

## Former Softball Pitching Coach Passes Away

Written by Staff Reports

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Former pitching coach for Appalachian State University softball, Richard Howlett, passed away Saturday, Sept. 1 at the age of 76. Howlett was a volunteer pitching coach for the

Mountaineers from 2001-02. He was hired by head coach Willie Rucker in Appalachian's inaugural season to work with the pitchers to enhance their game.

While at Appalachian State, Howlett helped the Mountaineer pitching staff to 24-81 overall record in his two seasons on staff. In 2001, the ASU pitching staff boasted a 3.32 earned run average while standout pitcher, Jordan Arnold, finished 2001 with a 1.96 ERA, the second-best in Appalachian history.

In 2002, Arnold once again anchored the pitching staff under the instruction of Howlett, where she hurled 18 complete games with a 2.57 ERA and set a school record for innings pitched in a single game with 12.0.

Former ASU outfielder Candace Shelton, who was a member of the team from 2000-04 said that Howlett was a part of her life from a young age as she attended Watauga High School before coming to Appalachian State. Shelton was a standout outfielder in her four years as a Mountaineer, batting .223 in her senior season playing in 52 games.

"Richard really cared about the young girls and had a drive to help them excel in life," said Shelton, "He wanted to bring out a freedom in them and had a vibrancy about him that would excite you about what you were doing."

"He was a special guy who came around a lot and always supported App State." Senior Associate Athletic Director Debbie Richardson said, "He loved App State softball and wanted it to be the best it could be. He loved working with the girls and being around them."

Howlett was influential in the career of former ASU standout Kayla Richardson, who pitched for the Mountaineers from 2006-09. While at Appalachian Richardson wrote herself into the record books in 22 different categories, including being a career leader with 34 wins and 130 appearances "Richard was very passionate about softball, he would talk to anyone for hours about players, the game and certain pitches," said Richardson, "He was very fun and loved everything about Appalachian and always tried to get his players to transfer to App State after he left."

Howlett spent most of his life as a softball player and an instructor. A Colorado native, he attended San Marcos Military Academy and Cisco Junior College before graduating from Southwest Texas State University in 1958.

He had an impressive career in fastpitch softball, playing 10 years for the Sun Oilers and Tide Petroleum in Texas, where his teams finished second twice in the Texas State Men's Fastpitch Tournament.

After his playing career, Howlett spent his time as a pitching instructor for various high schools and colleges, in Texas, New Mexico, Tennessee and North Carolina and was the co-founder of the Sun State Fastpitch Camp.

Besides being widely known in the softball world, Howlett was also a successful businessman as the former president of El Paso Mining and Exploration and Waterman Mining. He also held three government patents in the mining and hazardous waste industries. Howlett was also a family man with six children - four girls and two boys and nine grandchildren. In addition to

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coaching at Appalachian State, Howlett spent five years with Lees-McRae and was also an assistant coach at Walters State Community College where he has been influential in the development of WSCC All-American second baseman Lindsay Loudermilk.

Richard Howlett was extremely instrumental in the Appalachian State softball program and will always be remembered for the time and effort he put into his coaching.

**Photo Courtesy: Richard Howlett, ASU Athletics**