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Millersville University women's basketball coach Mary Fleig announces retirement

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Millersville women's basketball coach Mary Fleig accepts congratulations at Pucillo gym after recording her 500th career win in January 2011.

LNP FILE PHOTO

Millersville University press release

The numbers and accomplishments stand on their own: 645 wins, 25 postseason appearances, seven PSAC East titles, six PSAC East Coach of the Year awards, and an impressive list goes on. Mary Fleig is a legend—as a coach, personality and influencer at Millersville University. On Monday, Fleig announced her retirement as the Marauders' women's basketball coach after 30 years on the sidelines.

"I never said I would get to 30 years and that's it," said Fleig. "But I did say that I would know when it was time. I just started thinking, my age, it made me think about things I want to do for myself. I'm not the kind of person who wants to coach at 70. I want to do things while I still can in my 60s. I want to have my health, travel, do things with family and friends. As a coach, you find yourself saying, 'I missed this, I missed that.' It's what I need for me."

Fleig retires after totaling 645 wins including 523 at Millersville. At the conclusion of the 2019-20 season, she ranked 30th in wins among all active women's basketball coaches regardless of division, and she ranked sixth among Division II coaches. Fleig also ranks 49th all-time in career wins and 11th in wins at the Division II level.

Fleig arrived at Millersville in 1990-91 following seven successful seasons at Franklin & Marshall. It took her just three seasons to win the first of her seven PSAC East titles, and from 1997-2014, Millersville reached the PSAC Tournament a record 18 consecutive seasons. In that stretch, she led the Marauders to nine NCAA Tournament berths and a PSAC Championship in 2005. That historic victory came inside Pucillo Gymnasium against Cal U, the defending NCAA Division II champs. She won at least 20 games in 11 seasons.

"I reflect back on some of the games, triple overtime in the playoffs, those kind of games were so much fun to be in. That's what's exciting for the kids to experience, playing in the NCAA Tournament games. Those runs we had, getting there is such an accomplishment and neat experience."

Beyond the wins and awards, Fleig led her program with class, and she utilized her coaching platform to impact others. The program made significant contributions to Girls on the Run Lancaster through the years, and Fleig helped rally the alumni base in the honor of the late Nichole Schneider Bomberger, renaming the alumni game after the former player and annually donating funds to a scholarship set up in the name of Bomberger's children. She generously shared her knowledge and experiences, mentoring young coaches both inside and outside of the basketball program.

"As a coach in college, the relationships with the players has been the most special, most rewarding to me" said Fleig. "You get to know them from recruiting them, their families; you get to see them grow and develop. It's so much fun to watch them blossom by the time they are juniors and seniors, graduate, and go out, get jobs, go into the next phase of life and build their families.

"It's so much fun. I get so much joy out of it when they come back. It's been fun. To me, the joy and respect I have for the alums, it means so much to me. I love Millersville. I bleed Black and Gold."

"Mary was a great coach and great competitor. Few coaches in the history of women's basketball can match her accomplishments," said Millersville Director of Athletics Miles Gallagher. "She elevated the program to a power in the PSAC. But Mary wasn't just about winning games. She influenced countless student-athletes and co-workers through her teaching and friendship.

"Her contributions truly made Millersville better. I consider Mary a good friend and mentor. She will be missed. On behalf of the Millersville University Athletic Department, I wish her a happy retirement."

Millersville will conduct a national search for the program's next head coach.