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Maguire affected one and all

By Journal sports writer Steven Allspach

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Please be forgiving, this is kind of a personal thing.

Writing about the passing of Steve "Boog" Maguire is surreal, difficult, exhilarating, even a bit scary. Yes, scary.

The big guy and I had a lot in common.

To wit:

Small town boys, small town athletic heroes (Boog was, at least), small college athletes (Boog, a star in three sports), same height, same weight, same blond hair, same family values, German stock, same love of all sports, same medical afflictions.

More than a few times, in cases of mistaken identity, I was even asked "How's your softball team going Boog?" I'd answer fine, but you'd best ask Boog, he's the game's poster boy.

Heck, there was even a time when we both tucked our blue and burgundy v-necked sweaters into khaki trousers (the waistlines still accepted that particular fashion trend in those days).

There is one glaring difference. I'm not convinced many doctors, scientists, clergymen or doctors did better good than Boog Maguire.

His life, which ended Tuesday, shocking and saddening so many, is maybe best remembered by those whose lives were directly influenced by a grand fella who coached and taught for nearly 35 years after graduating from old Westmar College in 1971.

"Steve Maguire was a coach and teacher who sincerely cared about his athletes and students and their welfare," said Larry Mason, a teaching and coaching colleague for many, many years. "He earned and deserved his share of victories, but it was his professionalism that counted.

"Whether he was the head coach or a volunteer assistant, he didn't worry about his stature or position. He was just willing to contribute in any way he could.

"A lot of people think of Steve as the great softball player and coach he was, but he was good at everything in high school at Treynor and then at Westmar. "He was punter in football, great hitter in baseball, basketball star and he qualified for the state track meet as a discus thrower."

Indeed, when Maguire graduated from Westmar, in a day when colleges played far fewer and more meaningful games, he was the Eagles' career leader with 13 home runs.

Maguire coached all capacities, including a stint as head softball coach at Briar Cliff University.

"Boog was my best friend for 20 years. Such a wonderful friend," said East softball coach Bob Michaelson. "I'm just devastated. It's going to take me awhile to get over this.

"I first met him when I was a young guy on the Penn Corp team and he became, well, a mentor. He knew the game so well.

"He was like a rock. Righteous. He was old school. I don't know what his record was, but he was all the good stuff in life wrapped into one. Family was so important to him. He loved them all and was so proud of them."

Maguire and Michaelson were going to be reunited in the upcoming high school season with Steve working as Bobby's assistant at East High.

Maguire's influence on what some, many times too blithely, refer to as the youth of America, is probably immeasurable.

During his 13 years as North High's girls softball coach, two of his most prominent players were Kathleen Kueny Roe and Christa Davis.

Both received softball scholarships at the University of Iowa.

"When I think about all the people in my life who have been a meaningful influence, coach is the one," said Kueny Roe, now a Sioux City attorney. Davis, an All-Big Ten selection in 1992, now owns a successful sports clothing business in Houston, Texas. "For all of us it all started with Steve Maguire.

"He fought so hard for Christa and I to get scholarships. He's the one who wrote the letters and talked to the Iowa coach, trying to convince her we deserved scholarships.

"I first met coach when I was 13 years old and as a softball player I longed for his approval. He taught us all the value of hard work, ambition and training.

"All of us on those teams feel that way. To this day I'm proud to call him my friend."

Last weekend, Maguire, who had undergone some surgery to improve blood circulation in his once-strong legs, attended a softball clinic in central Iowa.

He was there because he told Michaelson this part of the state needed to be represented because history has convinced him of misrepresentation come post-season tournament time.

Talk about sacrifice.

On Sunday, Boog's mother was being honored by the family church in Treynor for playing the organ on Sundays for 55 years.

Stephen "Boog" Maguire was 55 when he died Tuesday.

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