

The College of Business

Management of Sports Industries Celebrates 25 Successful Years

Jeff Thiffault '99 B.S. is director of game operations for Major League Soccer. Chris Brown '00 B.S. is manager of community affairs for the New York Mets. Aaron Haviland '97 B. S., is senior director of facilities, Miami Dolphins. AnneMarie Rickes '06 M.B.A., is a marketing specialist with the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Chris Ann Hayes '05 M.S., is regional operations manager for StubHub, the largest ticket retailer in the United States.

They are all alumni of UNH's innovative Management of Sports Industries program, which was introduced 25 years ago, and they are not unique by virtue of their high profile jobs. Graduates of the program enjoy a high placement rate.

"The major strength of our program is that it's part of the College of Business," says Allen Sack, Ph.D., chairman of the program. "About 40 percent of alumni work in the sports industry. Another 40 percent are in general business careers. Many of the remainder are in graduate school."

The degree was the brainchild of M. L. McLaughlin, Ph.D., who was dean of the School of Business

in 1985. "Characteristically, colleges have core courses," says McLaughlin, now president and CEO of the UNH Foundation and chairman of the board of the UNH Center for Family Business. "Since many of our student athletes were majoring in business, I wanted to develop a program that would link the two ideas. I also wanted to make sure

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this program was not perceived as management of 'sports.' This is a business degree."

To address that point of distinction, McLaughlin named the program Management of Sports Industries from the beginning. It started modestly as a B.S. in business with a concentration in sports. It was so popular, though, that a B.S. degree in Management of Sports Industries was introduced in 1990. Seven years ago, a master's degree was added. UNH was the

first school in Connecticut to offer either degree, and one of only a few in North America to offer both. Today there are nearly 250 such programs.

There are now some 300 alumni working around the globe. Like many of today's students, they benefited from internship opportunities and regular interaction with leaders from the sports industry, such as

Brian Cashman, senior vice president and general manager of the New York Yankees, and ESPN's Chris Berman, both of whom lectured on campus earlier this year as part of the program's 25th anniversary celebration. Experiential learning is a hallmark of the program.

"M. L. had a vision," says Sack. "Sports has come a long way since 1985. According to *Street and Smith's SportsBusiness Journal*, it's a \$213 billion international industry. It requires skilled business people, and that's what we specialize in."



Professor Allen Sack poses with ESPN Sportscaster Chris Berman during a lecture at UNH.