

# EDDIE BURKE

Eddie Burke's career has been marked by a few things: excellence, devotion to coaching at all levels, loyalty to St. Joseph's Prep and dedication to his family. On all marks, he has been a success.

Burke, the fourth of five children born to Ellen and Peter Burke, was the first in his family to not enter religious life (two brothers became priests and a sister became a nun) but he followed a different vocation, that of an educator and father.

Although best known for his coaching prowess, Burke was also an outstanding player at St. Joseph's Prep, helping guide the team to the Catholic League title in 1962 and tying for the scoring title in 1963 when he also served as captain. He then went on to play three seasons at La Salle University before tearing his knee during senior year.

After graduating from college, Burke returned to his alma mater as coach of the freshman team. By the end of that year he was coaching the varsity and eventually led the Prep to the league title in 1971. Ironically, between the years 1947 and 2003, the Prep won only two league basketball titles and Burke played a major role in both of them.

The following year, Burke had the rare distinction of coaching a different team to the Catholic League Championship, leading St. Thomas More to the title and then the City Championship. For that victory, he won league Coach of the Year honors for the second straight season. Burke stayed at St. Thomas More until the school closed in 1975. He then moved to Bishop McDevitt for a year and West Catholic for a season before landing the head men's basketball position at Drexel University.

At Drexel, Burke built the program, helping it emerge from the shadows of the Philadelphia Big Five. In 1986, Drexel won the East Coast Conference Championship and a berth in the NCAA Tournament along with three other city schools. Burke, who has the most wins in Drexel history (207), was also the ECC Coach of the Year that season.

Throughout his career, Burke was a regular on the clinic speaking circuit, spreading his love for basketball throughout the region. And during the mid-1980s, Burke served as an advisor to Team West in Ballina County Mayo, Ireland. The idea was to help foster relations between Northern and Southern Ireland. For Burke, it held immense emotional ties as it was also the birthplace of his father.

Burke returned to the Prep in 1992, helping restore the program to respectability. He coached for seven seasons, stopping for good in 1999. He also served as the school's Director of Alumni Relations, a position he held until he retired in 2004.

During his long and distinguished career, Burke has earned many honors. At the Prep, he won nearly every award given to an alumnus or an employee, including the Ignatian Award and the Schnorr Service Award. One indication of the respect Burke engendered throughout his career was the award presented to him by the Roman Catholic Alumni

Association for his service to the Philadelphia Catholic League, a rare honor for an opposing coach.

During his tenure, Burke influenced dozens of coaches. Most notably, he coached Phil Martelli (Saint Joseph's head coach) at the Prep and hired Jay Wright (Villanova head coach), Joe Cassidy (Rowan head coach), Pat Flannery (Bucknell head coach) and Whitey Rigsby (Villanova color analyst) as assistants at Drexel.

Burke and his wife, B.A., have three children, Maureen, Brendan and Melissa. Maureen and her husband Matt provided the family with the first grandchild in 2005, appropriately naming the boy Burke. Now retired, Burke keeps active as a golfer and volunteers his time with the Prep Development staff and the school's Alumni Board of Governors.