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Gardner-Webb's Chuck Burch Announces Retirement as Vice President for Athletics

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JUNE 23, 2022



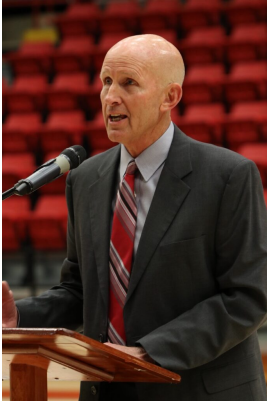
Alumnus Has Led the Athletic Department for Two Decades

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University Vice President for Athletics Chuck Burch announced today (June 23) that he will retire following more than two decades in charge.

Burch, who will turn 65 in July, recently finished his 25th season at the helm of the athletics department. He will remain at Gardner-Webb during the upcoming academic year, serving in the role of Vice President for Athletics until his successor is hired and thereafter working to ensure a successful and smooth transition.

“The opportunity to lead this athletics department is one I will always cherish and look back upon with appreciation,” said Burch. “This place, the people and its mission are tremendously important to me, but the time has come to step away and begin the next stage of my life. Retirement will center around a devoted family that has sacrificed often to allow me to enjoy a fulfilling and exciting career in college athletics. I am thankful to my wife, Dr. Franki Burch, and our children for their dedication and sacrifice. We have gained so much through our involvement with Gardner-Webb University and the town of Boiling Springs.

“I would like to thank our coaches over the years for their dedication and hard work, a tireless staff and the student-athletes who have made such a terrific impression on this institution – athletically and academically. The future of this school and its athletics department is bright and I am eager to see the Runnin’ Bulldogs succeed down the road.”



▲ Chuck Burch

“It has been my privilege to work with Chuck Burch over the last three years,” affirmed GWU President William Downs. “Chuck loves Gardner-Webb. He cares deeply about each and every student-athlete. He works hard to promote our institution’s Christian values through athletic competition. Chuck has committed so much time and talent to leading our athletics programs, and all Runnin’ Bulldog fans and alumni owe him a profound debt of gratitude.”

Burch returned to his alma mater in May 1997 to take over leadership of the athletics department. He spearheaded the Runnin’ Bulldogs move into NCAA Division I athletics in 2000, which saw Gardner-Webb gain full conference membership in the Atlantic Sun Conference two years later.

Gardner-Webb gained associate membership in the Big South Conference for football prior to the 2002 season and moved into full membership in that league on July 1, 2008.

A well-respected member of the NCAA Division I athletics community, Burch recently served as a member of the FCS Playoff Selection Committee, and has served in a variety of roles at both the national and conference levels during his career.

Growth has been a key theme during Burch’s time in Boiling Springs, with seven varsity sports added during his tenure. Gardner-Webb student-athletes have also excelled in the classroom, putting together a streak of 14 academic years of a combined departmental GPA of 3.0 or better. That academic effort has produced numerous team and individual academic achievements – at the conference, regional and national level – over the past decade.

During Burch’s time in charge, Gardner-Webb has seen 15 teams win conference titles at the Division I level, in addition to numerous individual honors – ranging from All-America and All-Conference recognition to conference titles and national tournament berths.

Gardner-Webb athletics has also seen the construction of several major facilities during the past 25 years, including John Henry Moss Stadium and Bill Masters Field for baseball, Brinkley Family Stadium

for softball, the Gardner-Webb Football Center and Spangler Stadium renovation, Greene-Harbison Soccer Stadium, tennis courts and a major renovation to Gardner-Webb's swim facility.

Burch graduated from Independence (N.C.) High before enrolling at Gardner-Webb as a student. He played football and tennis for the school before graduating with a bachelor's degree in social science in 1980. He went on to earn a master's degree from Eastern Kentucky before beginning his athletics career as an assistant sports information director in 1982 at Liberty University.

From there, Burch took over the lead role in sports information at Liberty, was elevated to Assistant Athletics Director in 1984 and Associate Athletics Director in 1988. He served as Director of Athletics at Liberty from 1991-1997 before returning to Boiling Springs.

Burch and his wife Franki raised their three children – Travis, Danielle and Amy – in Boiling Springs. The couple has three grandchildren – Bailey, Afton and Bennett.

A national search for Burch's successor will begin immediately.