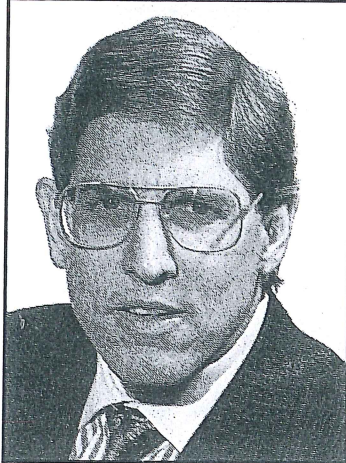


Southern Miss Director of Athletics Richard Giannini Announces Retirement

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Richard Giannini
President/RMG

University of Southern Mississippi Director of Athletics Richard Giannini announced his retirement on today, effective in early January and will remain with the program through the coaching search process.

"Four years ago I turned 65 – the same year I hired Larry Fedora and the same year we completed the new south end-zone complex in Roberts Stadium," said Giannini. "At that time, I promised Larry I would stay four more years and help the football program get back to winning C-USA Championships. With Larry leaving and the 2011 football team winning more games than any other team in history, and topping that with a conference championship, it is a perfect time for me to retire.

"I have worked hard over the last 13 years to try to make this a better program, and we have experienced some great successes. I am most grateful to our donors for their friendship and financial support to help change the face of Southern Miss athletics. I'm proud of our efforts and my goal 13 years ago was to make Southern Miss a better place when I left than when I arrived."

Giannini, 69, a 45-year veteran of athletic administration, has served as the school's athletic director for 13 years. Giannini was officially hired on April 21, 1999.

Under Giannini's tenure, Southern Miss Athletics has captured 13 Conference USA championships, including three football titles, two regular season and two tournament crowns in both baseball and softball and one in volleyball and men's basketball. Under his direction the football team enjoyed 13 consecutive winning season and 12 bowl appearances. The baseball team played in nine consecutive NCAA Regionals.

He had two sports reach the College World Series, including the baseball team that went to the event in 2009, and the softball program which were among the final eight, in both the 1999 and 2000 campaigns.

In addition, Giannini spearheaded a total makeover of the school's athletic facilities, which included the construction of a new athletics building, the Athletic Center, the South End Zone and East Club suites, an artificial turf and new lighting at Carlisle-Faulkner Field at Roberts Stadium, a new press box and suites as well as an expansion at Pete Taylor Park/Hill Denson Field. New construction also included a new tennis facility as well as a new stadium construction at the Softball field and Reed Green Coliseum which had a makeover which included an expansion to the men's and women's basketball offices, dressing and meeting rooms.

Giannini founded the Southern Miss Athletic Foundation, which has raised over \$100 million, including cash and endowments as well as the development of the Circle of Champions program, a group who have each committed \$100,000, and has grown since its inception to over 140 members.

A tireless and innovative administrator, Giannini brought outstanding intercollegiate athletic experience to Hattiesburg. He came to Southern Miss after working in a similar position at Louisiana-Monroe.

While working for the NCAA in the mid-1970s, Giannini's responsibilities included serving as executive producer of the ABC Football Highlight Shows, as well as NCAA Tournament basketball games not aired by NBC. He also arranged and produced the first national telecast of the College Baseball World Series for HBO, and produced numerous conference football highlight films. He was also director of licensing for the NCAA.

He served as assistant sports information director at Florida (his alma mater) from 1966 to 1970, was sports information director at Duke from 1970 to 1973, before becoming assistant athletics director at Duke in 1974. After working for the NCAA in 1976 and 1977, Giannini returned to Florida as senior associate athletics director to oversee external affairs.

He left Florida in 1986 to enter the private sector, taking over as CEO and co-owner of Raycom Management Group in Charlotte, N.C., a subsidiary of Raycom Sports, where he developed numerous sporting events, including the Blockbuster Bowl, the most successful first-year bowl in NCAA history.

He was inducted into the University of Florida's College of Health and Human Performance Hall of Fame in March of 2004 and the Saint Leo University Athletics Hall of Fame in February of 2005. The Golden Eagle athletics director was a track athlete, competing in the weight events, at St. Leo and Furman; and graduated from the University of Florida in 1966.

His knowledge and insight into the world of collegiate athletics has allowed him to serve on several Conference USA committees and currently is the chairman of the Football and Scheduling Committees. He was chairman of the C-USA athletic directors' committee in 2001-02 and 2008-09.

"I look forward to being an advisor to Southern Miss in the years to come and this will allow me the opportunity to pursue some projects I have on the national level," said Giannini. "I am very fortunate to have good health which will allow me to spend more time with Gayle, my wife of 42 years, my four daughters and son-in-laws and my nine grandchildren. Gayle and I have met some of our dearest friends at Southern Miss and we will continue those friendships for years to come."

Giannini and his wife, Gayle, are parents of four daughters—Ansley Stone, Brittney Borbash, Carlyn Linker, and DeLancey, and grandparents of Tori, Parker, Sara, Kelsey, Ryleigh, Kyle, Avery, Mackenzie and Landon.