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Ouachita News Bureau

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Ouachita mourns passing of Head Softball Coach Mike McGhee

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University Head Softball Coach Mike McGhee passed away Feb. 24, 2019, after a short battle with cancer. McGhee was in the midst of his 17th season at the university.

“We are deeply saddened by the loss of Coach Mike McGhee. His influence on his players and the qualities and values he expected from them established a program respected by all,” said David Sharp, Ouachita Director of Athletics. “He was a tireless recruiter and would drive many miles night and day to watch his recruits and commitments compete. His hard work and relationships with others built Ouachita softball into what it is today. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family in the days ahead.”

McGhee joined the coaching staff at Ouachita as assistant softball coach in 2002 and took leadership of the team, along with Danny Prescott, in 2004 as he finished his bachelor's degree at Ouachita. He was named head softball coach in 2006 and served in that capacity until his death in 2019. He also served as head cross country coach from 2007-2016.



“Coach McGhee exemplified the higher ideals of Ouachita as he invested in student-athletes the past 17 years,” said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president. “We give thanks to the Lord for a life well lived and commit to pray and support Debbie and family as well as our softball team.”

Since the establishment of the Great American Conference (GAC) in 2011, McGhee coached 42 softball players who were named to the All-GAC Academic Team and three named to the All-GAC Tournament Team. He coached 19 cross country athletes who were named to the All-GAC Academic Team, one GAC Distinguished Scholar Athlete and two named to the All-GAC Cross Country Team. Additionally, 30 of his softball players were named All-American Scholar Athletes by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association.

He leaves a legacy of investing in his players both on and off the field.

“Along with coaching these players in softball, you end up looking after these girls,” McGhee said in a 2013 interview with the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. “That is part of being at a smaller religious school. It’s the OBU way. I get to know and love each one of my players. I feel like they are all my daughters.”

McGhee was born on Oct. 31, 1960, and participated in baseball, basketball, football and track as a teenager. He competed on the football team at the University of Arkansas at Monticello and later enjoyed playing adult-league softball and coaching girls fastpitch softball.

McGhee, of Benton, Ark., was survived by his mother, Vyda Pearl McGhee; wife, Debbie McGhee; daughter and son-in-law, Beth and Ronnie Goodwin; son and girlfriend, Ryan McGhee and Lauren Briggins; sisters and brothers-in law, Joyce and Bill Farnam, Kay and Richard Moore, Dee and Todd Thomas, Carla and Mike Charles, and Trish and Curt McGhee; and brother-in-law, Jim McGee.

A visitation will be held at Ashby Funeral Home in Benton, Ark., on Thursday, Feb. 28, from 6-8 p.m. Memorial services will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Mike McGhee Scholarship Fund at Regions Bank.

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PHOTO OF MCGHEE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT <https://obu.edu/news/2019/02/26/ouachita-mourns-passing-head-softball-coach-mike-mcghee/>.