts in the NAIA. Membership increased by over twenty-five percent; a district newsletter was initiated; individual district coaches' associations were organized and began to function effectively; and district championship tournaments were started in each of the following sports: cross country, tennis, golf, wrestling, swimming, and indoor track.\(^1\)

When elected as president of the NAIA in 1963, Strahl organized and was responsible for instituting two major programs. The *NAIA COACH* magazine was started with Strahl serving as editor, and a plan whereby individual membership dues in the NAIA were collected through institutional memberships was begun. The latter resulted in the rapid growth of the various sport associations.

The *NAIA COACH* continues to be published four times a year and is a valuable source of information to all members of the NAIA. Strahl's NAIA presidential term ended in 1965. In that year he also received the NAIA Award of Merit for his outstanding service as president of NAIA. He earned a second "Award of Merit" in 1970 for his excellent leadership in District 20.

John Strahl continued to be a valuable member of the NAIA as he served in the capacity of national chairman of the District Chairman Committee from 1967-1969. In 1969 Strahl was elected to the Executive Board of the NAIA.

\(^1\) Excerpt from the Nomination of John Milton Strahl to the NAIA Hall of Fame, January 9, 1975.
Dr. Robert E. Smith observed John's unselfish dedication to the NAIA during these years and commented on Strahl's willingness to serve in any capacity.

Over the past twenty years I have observed John at work at all levels of the NAIA. I have seen him on numerous occasions drive 150 to 200 miles on successive nights to be at the District 20 basketball play-offs but still maintain his teaching responsibilities at Greenville College. I have seen him battle inclement weather conditions in order to be at District meetings even before he had official responsibilities. And I have seen John as he recently prepared to fly to Florida to represent the NAIA on the United States Olympic Committee. In all of these instances and hundreds of similar ones in between, John has approached his responsibilities with the same serious dedication and commitment to excellence.²

As an Executive Board member Strahl has been the coordinator for national tournaments in each of the following sports: baseball, bowling, football, golf, ice hockey, soccer, swimming, tennis, track, volleyball, wrestling, and cross country. He has also served as national coordinator for both the Eligibility Committee and the Faculty Athletic Representatives Committee.

In 1972 Strahl was elected fourth vice president of the NAIA. That was also the first year he represented the NAIA on the United States Olympic Committee. His duties expanded in 1975 to include representing the NAIA for the Amateur Basketball Association of the United States as well as the Joint Committee on Physical Education and Athletics in Colleges and Universities. Strahl also served on the Joint Committee of the NAIA and the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW).

Each year, from 1972 on, he moved a step closer to the presidency of the NAIA as vice-president. Strahl was inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame.

²Letter to the NAIA Hall of Fame Nominating Committee from Dr. Robert E. Smith, January, 1975.
Hall of Fame for Meritorious Service in 1976. Dr. W. Richard Stephens, then Vice President for Academic Affairs at Greenville College, commented on the NAIA's choice of John Strahl as a member of the Hall of Fame, "John Strahl will have been honored if elected to the NAIA Hall of Fame. But also, the Hall of Fame will have added to itself a member whose life will add significant meaning to the Hall of Fame."³ In March of 1977 John Strahl assumed the presidency of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics during the annual ceremony in Kansas City, Missouri.

John E. Visser, President of Emporia State University and current member of the NAIA Executive Committee, in a July 9, 1980, letter to Strahl expressed these thoughts on the contributions that John Strahl had made to the NAIA.

...just making plans for attending our summer Executive Committee meeting next week and thinking ahead how nice it will be to see all of you again when it struck me that John Strahl would not be there.

John, you leave a real void. Others of us will try to pick up where you left off but it will not be quite the same. You brought something very precious to your role as an active member of the Executive Committee and as our president. It was not only your philosophy of intercollegiate athletics which fitted so well but also your moral stature which captivated us. You had a vision which we could strive for both as an organization and as individuals. And, above all, you correlated your actions with words.

It was a privilege for me to work with you and I feel that I have gained much from it.

The United States Olympic Committee

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) is designated by the

³Letter from Dr. W. Richard Stephens to Dr. Robert E. Smith nominating John Strahl for the NAIA Hall of Fame, December 31, 1974.

⁴Personal correspondence between John E. Visser and John M. Strahl, July 9, 1980. Permission to quote secured.
International Olympic Committee to enter athletes from the United States in the Olympic Games. The committee decides upon the philosophy and helps underwrite programs for amateur athletes involved in the United States Olympic effort.  

In the late 1950's and early 1960's Al O. Duer, then NAIA Executive Director, pushed hard for the NAIA to be recognized by the United States Olympic Committee. Through Duer's work and that of other NAIA officials, the USOC recognized the NAIA and gave it a five vote representation on the USOC.

Strahl served as the NAIA alternate to the USOC in 1974, 1975, and 1976. As president-elect in 1976 Strahl was appointed as the official delegate of the NAIA to the USOC. He became one of seventy members of the Executive Committee.

Strahl attended both the 1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and the 1980 Winter Games in Lake Placid, New York, as the NAIA Representative to the USOC. He served on the Food and Housing Committee for Lake Placid and also for the 1979 Pan American Games in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Strahl's responsibilities on the USOC Executive Committee have taken him to numerous USOC business meetings in Colorado Springs and Squaw Valley.

In an article in the March 14, 1980, issue of the Papyrus, Strahl commented on the USOC unanimous vote to support President Carter's boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics.

Most members of the USOC are, for the most part, opposed to a boycott. I think that it's great such a World Athletic Competition

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exists, it sure beats war. But we all feel that the President should be upheld.

...the current situation is a crossroads for the Olympics because it is the first time the two major nations have been at odds.

Strahl went on to say that, "...it isn't so much the competition you are destroying, but the spirit of The Games." 7

Summary

John Strahl's professional involvement in athletics began in 1948-49 as the men's tennis coach for Taylor University. In 1950, Strahl took his first full-time professional position in athletics at Greenville College. He has coached every men's sport at Greenville in a span of thirty years of teaching and coaching.

Strahl's relationship with the NAIA began in the early 1950's when he attended District 20 business meetings. He served as secretary-treasurer of District 20 from 1957 to 1962. The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Coaches Association (NAIAC) elected Strahl membership chairman in 1957. He served on that committee for nine years. Strahl's District 20 colleagues elected him district chairman in 1963. He served in that post for three years. During his tenure, District 20 became one of the best-organized in the NAIA. As president of NAIAC, Strahl began two major programs that continue to function well. He began and edited the NAIA COACH, a magazine for NAIA members. Strahl also started the collection of individual coaches' membership dues through institutional membership fees.

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6 The Papyrus (Greenville College, Greenville, Illinois), March 14, 1980, p. 4.

7 Ibid.
Strahl received homage from the NAIA National Office in 1965 and again in 1970 when he was the recipient of the NAIA Award of Merit. He served as national chairman to the District Chairman Committee from 1967 to 1969 when he was elected to the Executive Board. Strahl was the national tournament coordinator in every sport offered by the NAIA. He also served as national coordinator for the Eligibility Committee and the Faculty Athletic Representatives Committee.

In 1972 John Strahl was elected as the NAIA's fourth vice-president. He also first represented the NAIA on the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) as an alternate during that year. The Amateur Basketball Association of the United States and the Joint Committee on Physical Education and Athletics in Colleges and Universities were two more of Strahl's assignments. In 1976 Strahl was inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame for Meritorious Service. In March of 1977 Strahl assumed the presidency for one year of the NAIA.

When the NAIA finally received recognition by the USOC, Strahl was appointed to serve as an alternate to that committee. In 1976, as an official delegate of the USOC, John became involved with the Food and Housing Committee for the 1976 Montreal Summer Olympic Games, 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympic Games, and the 1979 Pan American Games. He attended both the 1976 Summer and the 1980 Winter Games as a member of the USOC Executive Committee.
Chapter 5

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT DR. JOHN MILTON STRAHL:
A COLLECTION OF COMMENTS

What a man lives and stands for is one measure of his success or failure in society's eyes. What Dr. John Strahl's athletes and peers say about him is the true measure of his success and effectiveness in affecting positively the lives of those people with whom he became associated.

Questionnaires were mailed to 133 of Strahl's former athletes and peers. Sixty-seven responses were returned. The following statements were made about Strahl by those former athletes and peers responding to the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Responses

Thirteen of Strahl's former athletes gave the following responses to the question, "What do you consider to be some of Dr. Strahl's outstanding qualities?"

1. A committed and dedicated Christian.
2. A love for God, his family, and man.
3. Ability to communicate with people.
4. Simple philosophy regarding life.
5. Emphathize and cares for others.
6. Doesn't take himself too seriously.
8. A good listener.
9. Well liked and respected.
10. Enjoys life and is happy.
11. A common sense approach based on experience and wisdom.
12. Understanding of human needs.
13. Doesn't forget you.
15. Able to delegate responsibility and offer credit where it is due.

-Steve Kimery

His easy going manner—I don't ever remember seeing him really angry. His patience—many of his fellows would have been booted from the team by another coach, but John Strahl believed that they would eventually turn their lives around, and many of them did. His genuine concern for his players showed itself in many ways.

-David Colgan

John Strahl really made me feel like I was someone and that there is no one to be treated differently. He was always looking at the sunny side of everything. It rubbed off.

-Delbert Maroon

His easy, relaxed manner and patience. His philosophy of life and sense of humor. The manner in which he relates to all people and his warm personality. His interest in the achievements of others. His office door was always open—he always had time for you. His qualities are just too numerous to list completely.

-David Altopp

Coach Strahl possesses a good sense of humor and has the unique ability of always seeing the lighter side of what first appears to be serious and complex problems. His ability to work harmoniously with all people is one of his more outstanding traits.

-Tom Young

Easy going but very insightful manner with students and athletes. Ability to relate to people...and get good effort without undue pressure.

-Ted Comden

He is able to keep several things going at once. I've seen him organize a tennis practice, participate in a conference call for the NAIA, answer questions about a departure time for a tennis trip...all at virtually the same time. He always seemed to be able to get the most out of an athlete's abilities in key situations.

-Kevin Hickey
He was calm and quiet in times of stress. Always an outstanding Christian coach.

-Dr. Kenneth R. Smith

His casual, laid-back, never panic style, his ability to get along with everyone and his ability of assessing talent quickly and correctly.

-Dennis Spencer

Relaxation with life. He never lets anything bother him to any great degree, at least not that it affects his public relations. He has a broader perspective than just the winning of a game. This allows him to see sports in its proper place in life.

-Leslie Krober

He seemed to be able to look beyond the outward barriers of a person and understand the real you.

-Darrell A. Lee

He is a "regular" person, yet outstanding. He tends to show personal interest in you no matter who you are. He remembers your name. He has many titles of prominence, and yet he's not snobbish about them.

-Phillip Owsley

Coach Strahl's most outstanding qualities? ...probably June, his wife, and his three kids....seriously he always had time for anyone. He knew when someone was down and could give you an encouraging word when it was needed most. John tried to meet the need of every individual. He has a tremendous ability to get lost in other people.

-Roy E. Yarbrough

Thirteen of Strahl's peers gave the following responses to the question, "What do you consider to be some of Dr. Strahl's outstanding qualities?"

Dr. Strahl has the amazing ability to recognize the relative importance of individual circumstances in regard to the big pic-
ture. He also always manages to use all of the time he has without getting ahead of or behind his established goals. These qualities show up in his ability to make the people around him feel productive and comfortable at the same time.

-Phillip Storer

His sensitivity toward others. Consciousness of other's feelings and attitudes. Confident Christian gentleman, who is respected by all who have ever known him. Ability to make one feel comfortable even when they disagree. He has a knack for getting people involved even when they initially didn't want to.

-Dr. Robert Mason

A sincere interest in people. A sincere love for his family. A sincere belief in fairness. Integrity beyond reproach.

-Leon G. Davis

He is patient, understanding, loyal. He loves God, family, Greenville College, and NAIA. He is a fine Christian man that lives Christianity.

-W. C. Myers

1. His willingness to trust people, allowing them both the responsibility and the freedom to do a job.
2. His unselfishness and loyalty to his friends and associates.
3. He inspires confidence.
4. Most important, he "sees the big picture." He has a great ability not to lose sight of the big, important goals.

-Dr. Robert E. Smith

One of John's outstanding qualities is the ability to accept a person as he is, not as he would hope him to be. This acceptance allows freedom for the individual to grow and develop. Another quality is his optimistic attitude about life in general and about people in particular. Because of their successes, as well as failures, he always seemed to have time for students and colleagues when they needed to talk.

-Marilyn Starr

Sincere, integrity, Christian, ethical, moral, low-key but strong leadership, dedicated, cooperative, supportive, and positive.

-Robert Livingston
Everything about John Strahl is outstanding. His sense of fair play was always visible. He was always methodical, listened to all sides of issues, and expressed his views without selfish interest.

-Steven Senko

I think the quality that most appeals to me is the easy-going attitude that he has. I know that deep down inside things are churning, but outwardly nothing seems to affect him. Dr. Strahl is a great leader. He can get you to do things that would be impossible for other men to do. He brings out the best in everyone.

-Roland Fletcher

His leadership ability. His years of experience in the field of athletics and in working with people. His relationship with Christ. His love for people.

-Roger E. Haun

John has many essential qualities necessary for leadership. Among the most important are honesty, sincerity, humility, and all the qualities necessary to deserve the confidence of men. John was dedicated without being brashly and selfishly ambitious. It was his nature to serve his fellow man and his unselfish nature produced a man with the most ideal qualities of leadership.

-Al 0. Duer

Perspective on life...issues that are not life or death do not call for great emotional outbursts. This is a reflection of his Christian faith and experiences in World War II as I see it. People orientation. He is trustworthy and greatly is he emulated for his acceptance of people.

-Dr. W. Richard Stephens

His great humanism. His genuine concern for people. He sees the best in everything and everyone.

-Dr. Harry Fritz

The following section indicates the replies of eleven of Strahl's former athletes to the question, "What was your impression of Dr. Strahl as an educator?"
He was very informative and knowledgeable and had a great ability to come across with it.

-Darrell A. Lee

He saw education in its broadest sense, not just limited to the classroom. He probably taught the most by his own example--modeled for his students things that were important.

-Dr. Robert E. Smith

I always looked forward to his classes with the expectation of enjoyment. I learned a lot from him, outside the classroom. His life, for all, is a living witness.

-Stu Brynn

Coach Strahl can probably best be described as one who does not put a great amount of emphasis on "book smarts"; he is a very practical person. As an educator, I believe his goal was to equip people to be functional in life. That does not always take "brains," but an ability to be rational and adaptable to situations.

-David Altopp

Coach Strahl exemplified all the qualities of a gentleman and professional educator. He taught the values of life through example.

-Tom Young

Coach Strahl educated me by example.

-Dr. Kenneth R. Smith

Something about him inspires young people toward more education. This is evidenced by how many Greenville athletes and physical education majors go on to advanced degrees.

-Robert Briner

Excellent teacher. He possesses the ability to communicate with theory and application. The uncanny sense of being able to motivate and interest the student belonged to him.

-Steve Kimery
Well-qualified, always prepared, interesting class to attend due to his knowledge of the subject and his sense of humor.

-Bill Staff

A graduate level approach to an undergraduate curriculum. He made routine courses interesting with his method of presentation.

-Thomas Bugbee

His teachings were based on life situations.

-Roy E. Yarbrough

Responses by eight of Strahl's peers to the following question appear next, "What was your impression of Dr. Strahl as an educator?"

He was an excellent educator because he inspires students to attain high levels of quality. He always covered the necessary materials and most importantly, he continually offered examples in practical application.

-Phillip Storer

John Strahl has been, and is, the type of educator that has had a strong influence for good on young people -- I feel that his is his main objective.

-Leon G. Davis

He had a great desire to learn and to improve the society in which he found himself. He was my kind of educator -- by example and inspiration.

-Al O. Duer

Students are of ultimate value and are to be treated as growing persons. He therefore believed in education by involvement!! Experiences of varied sorts -- in and out of class -- were to be provided for all-around growth to occur. His expectations for students were always to help them mature, and they were tailored to each student's level of attainment.

-Dr. W. Richard Stephens
Conservative and yet not traditional for the sake of tradition. Uses the past as a springboard for the future. Committed to the Christian heritage as reflected in a contemporary educational approach to learning.

-Dr. Robert Mason

A vast wealth of knowledge. Very earthy. Could get to the little things that mean more than the bold things. Most of his teachings came from experience, not books.

-Roland Fletcher

John was never threatened by new ideas or suggestions for change in the Physical Education Department. He allowed participatory management by the physical education faculty, thus helping to develop a strong "esprit des corps" among the members and building good relationships between the men's and women's programs.

-Marilynn Starr

Dr. Strahl is able to put all events in perspective. He imparts philosophy in subtle ways.

-Dr. Harry Fritz

The question, "What is your opinion of Dr. Strahl as a leader and administrator?" brought the ensuing remarks from eleven of his former athletes.

He has definitely contributed to the minds and bodies of Greenville graduates. Some more than others. For me he set an example of what real success is all about. That is, it's not the quantity of what you produce that counts, it's the quality of your efforts that have everlasting endurance.

-Phillip Owsley

He allows you to become what you are capable of becoming. To be yourself and be honest to yourself. This was shown through his consistent life.

-Hank Burbridge
He is the type of leader we wish all athletes would have the opportunity to play for.

-Bill Staff

Dr. Strahl taught me the ultimate principles of life from my associations with him in tennis. Tennis, as he saw it, was a sport which developed character. I learned about winning and losing in such a framework that it is now a part of my life. The tennis court was a "lab" course.

-Nelson Blount

I can only say that I hope my son, John, has the privilege of being on campus and in contact with Coach Strahl at Greenville College at the end of his high school career.

-Delbert Maroon

Dr. Strahl imparts a strong sense of self-esteem to those he coaches. He is always seeing the good things and building up the young men he teaches and coaches.

-David Colgan

Because of his unique personality, he is what I term a "silent leader." He instills by example and a simple philosophy of life. His wisdom in decisions and the use of good common sense is respected by those who come in contact with him. Evidence of these inherent qualities was the doctorate degree awarded by his constituency, his promotion on the administrative staff, positions and offices held on the state and national levels of intercollegiate athletics.

As a leader of young men, he is a legend in his own time. The influence he has held over all the young people who have been associated with him is great. He instills ideas and thoughts, exhibits patience, and then observes growth. Through this process, he emphasizes his own personal strengths and weaknesses. Thus, each person can also develop his own leadership qualities.

-Steve Kimery

The leadership program designed for the Coast Guard Reserve by another person and I completely reflects John Strahl's leadership. He administered and led by examples.

-Stu Brynn
There is a mystical quality that Coach Strahl possesses that inspires people to strive for their highest potential. His easy-going manner makes him an excellent administrator as far as I am concerned. When the boat starts to sink, Coach Strahl is the last one to abandon the ship. In fact, he will find a way to plug the hole.

-David Altopp

He seemed to be able to see the good qualities in others and was able to get others to see it in themselves.

-Darrell Lee

He led by example. I always wanted to do my very best for John for I knew he would completely support me. He was also quick to praise and give credit. He wanted his programs to show real "class." John inspires people to do their very best.

-Dr. Robert E. Smith

The following eighteen responses all echo Strahl's peers' opinions of him as a leader and administrator.

I know that he is and was a fine administrator. I sincerely feel that he must have had the same influence on young people. Very positive!

-Gordon Gillespie

It has been proven that his influence is present in the lives of others he has touched. Therefore, I think he has been a good and effective leader of men.

-Jack Trager

If I had a son attending college, John Strahl is the type of person I would want at the institution my son attended.

-Leo O. Traister

He must have had a very significant influence on young people as evidenced by the vast number of physical educators and coaches in the ranks of both high schools and colleges, all teaching and coaching from Greenville College.

-Dr. Barry May
As an administrator he allowed me the freedom and independence to develop the soccer program in my own way. As a leader his relaxed and personable attitude towards athletic competition enables an athlete to also relax and perform better.

-Dr. W. James Stuart

Dr. Strahl always liked to see his students experience success. He made local "stars" out of some of the most unlikely people and then carried their story into the tradition of Greenville College.

-Phillip Storer

I know, from the number of people who come to see John wherever we are, that he is a leader. His graduates and associates depend upon him in many respects. As an administrator, Greenville College placed him in the Development Office and that tells a story in itself. As an Executive Committee member and as president of the NAIA, he demonstrated his administrative ability.

-Clark L. Swisher

As an administrator, he has an uncanny way of picking the right people for jobs and then is able to delegate authority. As a leader, he could instill confidence in players and make them want to perform, rather than pressure them into performance. Players seem to love and respect him as one can see by the great number of athletes who return for reunions.

-Bonnie Tidball

He is in the top one percent of all the men I have ever known. He is unquestionably one of the finest men I have ever been associated with professionally or simply as a friend. He always has foremost in his judgements the finest and best for those he serves. He is truly a servant of God.

-Dr. Robert Mason

Thorough and organized as an administrator. He lead by setting a model example of how to live and interact with people.

-Dr. Robert Gay

An administrator who lives by the spirit as well as by the letter of the rules—who is well-organized, and who is prepared. A leader who leads by example and expects the best from young people.

-Leon G. Davis
Excellent administrator. Thoughtful of others. Interested in seeing others grow. Well respected as evidenced by loyal alumni. Has great patience and interest in young people.

-W. C. Myers

For a man to "survive" the many changes that have taken place over the past thirty years on the college campuses, he had to be a great administrator and educator of young men and women.

-Steven Senko

Dr. Strahl did an outstanding job of administering by hiring the right people to work under him. He was an excellent motivator and leader.

-Roger E. Haun

Administratively, he brought clarity of mission and purpose. His staff respected him and had confidence in his ability to "get things done." He tended to farm out many of his administrative duties to his own staff to engender spirit and morale. He always lived his own! His students almost worshiped him as a person.

-Dr. W. Richard Stephens

The fact that John Strahl became president of an organization of thousands of coaches and college men proves him to be a truly outstanding administrator and, quoting one of my idols, Will Rogers, he "never met a man he didn't like,...and I add...who didn't like him.

-Al 0. Duer

Dr. Strahl administers "softly" and by example, yet persistently and effectively. He has prodigious energy and is always willing to adjust and adapt to new and difficult situations. He is a "kind" person, yet he will not bend his basic principles. He has the great knack of creating a family of the organization he is leading. His life serves as an admirable model for the young people he reaches and whose programs he administers.

-Dr. Harry Fritz

Dr. Strahl has proven over and over again his ability to do a job. I feel that Dr. Strahl is an outstanding administrator and leader.

-Charles C. Carroll
The question, "What impressed you the most about Dr. Strahl?" is answered by ten of his former athletes in the next section.

He never belittled us for our performances, but used gentle-like suggestions. One day early in the spring I ran a 440 for him in a time that wasn't too good. His only comment was, "Now if you put two of those together, you'll have a good half mile!"

-Frank Van Valin

In 1956 we had a great basketball team. I was only sixth man, but Coach Strahl made me feel important. He refused to play in a Christmas tournament unless the organizers agreed to pay for my first class fare home to Texas. These things you don't forget.

-Robert Briner

He had peculiar expressions that he could say like no one else. If he were to praise or imply that something was ok, he would say, "You know, you old GC dinks do a real good job."

It was on the Christmas Holiday California basketball trip. He permitted us to express our desires in sightseeing, etc., while we were out there. Coming home, we discovered an alternate route that would take us to the Grand Canyon. He really wanted to go too but used the democratic process and put it up for a vote. There was a little underhanded vote-getting by the only married team member who really wanted to get home. By a one vote margin the idea was defeated. He took me aside and humorously said, "Steve, that's the last time we use the democratic vote method." Ten years later, when I became Athletic Director and Basketball Coach at Judson College, he wrote me, saying, "I should have known that you'd be great, you voted for the Grand Canyon!" He never forgot.

-Steve Kimery

He always referred to the fact that we, as teachers, must always try to bring out the best in those people around us.

-Fred Reader

I remember Coach Strahl reading us a passage during one of our practices and he paraphrased it with this message, "Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man, but sooner or later, the man who wins is the man who thinks he can."

-Delbert Maroon
His sense of identity, or "being himself," whether on campus with students, athletes, and peers--or off-campus with NAIA or Olympics; not being ashamed of being from a small college, rather being proud of Greenville College!

-Ted Comden

He always wanted to treat his players to a dinner at the Blackhawk Smorgasbord in Jacksonville, Illinois. He wouldn't schedule a match with Illinois College or MacMurray College on a Monday because the Smorgasbord was closed then. He didn't think the season was complete if he couldn't see his players eat their fill at the Blackhawk.

-Kevin Hickey

It was not uncommon for him to say at the alumni soccer games or others, "...Smith...you say your mother is here today, ok...you can start!" Another time he took us out to the city park where the cross country team was having a meet. He wanted us to yell for them, support them. We were doing this during soccer practice and were dressed in shoes and shorts. After the meet, Strahl said, "Ok...everybody run around the lake on the cross country course. The first eleven finishers will start the next soccer game." Don't you think we ran! He used uncommon easy-going methods to get good results.

-Leslie Krober

His personal concern for his players -- two instances in my life describe this point: (1) At the beginning of my senior year, I almost did not come back to school for lack of finances. I shared with him this possibility and he advised me to finish even if I had to borrow the money. He said, "Your education is the best investment you can make." I stayed in school and found out he was right. (2) My junior year I had a stretch of bad shooting nights, and I was worried about my starting spot. He came to me in practice and said, "Dave, if you don't score a point, you can be valuable to us. If you can just get 8-10 rebounds a game, that's all we need." That was the encouragement that I needed to relax and I began to play much better.

-David Colgan

It is hard to put my finger on one incident because it was his total way of life that impressed me most. He is sincerely interested in people and he helped everyone appreciate life and living and most of all living for Christ. Because of my associations with Dr. Strahl I have learned how to handle losing as well as winning.

-Nelson Blount
Strahl's peers acknowledge how he most impressed them.

He has always been interested in me as a person. He is a wise "sage" person. He has common sense-plus.

-Thomas D. Morgan

Back in 1965 or '66 at a Greenville College alumni banquet in which Dr. Elva Kinney was being honored, John was also given an award by the Alumni Association. In receiving the award John immediately turned the "spotlight" back on Dr. Kinney and gave her special recognition and a tribute. Though he always receives recognition and praise graciously John has a special way of making others feel important too.

-Marilyn Starr

John kept telling me that we were among the last of the "old guard" coaches and administrators. He was right! As the president of the NAIA (following John) his advice was the best part of the year.

-Clark L. Swisher

One year I coached soccer at Greenville College. At the time I was married and under extreme financial duress. When the team played their games, Coach Strahl would buy snacks for the guys to eat at half-time. That year he always over-bought so there would be leftovers for me to take home. For two and a half months our food supply was supplemented, at times dominated, by Strahl's goodies.

-Phillip Storer

On two different occasions -- (1) when accepting or assuming the presidency of the N.A.I.A. and, (2) when being initiated in the NAIA Hall of Fame -- I was impressed by John's strong appreciation for the past and his humility--and his commitment to the future.

-Leon G. Davis

His thoughtfulness of everyone regardless of their position; social position, office held, etc., does not preclude the treatment received from John Strahl. He makes everyone feel special to him.

-Dr. Robert Mason
His honesty, willingness to roll up his sleeves, and his organizational ability. His "Abe Lincoln - Will Rogers" style.

-Gordon Gillespie

His insistence on opening meetings with a prayer. His ability to "get across" messages in an indirect manner. His tolerance and his ability to effectively relate to people whose life styles and objectives would certainly not be compatible. He seeks for new experiences and is very inquisitive. He is young at heart and is interested in learning and observing.

-Dr. Harry Fritz

In my dealings at the district and conference levels, I was always impressed with his ability to let those on opposing sides have their say and then make a decision that would not offend either side. Both would think they had won.

-Bill Merris

When times were tense, he would bring perspective by means of some funny activity. An unskilled basketball player thought his moment of glory had come when Coach Strahl called him from the bench. The score was close and it was late in the game. What dismay came over Bill when Coach Strahl told him to go to the back of the scorer’s bench to watch the clock and keep the suspect score-keeper honest!

-Dr. W. Richard Stephens

A serious injury occurred in the gym during practice one day. Coach Fletcher, Coach Strahl, President Herron, and myself were all in the gym at the time. It was interesting to see how Coach Strahl took charge, remained calm and handed out orders for each of us to do --just like the true administrator that he is.

-Roger E. Haun

Summary

Throughout thirty years of teaching, coaching, and administrative duties, John Milton Strahl focused his attention and efforts on people. He lived by the "Golden Rule" and personally affected hundreds of lives as a positive influence.
The statements made in the preceding pages of this chapter indicate that John Strahl was an effective teacher, leader, and friend. His teaching ran deep to the roots of many lives. This collection of statements by Strahl's former athletes stands as evidence of the truth of which Henry Adams spoke when he said, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."¹

John Strahl's positive, Christian influence on his former athletes and peers has been great. It taught individuals to live a true life, true to themselves and their fellowman. Henry Van Dyke's "Four Things" describes in detail the formula of success Strahl applied to living an influential life:

Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true;
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow-man sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and Heaven securely.²


Chapter 6

"STRAHLISMS" -- A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

The Origin of the Strahlism

The first words John Strahl uttered after the speech coaching of his twin sister Jean may qualify as the original "Strahlism." The exact date or content of the first sagacious maxim of Strahl was never recorded for posterity.

The term "Strahlism" originated with June (Starr) Strahl. Hearing others comment on John's infamous verbal contributions at meetings, athletic contests, and classes, June quickly labeled the collection of sayings, "Strahlisms". She explained,

John has this attitude that calms people around him because of his youthful experiences during World War II where he came "that close" to meeting his Maker several times. If it isn't a life or death situation, John doesn't see any reason to get upset or lose sleep about it.

Since then, Strahl's sometimes witty, sometimes obvious, and always true proverbs have been looked upon as the basis for his common-sense, easy-going lifestyle.

A Way of Life in Words

For one to understand John Strahl, one must listen to his wisdom expressed in many differing situations. The following examples were

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contributed via the questionnaires by his colleagues, athletes, and students. They express lessons learned about life through "Strahlisms."

"Don't judge anyone too quickly. Give him a little time to grow, wait ten years or so after he gets out of college and see what he becomes."

"Take your time in college. No one will listen to you before you are thirty anyway -- and they may not even!"

"If you live long enough, you will see everything three times."

"For some reason or another, struggle generally brings great satisfaction."

"Attitudes are most important; material things are often temporary."

"When it is all said and done people will likely accept you in the long run of daily performances -- as a good person, teacher, or ditch digger."

"Maturing is a life-long project."

"Sports, music, art, religion, and politics make the world go around -- otherwise war is the only alternative."

"A good life value system is not a gimmick or gadget -- it takes time."

"One can borrow money, but not time or good friends."

"Relax and play it by ear. Things will work out in their own good time."

In response to a difficult situation he would comment, "Don't let it bother you; in two weeks we'll be laughing about it." To that he might add, "The young are impatient. Everything comes out in the wash. The chickens all come home to roost."
On Athletics

In his early seasons of coaching a new sport, Strahl applied the KISS principle, or, "Keep it simple, Stupid." Coach Strahl never went into a game that he thought he might lose. He would say, "They put their pants on the same way that we do: one leg at a time."

Soccer was one sport he coached by the KISS principle; an example, "Always keep the ball in front of their goal. If we can't kick it in, they will." In tennis it was, "Learn to return the ball. Your opponent will provide the mistakes." He kept his coaching low-keyed and in one non-pressure situation, he quipped, "I wonder who we're playing today, anyway?"

Greenville College's current athletic director, Jack Trager, used the following "Strahlsim" to help keep his coaching in a proper perspective: "You win some, you lose some, and some get rained out." In the same vein, Trager recalls Strahl instructing him with, "There is no sense getting worked up over the outcome of a ballgame. It isn't life or death, like war."

The "Strahlsim" that best reflects his attitude towards athletics and its carry-over value was mentioned by over eighty percent of the respondees: "A hundred years from now no one will remember who won or lost or even the score of the game; but they will remember the important things about the people and experiences around them. So let's have fun, do your best, and keep everything in perspective."

Greenville College was a favorite subject of Strahl's. One of his most memorable statements about his "employer" and "second-home" refers to the college as more than just bricks and buildings:
Greenville College is a spirit; it is people; it is a small island where we are able to perform for God for a short time. Here you don't fool students very long because students are like children and dogs—they sense quality when they find it. At Greenville, and anywhere else, education and sports are a privilege.

**On Himself**

Strahl was quick to set the pace for others to march by, but he also held high standards for his own venture through life's hills and valleys. Behind his desire for excellence was the credo, "The only way to go is to go first class." He told students, "Always try to do your best and be able to face yourself. That's all anyone can ever ask of you." He lived up to that challenge. He said, "We all live a recognized pattern; all I ask are options in life."

His mission in life was clear to him and, reflecting on that, he stated, "Life is no brief candle for me; it is a splendid torch which I have for only a moment of time." His time and efforts were spent in living up to those self-imposed measures. Strahl believed that "life is made in God's image; therefore, it should not be spent in vain."

Thomas Bugbee was able to recall Strahl's ability to see the whole picture, not only for himself but for others as well. Bugbee recounts the situation leading up to a particularly meaningful "Strahlism":

A "Strahlism" emerged at a time when I was experiencing a great deal of difficulty grappling with God and faith. Coach Strahl related that it was "too bad" that faith wasn't as easy for everybody to accept as it appears to be for the old woman sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of her home up in the hills of Kentucky.

With the abundance of awards and special recognitions he has received, John Strahl has not lost his sense of direction. He well remembered his beginnings and how he advanced, "In school I was the
smartest kid in the dumb row!" When he was inducted into the NAIA Hall
of Fame in 1976 he sent his twin Jean a copy of a newspaper clipping
describing the significance of the event. Across the bottom of the
article he had quickly but accurately scribbled, "Jean, all this from
shooting basketballs against the coal shed in New Philly!"

Summary

The simple and truthful statements of John Strahl took on spe­
cial meaning to those who best knew him. Throughout his career as an
administrator, coach, and teacher, he took the time to offer assistance
to the many lives with which he came in contact.

The original "Strahlism," though unrecorded, set the stage for
the numerous quips, comments, and expressions Strahl offered as inspi­
ration, salve, and diversion. One "Strahlism" reflects this theme more
than any other the Greenville sage has offered. It provides a concise
and genuine description of the originator's self-design, "Learn to give
of yourself..."
Chapter 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

John M. Strahl has taught and coached at Greenville College for thirty years. During that time (1950-1980), he became one of the most highly respected individuals on the Greenville College campus and in the field of physical education and athletics. That respect was based on his knowledge of people and of his profession, on the high standards of conduct he set for himself and his student-athletes, and on his genuine concern for the total worth of the individual.

Strahl's special efforts to exert a lasting influence on the lives of the people with whom he came into contact caused him to constantly reach out and give people something distinctive that they needed. Those particular needs varied from one personality to the next but all received similar treatment and results from Strahl's ability to see the "total picture."

The purpose of the study was to collect and arrange information leading to a compiled history that would accurately record the life and professional contributions to date of Dr. John Milton Strahl to physical education and athletics at Greenville College. Another intent of the thesis was to bring into focus the significant effect of one man on an institution of higher education, a national organization, and numerous students and colleagues.
Strahl was born July 1, 1924, in New Philadelphia, Ohio. He loved athletics because it brought people together. John's parents placed a high value on both education and religion and his family background included several generations of educators. John recalled that the family was most important during his childhood and many experiences stand out in his memory that involved family participation and communication.

John attended school in New Philadelphia until his senior year in high school when his family moved to Roseville, Ohio. He graduated from Roseville in 1942, following a successful year of athletic participation and other student leadership roles. His college education at Olivet Nazarene College in Kankakee, Illinois, was interrupted after only one semester by World War II. John enlisted in the Army and served admirably in the European Theatre for twenty-five months, including eighteen months in combat in four major combat areas. His experience in the military as a very young man convinced him that only life or death situations merited intensive reaction. That calming attitude was reflected in his personality and later in his teaching and coaching.

Strahl returned to college in 1946 and came under the influence of Dr. Ronald Jones, professor of physical education at Olivet. John took on numerous student leadership roles and became more certain of his desire to major in physical education. When Dr. Jones left Olivet to teach and coach at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, John decided to transfer to Taylor as well to earn his degree in his chosen profession.

While still at Olivet John met June Starr and after a lengthy engagement, the two were married in 1947 and now have three children. John graduated from Taylor University in 1949 and entered graduate
school at the University of Illinois at Champaign. He successfully completed his master's degree in physical education in 1950. That fall John began his teaching and coaching career at Greenville College.

At Greenville College John served as athletic director, head coach of three varsity men's sports, and, along with his wife, June, taught the physical education courses. Strahl was instrumental in the physical education and athletic departments' growth into two of the largest on campus. Through his untiring efforts four more men's varsity sports were added and five women's varsity teams came into being. Under his direct leadership, Greenville's athletic facilities multiplied into a new 1600 seat gymnasium, a thirty-three acre athletic complex for baseball, soccer, softball, and intramurals, and a new tennis complex.

His coaching record is outstanding. More importantly, however, is the significant positive influence Strahl has had on the athletes and students he has instructed. The emphasis he placed on the "whole student" receiving the total educational experience caused a great many of his former student-athletes to give credit to Strahl for the personal successes that they have encountered later in life. At one time Strahl determined that over forty-two colleges and universities across the nation had within their ranks faculty members who had been athletes under Strahl's influential coaching.

The basketball and tennis teams he coached amassed the most impressive season totals. He coached basketball from 1950 to 1965 and produced 220 victories against 140 losses, with winning seasons thirteen out of fifteen years. In tennis his teams won eight straight Prairie College Conference championships and have recorded a twenty-seven year won-loss total of 211-106.
During his early years of coaching at Greenville College, Strahl began his long and fruitful association with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). From 1957 to 1980 Strahl has held every major title and served in every office of the NAIA. (Appendix C lists positions held by year.) In 1977 John received his highest honor when he was elected president of the NAIA.

His association and successful administrative work in his profession also gave him the opportunity to serve on the United States Olympic Committee as a representative of the NAIA.

Strahl's talents and dedication to the advancement of his profession have not gone unrewarded. He has twice been named recipient of the NAIA's Award of Merit for Outstanding Leadership. In 1976 he was inducted into the prestigious NAIA Hall of Fame. He was also honored that year by his own when Greenville College bestowed an Honorary Doctorate of Education upon Strahl. (Appendix D lists awards and honors received by year.)

John Strahl has served so many so unselfishly and has seen the fruits of his labors blossom into some of the great leaders of today in athletics and physical education. His influence and guidance of young people seemed divinely inspired and he continues to serve with great purpose the calling he received early in life. Throughout his successes, the growth he inspired in physical education and athletics, the leadership he gave in local, regional, and national organizations, and the literally hundreds of individual people he befriended and influenced, John Strahl has remained humble in his self-image. He is still, "Coach."
Conclusions

This writer shares the opinion of many who know Strahl that the influence he had on the growth of physical education and athletics at Greenville College was great. In fact all that Strahl had to offer his profession could not be contained within one institution of higher education. So vast were the talents and dedication at his command that they led him to the highest levels of achievement within the framework of the world's foremost athletic society. The magnitude of his accomplishments cannot be contained herein, for in fact, as he maintains his service to Greenville College and gives counsel in his field, he continues to maximize his tremendous ability to bring together and affect the lives of people.

The intent of the writer has been to uncover and bring to light the inherent benevolence of one man, John Milton Strahl, and to add, in some way, to the understanding of how he contributed to the overall betterment of his fellowman through his chosen profession. The success of this attempt to make an historical record in this may be clouded by the vastness of the amount of material uncovered and at least by an inability to document scientifically the personal thoughts and feelings of over one hundred people. Fortunately, one preceding writer recognized the labors of such a Herculean task. W. H. Auden authored the statement "I Believe," and this writer clings to that quotation in response to criticism of this thesis: "Goodness is easier to recognize than to define; only the greatest novelists can portray good people." \(^1\)

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Following John Strahl's retirement from Greenville College, it is recommended that an updated account be added to this thesis. This addition would provide a more complete edition of the "Strahl Era," which would be available to future readers.

2. A succeeding study is recommended to record the history of the physical education and athletic departments at Greenville College so that historical evidence of the college's contributions through these two subjects will also be recorded.
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Roseville High School Commencement Exercise Program. Roseville, Ohio. May 22, 1942.

APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A

COVER LETTERS OF CORRESPONDENCE

405 Eastern
Greenville, Illinois 62246
July 30, 1979

Dear ________:

I am gathering data for the purpose of writing a thesis for a Master's degree in Physical Education at Eastern Illinois University. My paper is entitled, "Dr. John Milton Strahl: His Life and Professional Contributions to Physical Education and Athletics at Greenville College."

My preliminary research indicates that Dr. Strahl was one of your coaches when you were a student at Greenville. Consequently your immediate response and assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Enclosed is a questionnaire to which I hope you will respond. Upon completion of the questions, please feel free to include any additional information you consider pertinent.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon, and thank you for your invaluable assistance.

Sincerely yours,

John A. Holak

JAH/mh
Dear ________:

I am gathering data for the purpose of writing a thesis for a Master's degree in Physical Education at Eastern Illinois University. My paper is entitled, "Dr. John Milton Strahl: His Life and Professional Contributions to Physical Education and Athletics at Greenville College."

My preliminary research indicates that Dr. Strahl was one of your coaches when you were a student at Greenville. Since that time you have been associated with him on a professional level as well. Consequently your immediate response and assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Enclosed is a questionnaire to which I hope you will respond. Upon completion of the questions, please feel free to include any additional information you consider pertinent.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon, and thank you for your invaluable assistance.

Sincerely yours,

John A. Holak

JAH/mh
405 Eastern
Greenville, Illinois 62246
July 30, 1979

Name
Address
Address

Dear _______

I am gathering data for the purpose of writing a thesis for a Master's degree in Physical Education at Eastern Illinois University. My paper is entitled, "Dr. John Milton Strahl: His Life and Professional Contributions to Physical Education and Athletics at Greenville College."

My preliminary research indicates that you have been associated with Dr. Strahl on a professional level. Consequently your immediate response and assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Enclosed is a questionnaire to which I hope you will respond. Upon completion of the questions, please feel free to include any additional information you consider pertinent.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon, and thank you for your invaluable assistance.

Sincerely yours,

John A. Holak

JAH/mh
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Return to: John A. Holak
Greenville College
Greenville, IL 62246

Your Name________________________
Current Address____________________

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the questions in the manner in which you feel will provide the most pertinent information to the completion of the study. You may use a separate sheet of paper, and if you do so, please be sure that your name is on all material returned. Please indicate any statements you do not wish to be quoted. I will consider all material quotable unless otherwise indicated.

A. Describe the manner in which you became acquainted with Dr. John Strahl, when you made his acquaintance, and in what capacity.

B. What do you consider to be some of Dr. Strahl's outstanding qualities?

C. What was your impression of Dr. Strahl from one or more of the following view points:
   1. Educator:
   2. Athlete:
   3. Opposing Coach:

D. Using an anecdote, describe what has impressed you the most about Dr. Strahl.
Questionnaire Page 2

E. Please comment on your impression of Dr. Strahl's personality.

F. Briefly reflect upon your thoughts in reference to Dr. Strahl as an administrator and leader of young men.

G. Dr. Strahl is known for his "Strahlisms" or brief summations of life in a philosophical manner. If there was or is a "Strahlism" that stands out in your mind that reflects your thoughts and relationship with Dr. Strahl, please describe it.
Appendix C

NAIA/USOC POSITIONS HELD BY YEAR

1957-62 Elected secretary-treasurer of NAIA District 20
1957-66 Selected membership chairman of NAIAC (Coaches Association)
1957-66 Served terms as membership chairman, secretary, vice-president, and president of NAIAC
1963-66 Elected president of NAIAC
1963-66 Elected chairman of NAIA District 20
1967-69 Named national chairman of the District Chairman Committee
1969 Elected to the Executive Board of NAIA
1969-77 Served as national coordinator for each of the NAIA National Tournaments in the twelve sports of baseball, bowling, football, golf, ice hockey, soccer, swimming, tennis, track, volleyball, wrestling, and cross country
1970 Served as national coordinator of the NAIA Eligibility Committee
1972-76 Served as fourth through first vice-president of NAIA
1972 Elected fourth vice-president of NAIA
1972 Represented the NAIA on the United States Olympic Committee
1974-76 Served as the NAIA alternate to the USOC
1975 Represented the NAIA for the Amateur Basketball Association of the United States
1975 Served on the Joint Committee on Physical Education and Athletics in Colleges and Universities representing the NAIA
1975 Served on the Joint Committee of the NAIA and AIAW
1976 Appointed official NAIA delegate to the USOC
1976-80 Served on USOC Executive Board Food and Housing Committee
1977  Elected president of NAIA

1977  Served on Joint Committee of the NAIA/NCAA

1977-79  Served as coordinator of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics
Appendix D

AWARDS AND HONORS RECEIVED BY YEAR

1941-42 Senior class president; co-captain basketball team, Honor Roll at Roseville High School

1945 Awarded the Army's Good Conduct Medal
    Awarded the Army's Meritorious Service Unit Plaque

1949 Received Bachelor of Science degree from Taylor University

1950 Received Masters of Science degree from the University of Illinois

1957 100th Basketball coaching victory

1959 P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year

1963 "This is Your Life" honorary tribute at Greenville College

1964 200th Basketball coaching victory

1964 P.C.C. Basketball Coach of the Year

1965 Awarded the Greenville College Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Leadership

1965 P.C.C. Soccer Coach of the Year

1965 Received the NAIA Award of Merit for his service as president of NAIAC

1965 P.C.C. Basketball Coach of the Year

1966 100th Tennis coaching victory

1966 P.C.C. Soccer Coach of the Year

1970 Earned a second NAIA Award of Merit for his excellent leadership in District 20

1971 Appeared in the 1971 edition of Personalities of the West and Midwest

1971 P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year
<table>
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<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Education Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Selected to Outstanding Educators of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame for Meritorious Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Received an honorary Doctorate of Education degree from Greenville College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Received the Recognition Award from the Bond County Community Unit # 2 Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Received an Award of Appreciation for Participation in the NAIA International Cup Basketball Tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>200th Tennis coaching victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>P.C.C. Tennis Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Selected for the Taylor University Chamber of Achievement Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Received the Higher Education Award by the Commission on Christian Education of the Free Methodist Church</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix E

RECIPIENTS OF THE JUNE STARR STRAHL AWARD

1975  Pat Davis
1976  Nancy Davenport
1977  Lynn Best
1978  Dorothy Jordan
1979  Sue Bixler
1980  Carolyn Parker
Appendix F

RECIPIENTS OF THE JOHN M. STRAHL AWARD

1976  Pamela Jordan
1977  Lynn Best
1978  Debbie Deppe
1979  Kathy Shemwell
1980  Becki Richert/Carolyn Parker
Appendix G

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF IMPORTANT EVENTS:
ATHLETICS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION
GREENVILLE COLLEGE

1905-06 Alpha Athletic Association began -- first intramurals
1943 Intercollegiate Athletics began -- men's basketball
1945 First home basketball game was played in Burritt Gymnasium on December 7, 1945, versus Eden Seminary
1947 Varsity baseball and tennis teams began
1948 First physical education major
1948 Team named changed from Gremlins to Panthers
1950 Strahls arrived at Greenville College and began coaching and teaching careers
1950 Thanksgiving Turkey Tournament began -- men's basketball
1951 Advent of the Alumni Homecoming basketball game
1952 Varsity track and field team began
1952 Greenville College joined the Illinois Church College Conference
1953 Women's varsity basketball began
1953 Prairie College Conference chartered
1953 Greenville College joined the Illinois Association for the Professional Preparation of Health, Physical Education and Recreation Majors
1954 Varsity golf team began
1955 Greenville College joined the NAIA
1956 Varsity cross country team began
1957 National Christian Physical Education Association chartered on the Greenville College campus
1957  Varsity soccer team began
1959  Construction began on the new gymnasium
1960  Women's varsity tennis team began
1961  H. J. Long Gymnasium dedicated; first home basketball game held in the new gym
1962  Francis Field complex acquired
1963  Bob Blume Greenville College Cross Country Invitational began
1963  H. J. Long Outstanding Senior Athlete Award began
1964  National Christian College Physical Education Association met at Greenville College
1964  Robert E. Stroud Most Valuable Baseball Player Award began
1964  Women's varsity field hockey team began
1965  Jim, Bill, Floyd Staff Outstanding Baseball Award began
1968  Women's varsity volleyball team began
1970  Most Valuable Runner Cross Country Award began
1971  Women's varsity softball team began
1972  Art Bollinger Basketball Captain's Award began
1972  Scott Jay Burgess Memorial Tennis Complex Dedication
1972  Scott Jay Burgess Outstanding Freshman Basketball Player Award began
1975  June Starr Strahl Outstanding Women's Senior Athletic Award began
1976  John M. Strahl Outstanding Senior Physical Education Award began
1976  Prairie College Conference disbanded
1978  Ronald Faulkner Memorial Scholarship established
1978  Women's varsity track and field team began
1978  Strahl named Associate Vice President of Development for Alumni Affairs
Appendix H

GREENVILLE COLLEGE COACHING STAFFS BY SPORT/YEAR

Men's Tennis

1947-1949  Dr. A. B. Quall
1950-1953  John M. Strahl
1954-1957  John M. Strahl and W. Brock Brentlinger
1958-1967  John M. Strahl
1968-1969  John M. Strahl and Paul Morgan
1970      John M. Strahl and Jon Finley
1971-1980  John M. Strahl

Men's Basketball

1944-1947  Homer Cunningham
1948-1949  A. Hallam Crum
1950       Richard S. Brumitt
1951-1965  John M. Strahl
1966-1967  Robert E. Smith
1968-1972  Thomas D. Morgan
1973-1976  Roland Fletcher
1977-1980  Jack Trager

Men's Track and Field

1952-1953  John M. Strahl
1954       Roll Brumitt and Jack Trager
1955       Dr. Cunningham
1956-1960 Peter Wickman
1961 Les Wothke
1962-1967 Bob Blume
1968-1972 Thomas D. Morgan
1973 Roland Fletcher and Dick Dickinson
1974 Roland Fletcher
1975 Thomas D. Morgan and Jim Scott
1976 Thomas D. Morgan and John A. Holak

Men's Baseball

1947 Homer Cunningham
1948-1949 A. Hallam Crum
1950 Richard Brumitt
1951-1953 Guy Delamarter
1955-1958 John M. Strahl
1959-1961 W. Richard Stephens
1962-1966 Robert E. Smith
1967 Robert E. Smith and Mike Randall
1968 Robert E. Smith, D. Cassell, and B. Burge
1969 Robert E. Smith, Doug Tkachuk, and Dick Kraft
1970-1971 David Altopp and Doug Howard
1972 Robert E. Smith, David Altopp, and Paul Morgan
1973 Robert E. Smith and Paul Morgan
1974 Robert E. Smith
1975 Gene Odom
1976 David Altopp and Marty Daily
1977-1979 David Altopp
1980 Marty Daily

Men's Cross Country
1956 Peter Wickman
1957-1959 John M. Strahl
1960 John M. Strahl and Ralph Moorehouse
1961 Robert E. Smith
1962-1966 Bob Blume
1967-1968 Robert E. Smith and Dr. Leon Winslow
1969-1971 David Altopp
1972-1974 Roger Haun
1975-1980 John A. Holak

Men's Soccer
1957 Spencer Mulholland
1958 Spencer Mulholland and Ali Kurdieh
1959-1960 Ali Kurdieh
1961 John M. Strahl and Dave Doty
1962-1965 John M. Strahl
1966 John M. Strahl and Howard Barnes
1967-1968 John M. Strahl and Ron Goldsmith
1969-1970 John M. Strahl and Phil Storer
1971 Phil Storer
1972-1979 W. James Stuart

Men's Golf
1949-1960 Spencer Mulholland
1961-1963 R. Simmonds
1964 W. Richard Stephens
1965-1969  John M. Strahl
1970-1973  Royal Mulholland
1974-1975  Roger Haun
1976       Roland Fletcher
1977-1980  Jack Trager

Women's Basketball
1953-1962  June Strahl
1963-1966  Marilyn Starr
1967       Sharon Alger
1968-1973  Phyllis Holmes
1974       Lynn Simpson
1975-1980  Phyllis Holmes

Women's Softball
1971-1972  Phyllis Holmes
1973       Lynn Simpson
1974       Phyllis Holmes
1975-1980  Lynn Simpson

Women's Tennis
1960       Coach Bedell
1961-1962  June Strahl
1963-1968  Marilyn Starr
1969       Sue Carlton
1970-1971  Debbie Wingard
1973-1975  Lynn Simpson
1976       Phyllis Holmes
1977       Nancy Davenport
1978-1979  Pam Craig

**Women's Volleyball**
- 1968-1971  Phyllis Holmes
- 1972  Debbie Wingard
- 1973-1979  Lynn Simpson

**Women's Field Hockey**
- 1964-1968  Marilyn Starr
- 1969  Sue Carlton
- 1970-1971  Marilyn Starr
- 1972  Debbie Wingard
- 1973  Lynn Simpson
- 1974  Phyllis Holmes
- 1975-1978  Lynn Simpson

**Women's Track and Field**
- 1978-1980  Pam Craig
Appendix I

TENNIS TEAM MEMBERS BY YEAR

1950
D. Blowes  W. Kendall
L. Dickinson  B. King
B. Gaffner  A. McAlister
B. Hull  K. Smith

1951
D. Blowes  A. McAlister
B. Gaffner  B. McCormick
W. Kendall  K. Smith

1952
W. Banks  B. McCormick
D. Blowes  K. Smith
D. Hamby

1953
L. Britton  B. Coates
R. Brumitt  J. Huntsinger
R. Brumitt  K. Smith

1958
G. Bedell  B. Joseph
C. Carey  B. Smout
R. Carey  B. Snyder
S. Ellis

1959
B. Augustine  M. Miller
G. Bedell  D. Seyler
R. Ellis  B. Snyder
B. Joseph

113
1960
G. Bedell
J. Bimes
R. Ellis
B. Joseph

M. Miller
D. Seyler
B. Snyder

1961
J. Bimes
J. Finley
R. Mulholland

H. Siefken
B. Snyder

1962
J. Bimes
B. Clark
J. Finley
E. Kline

M. Miller
H. Siefken
R. Slaughter
B. Snyder

1963
J. Bimes
B. Brooks
J. Finley

S. George
G. Holloway
E. Kline

1964
B. Brooks
G. Early
S. George
D. Hunter

E. Kline
P. Morgan
T. Spurlin

1965
G. Holloway
D. Hunter
R. Leidtke
J. Mayse
P. Morgan

J. Newell
T. Spurlin
J. Wickersham
J. Wojakowski
D. Wolkins

1966
K. Dillman
D. Draper
S. George
D. Hunter
J. Mayse
E. McKimmy

D. Rocke
T. Spurlin
J. Wickersham
J. Wojakowski
D. Wolkins
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<td>S. George</td>
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<td>D. Hunter</td>
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<td>E. McKimmy</td>
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<td>D. Rocke</td>
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<td>T. Spurlin</td>
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<td>P. Clem</td>
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<td>J. Martin</td>
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<td>B. Van Valin</td>
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1974
S. Christopher  R. Stephens
B. Durham  G. Turner
K. Hickey  B. Yardy
D. Spencer

1975
J. Bicek  D. Spencer
S. Christopher  R. Stephens
B. Durham  K. Straub
K. Hickey  G. Turner
G. Smith  B. Yardy

1976
J. Bicek  G. Smith
D. Ferrell  R. Stephens
L. Harnetiaux  K. Straub
R. Keffer  D. Widiger

1977
J. Bicek  R. Stephens
D. Ferrell  J. Strahl, Jr.
G. Goodin  K. Straub
L. Harnetiaux  R. Welsh
R. Smith

1978
B. Berggren  B. Smith
J. Bicek  K. Stephens
G. Goodin  K. Straub
L. Harnetiaux  R. Welsh

1979
P. Dean  D. Patrick
L. Harnetiaux  K. Stephens
E. Hendrics  J. Strahl, Jr.
K. Kistler  R. Welsh

1980
K. Bennett  D. McVicar
B. Dossett
G. Goodin
K. Kistler

B. Shaw
K. Stephens
J. Strahl, Jr.
Appendix J

BASKETBALL TEAM MEMBERS BY YEAR

1951
C. Carroll
B. Coleman
B. Cook
R. Hammer
K. Ivers
W. Kendall
B. McCormick
D. Smith
B. Staff
J. Staff

1952
S. Carroll
B. Cook
J. Maroon
R. Mason
B. Staff
J. Staff

1953
R. Brumitt
J. Cawood
H. Johnson
J. Maroon
B. Noel
C. Parr
B. Porter
C. Sandbach
R. Shives
L. Starr

1954
R. Brumitt
J. Cawood
D. Hamby
J. Johnson
C. Parr
B. Porter
C. Sandbach
P. Schaper
R. Shives
S. Young

1955
B. Cook
D. Hood
C. Lucia
D. Maroon
D. Mills
M. Olson
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B. Sandbach
P. Schaper
R. Shives
J. Trager
S. Young

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TRACK AND FIELD TEAM MEMBERS BY YEAR

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Appendix L

BASEBALL TEAM MEMBERS BY YEAR

1955

J. Cawood
D. Dobrinich
F. Hildenbrand
J. Hopkins
B. Hurd
D. Jones
J. Koch
C. Livingston

C. Loyet
C. Lucia
D. Neubauer
W. Porter
G. Rice
F. Tilbert
R. Wahlin

1956

R. Adomatis
K. Coffman
D. Congdon
J. Gallogly
D. Hood

J. Koch
C. Lucia
D. Maroon
W. Porter
R. Wahlin

1957

C. Bohannon
E. Elliot
S. Ellis
J. Koch
C. Lucia
D. Maroon
J. Maroon

M. McCullum
D. Neubauer
W. Porter
M. Roberston
R. Smith
R. Stroud
R. Wahlin

1958

C. Bohannon
R. Brown
H. Burbridge
C. Dippel
E. Elliot
K. Hood
H. Jefford
J. Koch

J. Maroon
D. Newbauer
W. Porter
G. Powell
R. Smith
R. Stroud
R. Wahlin
Appendix M

CROSS COUNTRY TEAM MEMBERS BY YEAR

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SOCCER TEAM MEMBERS BY YEAR

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## GOLF TEAM MEMBERS BY YEAR

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- B. Burtch
- L. Carlson
- B. Kingsley
- D. Mewhirter
- K. Schmidt

### 1966
- B. Burtch
- B. McKee
- B. Kingsley
- D. Mewhirter
- D. Wolkins

### 1967
- C. Bonesteel
- B. Burtch
- R. Leidtke
- B. Wills

### 1968
- B. Burtch
- J. Burtch
- B. Cline
- T. Colgan
- S. Eyestone
- B. Wills

### 1969
- B. Cline
- R. Dolinksi
- S. Eyestone
- M. Frykholm
- T. Sprehe
- B. Wills
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<td>1980</td>
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### Appendix Q

**BASKETBALL TEAM RESULTS BY YEAR**

<table>
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<td>13 - 11</td>
</tr>
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<td>1954</td>
<td>12 - 9</td>
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<td>1955</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>25 - 5</td>
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<td>1957</td>
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<td>13 - 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>8 - 13</td>
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<td>1962</td>
<td>15 - 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
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<td>1965</td>
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Appendix R

TRACK AND FIELD TEAM RESULTS BY YEAR

1952  Record:  2 - 1
1953  Record:  0 - 2
Appendix S

BASEBALL TEAM RESULTS BY YEAR

<table>
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<tr>
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Appendix T

CROSS COUNTRY TEAM RESULTS BY YEAR

1957  Record:  4 - 1
1958  Record:  0 - 3
1959  Record:  Incomplete records
1960  Record:  5 - 4
# Appendix U

SOCCER TEAM RESULTS BY YEAR

<table>
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<td>1967</td>
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<td>1970</td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix V

GOLF TEAM RESULTS BY YEAR

1965  Record: 4th in Conference
1966  Record: 4th in Conference
1967  Record: 1 - 4
1968  Record: 3 - 5
1969  Record: 1 - 7
VITA

John A. Holak

The writer was born in Litchfield, Illinois, on June 6, 1953. He was educated in south suburban Chicago schools and graduated in 1971 from Dwight D. Eisenhower High School in Blue Island, Illinois. While in high school he earned varsity letters in track and cross country and underclassman letters in football and wrestling. He was active in numerous extracurricular activities, including Varsity Letterman's Club and the staffs of the yearbook and newspaper. He was selected for membership into Quill and Scroll for Outstanding High School Journalism.

He entered Greenville College in Greenville, Illinois, in the fall of 1971 and competed on the varsity cross country team for three years. He competed on the varsity track squad for four years, serving as co-captain his senior year, and held the Prairie College Conference 440-yard dash championship his junior and senior years. He also served as editor of the college weekly newspaper, The Papyrus, for one year. As an undergraduate his major was recreation and he took on practicums to become the first planned recreation major from Greenville College. He graduated cum laude in 1976.

He has coached cross country since 1975 and track since 1977 at Greenville College. In addition he teaches in the physical education and recreation department and holds two administrative posts, Director of Intramurals and Sports Information Director. He began his graduate studies at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston in 1977.
He married Margene Ann Schwartz of Mason City, Iowa, in August, 1973. They have one son, age two, and are expecting their second child in December, 1980. They reside in Greenville, Illinois.