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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 30, 1980

BLOOMINGTON, ILL.--Jack Horenberger, who has been winning games and making friends for Illinois Wesleyan for more than 38 years, will retire as the university's athletic director and baseball coach at the end of the present school year.

Dennis Bridges, who played basketball and baseball for Horenberger from 1957 through 1961 and then succeeded him as basketball coach in 1965, will be the new athletic director, effective Aug. 1, Dr. Robert S. Eckley, president of IWU, announced today. Bridges will continue to coach basketball.

The search for a person to coach baseball and handle other responsibilities on the coaching staff will start immediately, Eckley said.

Horenberger, a 1936 graduate of Wesleyan and a former basketball and baseball star, joined the faculty in 1942 as baseball and basketball coach.

He became athletic director in 1947 and gave up the basketball duties after the 1964-65 season, when the Titans won their fifth College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin championship in six years. He finished his basketball coaching career with a 254-212 won-lost record for 21 seasons and had a 149-72 mark in the CCIW with seven championships.

Horenberger will take an overall record of 493-387 and an amazing 309-94 CCIW ledger into his final year of baseball coaching next spring. His teams have won 16 CCIW titles and placed second 11 times since the league was formed in 1946.

"You don't really replace a Jack Horenberger. He has brought honor as well as championships to the university. However, he has built his staff well and I have full confidence in the ability of Dennis Bridges to provide similar leadership for the athletic program," Eckley said.

Horenberger said he plans to remain in the community. "I have no particular

plans. I'll find out in a year's time whether I'll be happy without working at something in addition to my golf game. I'm most appreciative of the time the university has given me beyond normal retirement age but I am ready to step down now," said Horenberger, who will be 68 years old next May.

Bridges, who won 11 letters in baseball, basketball and football after coming to IWU from Anchor, coached at Plainfield High School for three years after graduation. He returned as Horenberger's basketball assistant in 1964. Since becoming head coach the following year, his teams have won 258 games against 143 defeats, captured seven CCIW championships and earned seven trips to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics tournament in Kansas City. He also coaches tennis.

Commenting on his appointment, Bridges said, "I have very mixed emotions. I'm thrilled at becoming athletic director. Illinois Wesleyan represents much more than a job to me. The responsibility for leadership in our athletic future is a tremendous responsibility, but it is a challenge that I welcome.

"At the same time, Coach Horenberger's retirement is something that I've not looked forward to. He has been the heart and soul of Illinois Wesleyan athletics. My goal is to maintain the same spirit, the same combination of feeling for athletics and academics, and the same kind of relationship with the community at large that have been the result of Coach Horenberger's love for the university.

"One thing I have going for me already is the presence of two other coaches with similar love for the university and its programs, Don Larson and Bob Keck," Bridges said.

Larson is the head coach of football and golf, while Keck is an assistant in football and head coach of track and field plus overseeing the wrestling and cross country programs. Larson has been on the staff since 1954 and Keck since 1957.

Horenberger began his association with IWU in 1933, when he enrolled as a sophomore. He had first entered Marquette, then dropped out and worked for two years in his hometown of Grayslake.

Horenberger was a three-year regular as a baseball shortstop and basketball

guard, serving as captain in 1935-36 of a basketball team that won all 20 of its games. He was good enough in baseball to be signed by the St. Louis Cardinals, but he never played professional ball.

Instead, he took a job in private business. He had thought so little of a coaching future that, when he did decide to go into that field, he had to return to campus in the spring of 1938 to earn some credits in the field of education. He started coaching at Wilmington that fall and remained in the northeastern Illinois city until his alma mater beckoned.

Jack didn't answer that call immediately. He had every basketball starter from a good team coming back. But he knew his wife, the former Mary Ann Costello, wanted badly to return to her home community. That and the challenge of a college position caused him to accept Wesleyan's offer.

As she has been many times since, Mary Ann was right.

Horenberger has been honored many times. He is a member of the NAIA Hall of Fame and the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame as a basketball coach. In 1968, he was chosen one of Illinois 150 leading living sports figures. Last January, he received the first meritorious service award of the American Association of Collegiate Baseball Coaches.

He was a founder of the Central Illinois Collegiate League, a summer baseball circuit that draws some of the nation's top college players, coached Bloomington's entry in the league for eight seasons and then served as the league's commissioner for another eight seasons.

He has served as president of the CCIW, was three times named NAIA District 20 (Illinois) Coach of the Year in basketball and at one time served as IWU's Dean of Men.

Bridges was an all-conference selection in basketball and football, captained IWU in basketball twice and was most valuable player once in basketball. He has been District 20 Coach of the Year once, Illinois College Division Coach of the Year once and coached Bloomington's CIGL team for eight years.