

Honoring a Wildcat Legend

Umile Hockey Scholarship Fund is a team effort

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In his 28 years as head coach for the UNH men’s ice hockey team, Dick Umile ’72 was known for commanding large and enthusiastic crowds at Snively Arena and later the Whittemore Center. So it’s no surprise that, when he retired this past spring, more than two dozen alumni and friends of the university came forward to contribute to an endowed scholarship fund established in his honor.

The lead donors behind the Richard C. Umile ’72 Hockey Scholarship Fund, J. Michael and Marilyn Hickey, both Class of

1973, reached out to UNH about making a gift in tribute to the longtime bench boss and the impact he had on decades of Wildcat men's ice hockey fans. Contemporaries of Umile's at UNH, the Hickeys have fond memories of watching him skate for legendary coach Charlie Holt and subsequently following his career as he continued Holt's winning ways as the team's head coach from 1990-2018.

The former interim dean of UNH Manchester, Mike Hickey says he and Marilyn wanted to do something for Umile that would both honor him and support Wildcats for generations to come. An endowed scholarship in his name seemed like the perfect fit.

"Student-athletes devote so much of their lives at UNH to competing at the Division 1 level," Hickey says, "and no one was more dedicated to developing his student-athletes not just as players but as students and community members and young adults than Dick Umile. We're honored to be able to establish this fund in his name and delighted to see the support for it take root with our fellow alumni and UNH hockey fans."

The Umile scholarship is the latest in a long line of gifts the Hickeys have made to support UNH athletics, spanning everything from basketball to the Northeast Passage adaptive sports program. The couple was among a small group of donors to fund the creation of the Watkins Student-Athlete Excellence Center, and they previously established a men's ice hockey scholarship in memory of Marilyn's father, Dr. William F. McLaughlin '35, who



AN INSPIRATION ON AND OFF THE ICE, DICK UMILE '72 EARNED MVP HONORS SKATING FOR CHARLIE HOLT (ABOVE) AND GUIDED 28 WILDCAT TEAMS TO 596 WINS — NINTH ON THE NCAA ALL-TIME LIST.

served in goal for the Wildcats from 1933-35.

Mike Souza '00, who succeeded Umile as the program's 13th head coach, says he's unsurprised that so many alumni and friends — 27 and counting — would come forward to contribute to a scholarship in Umile's name. "Coach had an incredible impact on so many people's lives, whether they played for him, worked with him or witnessed the way he grew and elevated the UNH hockey program over the years," he says.



He adds, "This scholarship means a lot to me personally, and I'm so grateful to have this opportunity to support my players in my own former coach and colleague's name."

Thanks to a current-use component to the gift, that opportunity started with the current season.

The first Umile scholarship recipient has already been named: senior forward and 2018-19 captain Marcus Vela '19 (at left).

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