



From Benedictine University at Springfield

Attention: Managing, News and Sports Editors

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Benedictine University at Springfield names men's and women's basketball coaches

Springfield, Illinois ~ Benedictine University at Springfield Athletic Director Nikki Bull-Eguez announced today the hiring of head coaches for the intercollegiate men's and women's basketball programs that will compete as members of the American Midwest Conference (AMC) beginning with the 2012-2013 season.

Ian McKeithen was named head men's basketball coach while Wanda L. Nettles takes the reins of the women's basketball program.

"I'm very excited about this opportunity to start a brand new basketball program with Benedictine University at Springfield," McKeithen said. "I look forward to building a program with our athletic director that brings excellent student-athletes from the surrounding area to Benedictine."

McKeithen and Nettles will begin their duties by scouting area high schools and junior colleges for players that fans will be excited to watch.

"I will be watching players during this high school basketball season at various tournaments and games," McKeithen said. "We're committed to growing the program as a whole with top talent on the court and in the classroom."

McKeithen comes to Benedictine University at Springfield after a short stint as an assistant coach at Iowa Wesleyan College. He previously served as an assistant at Dakota State University in Madison, S.D., and was a graduate assistant at Augustana College. McKeithen began his professional career in 2007 as a basketball operations intern for the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves and worked with the team's front office during the 2008 draft. McKeithen earned a master's degree in Teaching at Augustana and is currently working on a Ph.D. in Athletic Administration.

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Nettles comes to Benedictine University at Springfield from Harris-Stowe State University in St. Louis (Mo.) where she successfully led her team to the American Midwest Conference (AMC) tournament title with a (13-18) record in 2006-2007. Previously, Nettles coached at University of Illinois at Springfield, Lincoln Land Community College and Belleville Area College (now called Southwestern Illinois College).

Nettles retired from the Illinois Department of Transportation in 2004 after 16 years of service as an Engineer Technician III. She earned a bachelor's degree in Organizational Leadership from Greenville College, and an associate's degree in Drafting Technology from Belleville Area College. Nettles is an ordained pastor at Living Word Fellowship Ministries and has a Substitute Teacher Certification from the Illinois State Board of Education.

“My goal is to make the Benedictine University at Springfield women's basketball program a nationally-renowned program known for its dedication to academic excellence and athletic success,” Nettles said. “My desire is to develop the ‘Spirit of Excellence’ within the team through education, teamwork, leadership and character building, as well as enhanced athletic skills on the court.”

“Both coaches possess NAIA coaching experience and have a foundational knowledge of what it takes to be successful at this level,” Bull-Eguez said. “They have highly competitive objectives for the upcoming year, and I look forward to working with them to achieve those objectives.

“The entire campus is looking forward to adding basketball next year, and we hope to provide two quality programs for our community to support,” Bull-Eguez added.

For more information about athletics, go to <http://springfield.ben.edu> or call (217) 525-1420, ext. 256, or (800) 635-7289.

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Benedictine University at Springfield is an independent Roman Catholic institution located in the Illinois state capital. Founded in 1887, Benedictine provides 17 undergraduate majors, five graduate and one doctorate program in Springfield, in addition to a wide range of athletic opportunities for students through membership in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).