

Mary Jane “MJ” Telford ’75 to Retire

After 33 years of service, St. Bonaventure University director of volunteer relations Mary Jane “MJ” Telford ’75 has announced her intention to retire in May.

Widely regarded as an institutional icon, Telford’s service as a coach, admissions representative, advancement professional, and now as the director of the University’s signature volunteer program in the Office of Admissions, is marked by an extraordinary commitment to building and maintaining relationships.

“It’s difficult to contemplate the SBU campus without MJ’s presence on a daily basis,” said University president Sr. Margaret Carney, O.S.F.

“Whether in the role of coach, admissions representative, or advancement professional, MJ has dedicated her life to her beloved alma mater. It’s impossible to quantify the impact she has had on thousands of students, alumni, parents, and friends during her term of service.”

Telford will continue to contribute to the University’s admissions and alumni engagement activities through various endeavors and projects.

Her career at St. Bonaventure started in 1975 in the Office of Admissions when she also served as the head coach for the women’s basketball program. Over the next 10 years, she guided the Lady Bonnies from AIAW Division III to NCAA Division II and then into Division I in the Atlantic 10 Conference, at which point she transitioned to coaching full-time.

Under her tutelage, partial scholarships were awarded for the first time in 1977. In 1986, she led SBU to the Upstate Conference title and was named the league’s Coach of the Year. Telford served the Lady Bonnies as head coach through 1993 and totaled 201 victories over her career. She was inducted into the St. Bonaventure University Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012.

In 2000, she assumed the role of associate director of the Annual Fund, lending her relationship-building skills to the University’s fundraising enterprise. She also served as director of constituent relations, director of Devereux Giving Societies, and director of fundraising for the Franciscan Institute before returning to Admissions in 2006 as director of volunteer relations.

She was the architect of the SHARE program, which stands for Supporters Helping Admissions Recruiting Efforts. The volunteer network now engages some 400 alumni and parents in support of Admissions by staffing college fairs, writing letters, and attending off-campus events to encourage enrollment at St. Bonaventure University.

“Our alumni and parents make an important difference for our enrollment efforts through SHARE, and I’m honored to have played a role in the growth of that program,” said Telford.

“It has been a great pleasure to work for the University that I love. I’ve been blessed to interact with wonderful people throughout my professional career as we endeavored to enhance the Bonaventure experience for our students. Developing the women’s basketball program and

building strong relationships with alumni, faculty, staff, parents and friends has been very rewarding.”