

RUDY CORDOVA

His teams never won any championships nor had a winning record. But the late-Rudy Cordova accomplished for College of St. Joseph on the Rio Grande (later University of Albuquerque) what F.M. Wilson, Roy Johnson, Babe Parenti and Dave Tomlinson did for their schools.

He created and developed an outstanding athletic program. Cordova served St. Joseph's 22 years, building a strong intercollegiate athletic program while organizing the U of A's Health, PE and Recreation department. He served as Dons' coach (basketball, baseball, tennis) and athletic director.

Athletes tutored and coached by Cordova included veteran basketball and athletic directors Jim Hulsman, Albuquerque High; Henry Sanchez (Bernalillo, NM Highlands); brother Vince (Albuquerque Academy); Ron Tybor (St. Pius) plus Bobby Gibbs, NM Coaches/Officials executive.

The U of A enjoyed its finest hours in sports during the late '50s, early '60s in basketball and baseball under coaches Ernie Smith and Vince Cappelli. Both teams' successes resulted in NAIA Top 10 rankings. The U of A hardcourt clubs played at the Civic Auditorium, drew overflow crowds and were Dist. 7 champions in 1965 and '66, playing in the prestigious 32-team NAIA tourney in Kansas City.

Cappelli, later UNM mentor, played WAC, Big 8 and Rockies teams in 50-game schedules preceded by Arizona spring training exhibitions.

But all the successes ended abruptly in December, 1968 when the U of A president announced that a shortage of funds forced cancellation of the athletic program.

Cordova joined the U.S. Dept. of Education in Washington as deputy director in 1971, returned to U of A to assist in fund development. He joined UNM's Dept. of Education in 1982, and retired seven years later.

Rudy died suddenly in 1994, leaving a wife, Karen; two daughters, Theresa and Francine, and son, Robert, as well as two brothers and a sister.