

Doc Hayes: Almost A Legend

By Bob St. John

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Doc may not be able to control his emotions, but he never seems to lose his sense of humor. The best line under pressure I can remember was during the Midwest Regional Playoffs three seasons ago when SMU started its string of three straight SWC titles, SMU was playing against Wichita's press, or what Doc called "Wichita's karate defense." Finally Doc could stand it no longer. He walked out on the playing floor and an official screamed, "That's a technical foul!"

"Congratulations" answered Doc, "That my friend is the first thing you've interpreted right all night."

Later he explained, "Well when your life and future is wrapped up in something and the young men you coach are about like sons to you, you lose your composure some times and violently disagree. I'd imagine if you watched some of those stockbrokers when the market drops, you'd get some of the same reactions people see me display.

Those uncontrollable reactions started at Pilot Point High School, where Hayes became coach after receiving a degree in history and making All-Texas Intercollegiate Association at Denton Normal for three straight years. At Pilot Point he won the Class B, Denton County title three years and then moved to Dallas Crozier Tech.

Doc was the first basketball coach, as such, ever hired in the Dallas schoolboy system. At that time, basketball coaches were just football coaches in off-season. But he soon proved the difference and opened the door for others to follow. During his 17 years at Tech, he won nine city championships, tied for two more. The record also includes seven regional titles and one state crown. Four times his teams went to the state quarterfinals and twice to the semifinals. The state title came in 1946 and a year later, Doc went to SMU. Basketball was at a low ebb on The Hilltop. Doc had a few top players and to tall ones, but he did manage to finish third three times in the next seven years and said, if he could ever get a good big man, he felt he could win the championship.

That big man came in the person of Jim, Krebs, a 6-8 young man who worked until he dropped to become a great basketball player. And he became one of the SWC's all-time greats and led SMU into a new era. The Ponies won three straight titles in 1955, 1956, and 1957 and finished fourth in the nation in 1956. And with Krebs, who was killed just over a year ago in an accident, the crowds came. SMU moved out of the Perkins Gym, which seated 2,800, into plush Moody Coliseum.

"Doc always emphasized that SMU's success was because of the players," explained Rich Herrscher, a standout on Doc's fine teams in the later 50's. "Don't believe it for a minute. Doc organized and molded us...into fine teams, and more important, into men."

"Doc was never a hard task-master and never drove us," said Jim Hammond, who captained Doc's championship team of 1962."he made the game fun, I've never enjoyed anything more."

"His basic philosophy has always been to put he kids first," explained Bob Prewitt, who will now become the head coach at SMU after serving as an assistant to Doc for 17 years. "Doc always treated the kids like he would want somebody to treat his own. He makes the game fun and tries to win while doing it. A lot of folks get good players and don't win with them. Doc gets them and wins.

"One thing he never says much about is most important to him. That's for the kids to get their degrees and get them on schedule. I'm sure nobody in the conference has a better record for kids graduating on time or in the following summer."

A couple of years ago, Doc's title teams of 1955-58 got together and presented him with a plaque, which had on records on it, but said: Doc, Thanks For Helping Make Men of Us.

Hayes is as proud of this as his championships. Just before it was presented, Herrscher noted: "Doc's door has always been open to his players, present and past. His leadership and the things he taught me have carried over into life. I say this without reserve: I've never known a player who was with Doc that didn't respect him. And remember, everybody can't play. And I know I speak for all concerned when I say, one of the high points of my life was coming to SMU to play for a man like Doc Hayes."

HIGH POINTS... highlights, they're all over the wall in Doc's office. Pictures of teams past..The Krebs era, the era of Denny Holman, Bob Begert, Charles Beasley and Bob Jones...a foursome which just won a third straight title and probably caused more excitement than any club to ever play on the Hilltop by doing things like win 20 of 22 games which were decided in the final 20 seconds or less.

It's all there in the pictures around his office...the shouts and boos, the agony and ecstasy, the tears...bitter and sweet. All these teams and every player he has coached have a very special place in his heart.

You see, it's a very big heart.



Accident Kills Doc Hayes
Augusta Chronicle, Augusta Georgia
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Terrell, Tx. (AP) – E.O. “Doc” Hayes, 67. Former basketball coach at Southern Methodist University and his wife, Kathleen were killed in an auto accident Monday, Terrell police said.

The Texas Department of Public Safety said the pair was pronounced dead on arrival at Colonial Hospital here after their car struck a concrete abutment on Interstate 20 just west of this Northeast Texas city. Officers said the car was traveling west towards Dallas about 30 miles away.

Hayes, coach at SMU for 20 years from 1947-67, won eight Southwest Conference basketball titles, more than any other head coach in SWC history.

He put together four straight titles from 1955-58, and his 1956 Mustang team, led by All-American Jim Krebs, finished fourth in the NCAA. Hayes also won SWC crowns in 1962 and 1965-67, when he retired as head coach to become an associate.

His over-all record with SMU was 299 victories and 192 losses.

After retiring from SMU he joined the Dallas Chaparrals as director of player personnel in 1969 and held that post for two years.