

Hall of Fame

Larry Leverenz, PhD, ATC

Leverenz Delivers With Global Perspective

Family: Wife, Linda; mother, Hannah; brother, Jeff

Education: Bachelor of Science, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, 1970; Master of Science, Western Illinois University, 1976; PhD, University of Iowa, 1989

Career: Asst. Athletic Trainer, US Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO, 1972-74; Biology Teacher/Athletic Trainer, Macomb Senior High School, 1974-79; Asst. Professor/Program Director/Athletic Trainer, Western Illinois University, 1979-85; Athletic Trainer, University of Iowa, 1986-91; Clinical Professor/Program Director/ Athletic Trainer, Purdue University, 1991-present.

Hobbies: Traveling with my wife, golf, flying, amateur winemaking, reading, yard work



Text Darrin Scheid

Volunteering with NATA was a high-reward, low-risk venture for 2011 NATA Hall of Fame inductee Larry Leverenz, PhD, ATC.

"There were opportunities out there that were just plain fun, and there was enough to do and enough needs in the profession that you could find an area you enjoy," Leverenz said. "It's the idea that, if this doesn't work out, I can walk away from it. The way it turned out, volunteering sort of directed my career into a path that I've been able to enjoy."

Leverenz, now a clinical professor and Director of Athletic Training Education at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., combined his love for health care, sports, travel and education into a career that spans 40 years and several countries. There are far too many memorable moments to list, but highlights include the co-development of NATA's ATrack program, nearly a decade of working with legendary Purdue men's basketball coach Gene Keady and a study abroad program called "Global Perspectives in Athletic Training."

He has been a volunteer with the World Federation of Athletic Training & Therapy since 2005 and is a nominee for its next president.

Leverenz' first taste of NATA involvement came while he was working at Macomb (Ill.)

High School from 1974-79 in the same town where Roland "Duke" LaRue was head athletic trainer at Western Illinois. He looked up to LaRue and took some cues.

"He really pushed professional involvement, going to meetings and giving back to the organization and the profession," Leverenz said. "NATA was athletic training. It was how you identified with other athletic trainers. Duke really got me going."

An athletic training opportunity in 1980 changed everything. A professor at Western Illinois asked Leverenz if he would be willing to help with health care coverage for the U.S. Association for Blind Athletes Team during the 1980 Olympics in the Netherlands. Two years later, he helped with the World Disabled Ski Championships in Switzerland.

In the decade that followed, Leverenz worked seven different events for the U.S. Disabled Ski Team and the Blind Athletes Team in five different countries.

"I'm in the middle of the Midwest here; we don't have a mountain, but I did enjoy skiing," Leverenz said. "I was able to work with a great bunch of coaches and athletes. You know, a lot of things are about being in the right spot and being willing to help."

By 1989, Leverenz had earned his doctoral degree at the University of Iowa, and two years later landed a position at Purdue. His job was 75 percent academic and 25 percent men's basketball. He would work a basketball game on Wednesday night and use an injury from the game to help teach injury prevention and treatment on Thursday.

Simultaneously, Dennis Miller, ATC, PT, and Robert Behnke, ATC, Ret., urged him to become more involved in working with the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. Leverenz volunteered with CAAHEP for 11 years and was president from 1999-2002.

"One of the truly distinguishing features of Larry isn't just that he's such an intelligent person and such a visionary; it's that in true athletic training tradition, he's so humble," said Catherine Ortega, PhD, ATC, president of WFATT. "I don't think a lot of people even know the contributions he's made because he's not one to talk about them."