



AN OPEN LETTER TO

SOUTHERN NAZARENE UNIVERSITY FRIENDS OF THE BAKER GOLF CLASSIC

HOMECOMING 2024 MARKED THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST FULL SEASON OF INTERCOLLEGIATE COMPETITION AT SOUTHERN NAZARENE UNIVERSITY.

“...we feel that we should do more for our young people. We therefore recommend: That at their discretion the administration be granted authority to arrange for athletic participation with other Christian colleges... (Bethany Nazarene College (BNC) Board of Trustees meeting minutes February 11, 1964)

With that simple statement the direction of the institution was altered forever and a new era at BNC was born. It was one small step for a Board of Trustees but one giant leap into the unknown for an eager group of student athletes already on campus. That decision was made as the 1963-64 Redskins campus team, coached by Don Wilson, was in the middle of a 15-5 season versus men's industrial and church league teams. According to student newspaper records, that season included a February 15th 108-101 win over Oklahoma Christian intramural all-stars and a March 6th 106-90 win against Southwestern Bible College.

For the 1964-65 school year David Baker was hired to develop an intercollegiate varsity athletic program. He put together an abbreviated 14-game schedule that ended with an 8 and 6 record. The highlight of the season was an 89-85 win over a very competitive (20-3) Evangel team from Springfield, Missouri. BNC home games were played in the “tabernacle” gym at the south end of the campus mall. Broadhurst gymnasium was completed during the 1965-66 season.

Those early years were tough! The program grew to establish a place of prominence in the NAIA and NCCAA organizations. Men's basketball national championships were achieved in 1974, 1978, and 1981. Women's basketball championships followed in 1989, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2003, and 2004.

From that small beginning of one varsity team in one sport, SNU student athletes now participate in twenty-two sports in state-of-the-art facilities. After going through name changes (BNC to SNU and Redskins to Crimson Storm), it is fitting that we honor our roots and celebrate intercollegiate competition as a member of the NCAA Division II in the Great American Conference. Go Storm!!!

Board of Director's
SNU-BAPA (Basketball Alumni Players Association)

6729 NW 39th Expressway, Bethany, OK 73008 - snu.edu

the Baker

SNU GOLF CLASSIC

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2025



QUAIL CREEK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB | OKC



the Baker

SNU GOLF CLASSIC

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2025 marks the twenty-first anniversary of the David Baker SNU Golf Classic. This event raises much needed funds to ensure that SNU's basketball program can accomplish its goals. Coaches B.J. Foster and Trent May are dedicated to seeing their athletes achieve academically and compete at the highest levels. The Baker continues the vision to host a tournament at elite courses in which the participants get to see and feel the impact of their fund-raising. The Baker features the men's and women's basketball teams as active hosts for the golfers. An evening ceremony completes the day by featuring the purpose and mission of SNU athletics. That purpose and mission may also be viewed on YouTube under the title, "Celebrate the Journey: 60 Years of SNU Athletics".

Each year it is our intent to fill a roster of 28 teams and 112 golfers. In addition to player participants, our loyal hole sponsors make this a premier event impacting SNU basketball teams.

"The Baker," as it has become known, is the primary source of outside funding for the SNU men's and women's basketball programs. During and after the season student athletes receive additional academic opportunities and are able to take additional classes in order to graduate with the highest academic and athletic honors.

Thank you to all who contribute in any way to the success of this excellent event.

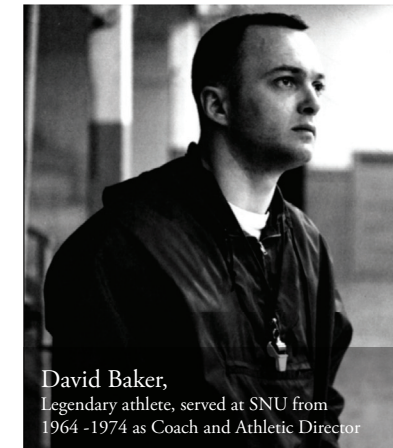


IT ALL BEGAN IN 2005 WITH 27 PLAYERS...

2005 Oak Tree National GC	2015 Gaillardia CC
2006 Gaillardia CC	2016 Quail Creek GCC
2007 Quail Creek GCC	2017 Oak Tree National GC
2008 Twin Hills CC	2018 Rose Creek GC
2009 Oklahoma City GCC	2019 Twin Hills CC
2010 Oklahoma City GCC	2020 Baker Worldwide (COVID)
2011 Oak Tree National GC	2021 Twin Hills CC
2012 Gaillardia CC	2022 Quail Creek CC
2013 Quail Creek GCC	2023 Gaillardia CC
2014 Oak Tree National GC	2024 Gaillardia CC

THE ATHLETE

David Baker (1937-2002) grew up in Bartlesville, OK and is the man we honor with this event. He was a three sport All-Stater in football, basketball, and baseball. He enrolled at the University of Oklahoma in 1955 under



David Baker,
Legendary athlete, served at SNU from
1964 -1974 as Coach and Athletic Director

legendary coach, Bud Wilkinson.

In 1959 he was drafted into the NFL as the fifth pick of the first round by the San Francisco 49ers.

Baker played cornerback for the

49ers for three seasons (1959-1961) and still holds the 49ers' interception record per season, having 21 career interceptions, averaging 7 per season. In 1959, his rookie season, he was selected to the NFL All-Pro team. After serving two years in the US Army, a return to the NFL to a signed contract seemed imminent.

THE PROFESSOR AND COACH

However, by divine intervention, a different path would be charted. In 1964 Dr. Roy Cantrell, President of SNU, asked David to help begin intercollegiate athletics and be a professor of physical education. The position would include serving as the first athletic director and head basketball coach. Setting aside a lucrative NFL contract and all of its amenities, David and Edna Baker traveled to Bethany, OK, signed an SNU contract worth \$3,600 annually, and began a dream.

THE VISIONARY

With no intercollegiate program, no scholarships, and no budget, Coach Baker set out with a vision that SNU could become one of America's finest small college athletic programs. At age 27, with a background in the country's finest collegiate football program (OU) and the NFL (49ers), Baker believed that the greatest impact and athletic experience could happen where "athletics in a Christian atmosphere" thrived.

During Baker's tenure (1964-1974) a long list of significant accomplishments occurred: the first men's basketball season garnered a winning mark; Benchwarmer Club formed in 1967; first funded scholarships awarded in 1969; Redskin Revolution changed the course of sportsmanship in society; women's basketball, volleyball, and men's and women's tennis were added; defensive innovation of a big man playing point on a 3-2 zone added in 1971 and copied nationwide; Spokesman Bicycle Tour group formed in 1972; and the goal to achieve a national title in 10 years was set and reached with men's basketball title in 1981 under Coach Loren Gresham; all under the foundation of Mark 9:23..."all things are possible to him who believes."

I speak for many when I say, "Coach David Baker was a life-changer for me. As my coach, professor, mentor, colleague, and friend, he inspired me to be all that I could be, to live life in the "right way with the right priorities" and "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." I will forever be indebted." -Dr. Larry Mills ('66)