

AFTER THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS AND SIX HUNDRED GAMES, A TRUSTED TRAINER RETIRES

Athletic trainer Dick Waterman hasn't missed a single varsity football game or freshman or JV home football game since he arrived at Middlebury on September 1, 1956.

For Waterman, who retired in June, those were years of 60 or even 70 hour weeks—years he wouldn't trade. "Long ago," he said, "Duke Nelson told me that athletics is the greatest fraternity in the world. It's true. There's really nothing like competitive athletics. It's very rewarding. And, the kids never forget to say thank you. After the football, hockey, lacrosse or basketball season, there'd be a steady stream of players coming in just to say 'Thanks for the things you did for the team this year.' That's really what it's all about."

In the early years, Middlebury's training department was Waterman, working alone in a 9-by-10 room with two tables, a small whirlpool and a heat lamp. Today the trainers and physical therapists inhabit 2,700 square feet, packed with high-tech equipment, from electrical muscle stimulators to ultrasound machines.

Over the years Waterman has watched his field become a profession. A longtime member of the National Athletic Trainers Associations, he helped found, in 1982, the Vermont Association of Athletic Trainers. Waterman and his staff have also expanded their role at the College, and work not only with the members of JV and varsity teams, but with any student with an athletic-related injury.

Waterman will be back this fall, working parttime with the football team. He's not sure what retirement will bring after that, but says he and his wife may head south for part of each winter. He likes to fish, and said, "I don't really have any other hobbies. I haven't had any time to develop any, because I've spent most of my time in this building."

In honor of Dick Waterman, "The Waterman Weekend" was held June 18 and 19 at Bread Loaf, with 170 in attendance. Director of Athletics Tom Lawson presented Waterman with a Middlebury Clock and the Middlebury football team made arrangements for Dick and his brother-in-law to go on a fishing trip to Montana, and he was presented with a purse by Development Officer Gordie Perine '49.

In an unanimous vote by the College Board of Trustees, the training room has been named "The Dick Waterman Training Room" in his honor.

One hundred sixty-eight alums and friends attended the Saturday night banquet at the Dick Waterman weekend. Will Graham '76 was one of the speakers. Here are some excerpts from his talk:

"Dick has been taking care of everyone else's body parts over the years and it is great to be here talking with him while all of his body parts seem to be working okay.



Dick Waterman and Pat Berry '91 enjoy one of Dick's favorite pastimes at Henry's Fork in Idaho.

"I want to thank Middlebury for bringing us together to honor Dick and do it right. It is an important occasion and I appreciate being included. This is a weekend of stories. I hope everyone gets the chance to remember a few and get them out before we leave. By unlocking those stories we measure the true distance we have travelled together through Dick's 37 years of service to Middlebury.

"Dick's in the pain business. When pain can't be prevented, his medical knowledge, his humor, his temperament, the snap of his lighter, his high shrill voice are the tools of the craft skillfully combined to help us from giving into the urge to blame opponents, coaches, or others, and face the pain of set backs and take responsibility for healing over the long haul.

"Measuring wins each season can be like measuring short term gains and losses, and looking at your feet. It is one thing to have a good practice or a good game. Dick's career is measured in countless practices, games and seasons, a standard for long term investment, a strong finish, a job well done, time spent but not wasted. There were Training Room hours filled with people like Duke, Stub, Dr. Parton and hundreds of athletes. It is a record of stories told and retold, full days, full of life, full of lives. It is a daily record of effort, a job of overtime, not quitting, not taking the easy way, and late nights away from home, It is a record of caring, and teaching us that we can carry our own load, and life should not go our way just because we went to Middlebury College. Dick has shown us through example the difference between making a living and making a way of life. When one measures commitment, selflessness, care for others, and service, Dick's record will not be broken. He is truly in a league of his own."