

2010 Faculty Excellence

JEAN BRIERLEY TEACHING AWARD



Stephen Hardy

Professor of Kinesiology

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

A Jimmy Fund Golf executive and a soccer coach. An athletics director and a professional hockey player. Beyond their obvious interest in athletics, the common thread that joins these UNH alumni is a professor whom they credit with shaping them both professionally and personally: Steve Hardy.

“Without a doubt, Steve Hardy was the most influential professor in my time at UNH,” says Marc Hubbard, ‘06G, head coach for Southern New Hampshire University’s men’s soccer team. Adds Tim Barry ‘98, associate director of Jimmy Fund Golf, “Simply put, I believe Professor Hardy made me the person I am today.”

The secret may be the correspondingly high regard in which Hardy, who won an Excellence in Teaching award in 2009, holds his students. “They’re the reason I’m in this business,” he says. “I ask a lot of them, and I am always amazed by how much they are willing to give back.”

Giving back includes being a source of support to Hardy and his wife, Donna, who have survived the loss of two of their three sons during Steve’s tenure at UNH. Though he talks about it freely, two-and-a-half years after his youngest, Nate, was killed in Iraq, and more than 17 since his firstborn, Josh, succumbed to brain cancer, there are days Hardy’s sense of loss is still raw. Teaching, he says, is what continues to give his days shape and purpose. “The classroom is the one place where I can focus 100 percent.”

In addition to being a full professor of kinesiology, Hardy is an affiliate professor in the UNH history department, and he brings an academic’s rigor to a range of sports studies subjects, with an emphasis on primary research and projects that have real-world applicability.

Students may enter his classes with the erroneous impression that course content is going to be a snap, but they leave more than educated; many of them leave transformed. Soccer and lacrosse All-American Maja Hansen ‘96, now director of Georgia Tech ticket operations, speaks for more than herself when she reflects, “I’m grateful for the countless hours Professor Hardy spent discussing my academic path and coursework, as they led me to where I am today. For me, he will always be a teacher of lessons and a mentor for life.”

~Kristin Duisberg

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