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## Moore leaves a legacy of success

### Blue Raider golf coach impacted program for 18 years

MT Media Relations

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - It is said that all good things must come to an end and the conclusion of a tremendous college coaching career reached its finality Friday (June 15) when veteran Middle Tennessee men's golf coach Johnny Moore officially retired from his position after 18 years.

Moore had actually announced his retirement during the spring golf season, indicating the time was right, but the decision was no less difficult.

"The decision was easy and hard," Moore said. "I have known for several years that retirement was coming. I don't know that there is ever a right time, but I do feel like the time is good now and the program is in good shape. I think with the players we have coming back, Middle Tennessee is going to do very well for a long time."

Just as he was indicating the time was right, reminders of how good - and young - his final team at Middle Tennessee suggests he could have had a change of heart at anytime. In his 18th and final season at Middle Tennessee, Moore was named Sun Belt Conference Coach of the Year after his team fashioned a 115-29-2 record and narrowly missed out on a spot in the NCAA Regional. The Blue Raiders lost the Sun Belt Conference championship in a sudden death playoff after storming back from a 13-shot deficit after the first round. Moore's starting lineup included one senior, two sophomores, and two freshmen. In fact, freshman [Craig Smith](#) was the Sun Belt's medalist, and sophomore [Chas Narramore](#) earned an at-large berth into the NCAA Championships.

"As we were leaving the Sun Belt Conference Championships I thought, 'Boy, I would like to have another shot at these boys,'" Moore said. "Of course, you could go on and on like that forever and then when you have a bad year, is that the year you are going to step out? I guess you have to weigh it all, but I really believe this is the time for me."

"I can't think of a day where I haven't enjoyed coming to work and enjoyed what I do," Moore continued. "There have been some frustrations, as with anything, but I tell everybody that I've had the best job in the world. It has been very rewarding and being at this University is the only place I've ever wanted to be. No one came after me but if they had, I would never leave this University for another. I have a lot of fond memories."

Moore played football at Middle Tennessee and is an inductee into the Blue Raider Hall of Fame. He led the Blue Raider golf program to its only NCAA Tournament appearance as a Division I member in 2000, and in 2007, sophomore [Chas Narramore](#) became the first Blue Raider golfer to earn an invite into the NCAA Championships as an individual.

Certainly, following in his footsteps will not be easy.

"We greatly appreciate the job Johnny Moore has done leading the Middle Tennessee golf program and with the consistency he has demonstrated for a long period of time," Middle Tennessee Director of Athletics Chris Massaro said. "He is a class individual and I have never heard a negative word about him. In my travels, whenever I have talked to someone who knows Coach Moore the first thing they talk about is what a gentlemen he is and how he does everything with class. I don't think there is a greater compliment."

Moore said he has no idea where the search for Middle Tennessee's new coach will lead, but the veteran mentor said he believes Whit Turnbow, his former player and assistant coach of five seasons, has made significant contributions to the Blue Raiders. Turnbow played for Moore from 1997-2000 and was a key member of the 2000 NCAA Tournament squad. He later returned to his alma mater and has assisted Moore for the past five seasons.

"Whit spent so much time with me he's almost like a son," Moore said. "He played for me and then he came back and coached with me for five years. Whit has brought a lot to this program. Whit tells me he learned some things from me, but I tell you what, I've learned a lot from Whit. I think we have been a good team. I don't know that we ever had a serious disagreement in the time we have been together. I was the boss and he knew that, but I certainly valued his opinion and I rarely ever made a decision that I didn't ask his opinion. He changed my mind a lot of times."

Moore worked for four different athletics directors at Middle Tennessee beginning with John Stanford, who hired him in 1989. The well-liked Moore also worked for Lee Fowler, Boots Donnelly, and Massaro.



Johnny Moore, right, receives the 2007 Sun Belt Conference Coach of the Year Award from SBC Assistant Commissioner Bryant Carter. (Bradley Lambert)

"I consider them personal friends," Moore said. "I never considered one of them a boss. They are close personal friends who each brought their own unique style to this University, and I have been very blessed to work for all four of those guys. I've met people at this university that have been unbelievable."

Perhaps Moore's greatest legacy is that he proved, with consistency, that excellence occurs both on and off the course. The veteran coach has become an institution, and under his tutelage the Blue Raider program has enjoyed tremendous success both in the classroom and on the course. In 18 seasons, Moore guided the Middle Tennessee golf program to a NCAA Tournament berth, five conference championships, and nine additional tournament team championships. During his tenure at Middle Tennessee, Moore produced six Golfers of the Year, and his players earned first-team All-Conference 19 times.

Middle Tennessee's success under Moore was not limited to the golf course. Blue Raider golfers earned 24 academic honors since Middle Tennessee joined the Sun Belt in 2001 with 19 landing on the SBC Academic Honor Roll, and the program also produced five players on the SBC Commissioner's List during this time. Middle Tennessee earned the SBC's Team Academic Award in 2003-04 and 2004-05, and three different linksters achieved the league's Sportsmanship Award. Moore's teams also had a history of being competitive not only during conference tournaments but also throughout the season. His teams produced 16 first-place finishes, 15 second-place finishes, and 17 third-place finishes. In all, the Blue Raiders finished fifth place or higher 80 times with Moore at the helm.

Success, indeed, was synonymous with the Moore era at Middle Tennessee, but that should not come as a surprise from a man who was inducted into the Blue Raider Hall of Fame in 2001.

Moore guided Middle Tennessee to one of its best stretches during the 1999-2000 season, when the Blue Raiders were ranked No. 35 by GolfStat and earned a No. 42 ranking by Sagarin in the fall, which is their highest ranking ever. The team finished in the top three of all four fall tournaments and ended 1999 with two golfers (Brett Alexander and J.R. Wade) ranked among the nation's top 80. The 2000 spring season saw more of the same as the Blue Raiders finished second or better in three straight tournaments while earning a trip to Moosic, Pa., for the NCAA Regionals. The Blue Raiders completed the 1999-2000 season ranked in the Top 50 of both major golf polls for the first time in school history (46th by Golfweek; 50th by MasterCard). Under Moore, the Blue Raiders won three consecutive Ohio Valley Conference titles from 1994 to 1996, and then won the championship again in 1998 and 2000. For his efforts, Moore was named OVC Coach of the Year in each of those seasons. During his 11 seasons in the OVC, Moore coached five OVC Golfers of the Year and 11 All-OVC players.

A former two-time Nashville Metropolitan Open Champion and one of the top-rated amateur golfers in Tennessee, Moore qualified and participated in the United States Senior Open in 1990, which was won by Lee Trevino.

For over 30 years, Moore has been a member of the Tennessee Golf Association Board of Directors. He is also a past president and was appointed a member of the Sectional Affairs Committee of the United States Golf Association seven years ago.

Moore is also known as a fine teacher of the game. He is active in instructing junior golfers at various summer camps across the southeast. He has worked as an instructor at the Tennessee P.G.A., Georgia Golf Association, and University of Alabama golf camps, as well as at Fellowship of Christian Athletes summer camps in Pine Needles, N.C. After he graduated from Issac Litton High School in Nashville, Tenn., Moore became a standout on the Blue Raider football and golf teams following a stint at Wake Forest. Moore was listed in the MT Football Press Guide as a big and rangy halfback. He played in the 1960 Tangerine (now Citrus) Bowl victory over Presbyterian (21-12). After graduating from Middle Tennessee with a B.S. degree in business administration in 1961, Moore spent two years in the U.S. Army. He was president of Garrett-Moore Inc., prior to accepting his current position at the helm of the Blue Raider golf program. Moore is married to the former Andrea Jo Lehning of Nashville. They have four children: Laura, Anne Marie, Johnny, and Mike; and three granddaughters, Sydney John Volkert, Chapel Anne Volkert, and Maclaine Moore Volkert. The Moores are members of First Baptist Church in Hendersonville.

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