Written by Mike Flynn
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Jim Duncan, who compiled a 31-15-2 record in five seasons as Appalachian State University's head football coach from 1960-64, died last Wednesday (Jan. 5) in his hometown of Sunset Beach, N.C. He was 85.

Duncan's .667 winning percentage at Appalachian is the third-best for a head coach in school history (minimum five seasons), behind only current head coach Jerry Moore (.716) and E.C. Duggins (.688 — 1947-50/52-55). His tenure included two second-place North State Conference finishes and no lower than a third-place league showing. In 1961, he led the Mountaineers to a 7-3 overall record and 5-1 mark in conference play despite playing all 10 games away from Boone while what is now known as Kidd Brewer Stadium was being constructed on ASU's campus.

Following his five seasons at Appalachian, Duncan enjoyed a successful coaching career in the Canadian Football League, first as an assistant with the Saskatchewan Roughriders (1965-68), then as head coach of the Calgary Stampeders (1969-73). In 1971, he led Calgary to its first Grey Cup championship in 23 years.

After his stint in Calgary, he left football and returned to North Carolina, where he became a Class A PGA golf professional. He is a member of the athletics halls of fame at both ASU and his alma mater, Wake Forest, as well as the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame.

"On behalf of the entire ASU athletics family, I extend our deepest condolences to the Duncan family for their loss," ASU director of athletics Charlie Cobb said. "Coach Duncan leaves behind a great legacy at Appalachian, both on and off the field, that Mountaineers will aspire to uphold for generations to come."

Duncan is survived by his wife of 59 years, Lib, three children and seven grandchildren. A memorial service will be held on Saturday at noon at the Wilmington Burial and Crematory in Wilmington, N.C. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in memory of Jim Duncan to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (322 Eighth Ave., 7th Floor, New York, NY 10001).

MOUNTAINEERS RANKED NO. 4 IN FINAL POLL: Appalachian is ranked No. 4 in the final 2010 NCAA Division I FCS poll by The Sports Network. The Sports Network poll, which is voted on by FCS media and sports information directors, is one of the two major FCS polls (the American Football Coaches Association poll being the other).

Appalachian (10-3) finished in the nation's top five for the sixth-consecutive year and 11th time since 1986. National champion Eastern Washington, runner-up Delaware and Villanova, which downed ASU, 42-24, in the national quarterfinals, finished ahead of the Mountaineers. ASU's Southern Conference rivals Georgia Southern and Wofford, finished No. 5 and 6, respectively and New Hampshire, Stephen F. Austin, North Dakota State and William & Mary rounded out the top 10.