

New scholarship honors Kirt Myers

Former dean, swimming coach remembered as a caring teacher

During Homecoming 2002, GSW announced the establishment of a scholarship to honor the memory of a beloved educator.

GSW is creating the Kirt Myers Teacher Education Scholarship, named for Dr. James

“Kirt” Myers, a professor of special education and reading. Myers, 55, died Dec. 13, in an early morning automobile accident in Dadeville, Ala. Dean of the GSW School of Education from 1994-2001, Myers is remembered as a dedicated administrator, teacher, coach and father.

“Kirt Myers loved teaching,” said Dr. Judith Spann, chair of the GSW Special Education and Reading Department. Spann was a longtime friend and colleague of Myers.

“He was happiest when found in front of a class,” Spann said. “He believed that teaching was the most noble profession and that nothing you could do was more important. He began his career in education by teaching children with disabilities—he was always a teacher. The night before his death was spent in front of a research class of graduate students.”

The Myers Scholarship will be awarded to an education student who shows potential to make significant contributions to the field of education, said Dr. Julia Dorminey, interim dean of the GSW School of Education. Criteria will include academic achievement and promise for professional growth as a teacher, she said.

“We are very pleased to be able to announce this scholarship in honor of Dr. Myers,” Dorminey said. “We hope this scholarship in Dr. Myers’ memory will help a new generation of teachers who are interested in making a difference.”

Myers, an Alabama native, focused on special education—mental retardation, physical disabilities and related topics. He earned all three of his degrees from the University of Alabama.

He first came to Georgia Southwestern in 1975 as an assistant professor and coordinator of special education. From 1982 until 1984 he directed programs, taught and conducted research in Quito, Ecuador, and at the University of Puerto Rico—returning to GSW as professor of education and chair of

Special Education Programs in 1984. Myers was named acting education dean in September 1994. He was appointed to the official title two years later.

Myers was also successful in swimming. In 1966, he was the Southeastern Conference champion swimmer. In recent years, he coached national swimming teams. His Americus Blue Tide Swimming Team finished in the top 10 in the United States every year from 1991 through 1996. In 1993, he served as the assistant U.S. women’s coach for the World Championships in Majorca, Spain, and in 1997, he was head coach for the United States in the World Championships in Sweden. Both times, his teams were named World Champions. Myers coached nine swimmers who swam in the Olympics.

All three of Myers’ children competed in Olympic swim-team trials, and his daughter, Angel Martino, succeeded. She competed in the Olympics as a swimmer in Barcelona and Atlanta. The GSW alumna won six Olympic medals including three gold medals. Martino lives in Milledgeville.

Another daughter, Kristina, lives in Scotland with her husband, a Royal Air Force pilot, Gary Andrews. Jamey, Kirt Myers’ son, lives in Savannah with his wife, Tara.

The timetable for awarding the first Myers Scholarship has not been set, but organizers are currently accepting donations to endow the fund. To make a contribution, make checks payable to the Georgia Southwestern Foundation, Inc., “attention Kirt Myers Scholarship,” and mail them to: University Relations, Georgia Southwestern State University, 800 Wheatley St., Americus, Ga., 31709. Call (229) 931-1373 for more information.

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*– Dr. Judith Spann
Chair of the GSW Special
Education and Reading Department*



REMEMBERING MYERS—Dr. Judith Spann, chair of the Special Education and Reading Department, remembers Dr. Kirt Myers Feb. 15 at a press conference announcing the creation of a scholarship in Myers’ honor. Spann was a longtime friend and colleague of the former GSW dean who was killed in a December traffic accident.