



***A Middlebury contingent was on hand during US Lacrosse Grand Opening festivities last fall to see the pillar dedicated to Middlebury's lacrosse program and National Lacrosse Hall of Famer Peter Kohn. Standing in front of the pillar are Eric Kemp (Middlebury '80), Jim Grube (Middlebury coach 1979-91), Erin Quinn (Middlebury '86, Coach 1992-2006), Bob Sideli (Middlebury '77) and Jon Peterson (Middlebury '86).***

*Behind the Bricks is a regular series on the US Lacrosse web site that highlights individuals recognized with commemorative pavers on the Henry A. Rosenberg, Jr., Promenade at US Lacrosse headquarters. This installment features Erin Quinn, the former men's lacrosse coach and current athletic director at Middlebury College.*

Moments after winning his second national championship, Erin Quinn reflected on what made Middlebury College and the lacrosse program such a special combination.

“The people we get love the school and they want to be there,” Quinn said in a hallway outside of the media room at Rutgers Stadium. “Guys aren’t out there just to play lacrosse. You’re choosing to go to school in Vermont. It’s out of the mainstream of lacrosse, but we get happy players that enjoy being at the school.”

Quinn was in the middle of an epic run never achieved by a New England men’s lacrosse team before. Middlebury became the first New England Small College Athletic Conference team to play in the NCAA Division III men’s lacrosse tournament in 1996 (the league previously had a rule that did not allow its schools to compete in postseason competition). By 1998 it had reached the quarterfinals and the school won its first national title in 2000.

“We went from being a legitimate Northern contender to kind of setting the standard in Division III by the time I finished,” said David Seeley, an All-American attackman who graduated from Middlebury in 2002. “We went to four championships in a row, winning the last three. It was an amazing run.”

An amazing run, led by an amazing coach – one who had never played the game.

Quinn was a football captain at Middlebury who played a number of sports growing up. After graduating in 1986, he was planning to go to Officer Candidate School in the Army and spent that fall coaching football at Middlebury. Physical ailments prevented him from starting OCS and Middlebury coach Jim Grube asked him to help out the lacrosse team in the spring.

He was hooked.

After coaching stops at Tufts and Lake Forest, Quinn returned to Middlebury as an assistant coach for both football and lacrosse and then became head coach of the lacrosse team prior to the 1992 season.

He won by following some great advice "coach to your strengths, and don't apologize (for not having been a lacrosse player)." He instilled a team culture that made players feel "free to make mistakes and free to play hard."

"My classmates and teammates revered him and loved playing for him," said Seely. "He was a great motivator and the relationship went beyond lacrosse. It's a lifelong relationship."

Quinn's 84.6 winning percentage is the second best all-time in Division III, and he fared just as well when it mattered the most – going 24-6 in NCAA tournament games, leading Middlebury to the tournament 10 times in his final 11 seasons with six national title game appearances. The most recent appearance came in 2005, but a year later a new opportunity presented itself right at home.

Quinn shifted from coach to athletic director at Middlebury in the summer of 2006.

"Truthfully, at the time I had no intention of getting out of coaching," said Quinn. "I did want to get into administration at some point. If I had the chance to write my own script, I wouldn't have done it in 2006. But that's when the job opened. If I had waited until the next time it opened, who knows when that would have been?"

A decade later, he sees the timing as fortunate.

"On the plus side, I was young and energetic," Quinn said. "I wasn't getting into it because I was tired of coaching. I was going towards something, because I was giving up something I loved. That made me really committed to the new job."

Today he oversees a 31-sport athletic department that annually ranks among the best in NCAA Division III. The school finished fifth in the nation in last year's Learfield Sports Directors' Cup standings that rewards points for finishes in NCAA championship competition. He's active on campus and recently worked with a psychology professor to put on a three-day academic symposium on mindfulness – "Fully Present: The Art and Science of Mindful Engagement."

"In coaching you get more depth with a narrower focus," said Quinn. "That was great and really worthwhile. Now I have less depth, but I can see some of the impact on a broader range of issues."

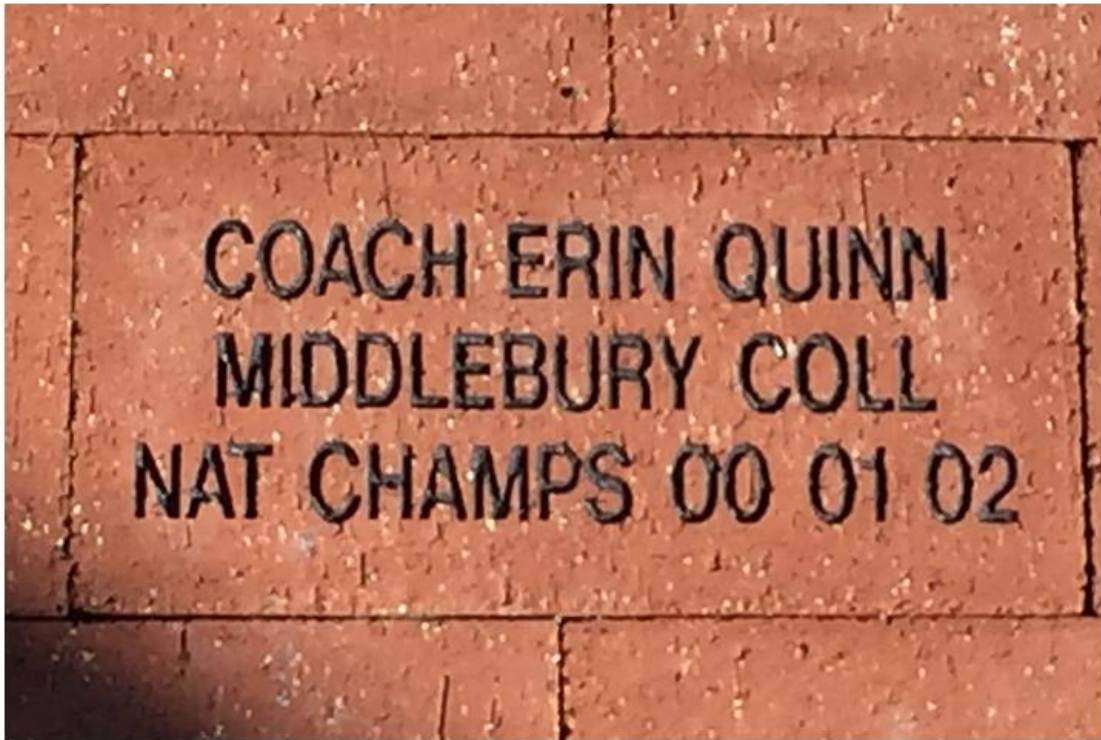
But lacrosse is still near and dear to his heart. He served as a [mentor to another coach who never played the game – Mike Daly](#). Daly just finished his first year at Brown after leading Tufts to three national championships.

Middlebury is now coached by one of Quinn's former players, Dave Campbell – an All-American goalie on the school's first national championship team – and Quinn gets to as many games as he can, including this spring's trip to the Carrier Dome to watch Middlebury play RIT. When US Lacrosse reached out to schools to be included with commemorative pillars at its new headquarters, Quinn helped lead Middlebury's fundraising efforts. It took them less than a month to raise the funding.

Quinn attributed it to two things – a strong alumni base that gets renewed regularly by putting together teams each summer for the Vail Shootout, and the appeal to honor Peter Kohn, the legendary figure who was a manager for Middlebury teams for decades.

"Peter Kohn had an immense impact on our program," Quinn said. "There was a love and humility that Pete brought to our program. The circle of people that knew Pete personally is disappearing and this was a way to honor him in a very public way."





*This is one of two bricks honoring former Middlebury coach Erin Quinn along the Henry A. Rosenberg, Jr., Promenade at US Lacrosse headquarters.*