The Heritage of Heritage Hall Episode 175

00:00:00 **Marc**

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00:00:17 **Marc**

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00:00:35 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:36 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:00:40 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:57 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC from the classroom to completion.

00:01:01 **Speaker 1**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

00:01:06 **Speaker 2**

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly, Pomona! Psychology major, English major ...

00:01:12 **Sun**

From transforming part-time into full-time-

00:01:15 **Speaker 1**

I really liked the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and cover letter.

00:01:22 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:24 **Speaker 1**

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:27 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

00:01:38 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty, and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

00:01:44 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:50 **Sun**

Welcome back to the podcast. This is your host, Sun Ezzell. In today's episode, co-host Tania Anders welcomes Kinesiology Professor, Marc Ruh, to the podcast to talk about a beautiful new space on campus, Heritage Hall.

00:02:04 **Sun**

Heritage Hall is the home of the Kinesiology, Athletics and Dance Division Offices, as well as the Douglas Smith Museum of Mt. SAC Athletics. Tania and Marc explore the history of Mt. SAC's athletics program, the path to making the dream of Heritage Hall come true, and the stories behind some of Professor Ruh's favorite museum pieces. Enjoy!

00:02:30 **Tania**

Welcome to the Mt. San Antonio College podcast. M23y name is Tania Anders, your host for today's episode. My guest today is Marc Ruh, Professor of Kinesiology, Head Coach of Men's Water Polo, Men's Swimming, and Assistant Director of Athletics.

00:02:47 **Tania**

And if that wasn't enough, today, I am excited to talk to him about another role that Marc has on our campus and that's the role of the curator of the Douglas Smith Museum, which is located in Heritage Hall, next to Hilmer Lodge Stadium. So, hi Marc.

00:03:06 **Marc**

Hi, Tania.

00:03:07 **Tania**

Thank you for being here.

00:03:08 **Marc**

Thank you for having me.

00:03:09 **Tania**

Such a pleasure. So, just for the listeners, the way this came about, I recently offered a in-person professional development opportunity over at Heritage Hall, which is one of the newer areas on our campus, and the Douglas Smith Museum is located there, and you were kind enough to give us a tour.

00:03:26 **Tania**

And so, I'm really excited for you to share a little bit more about this museum so that our broader campus community can get to know this little gem a little bit better. So, before we get started, could you please be so kind and introduce yourself to our listeners?

00:03:43 **Marc**

Yeah, so my name is Marc Ruh, and as you mentioned earlier, I am a professor in the Kinesiology Department. I am the Head Men's Water Polo and Head Men's Swimming coach. I am also the Assistant Athletics Director. I've been at Mt. SAC, I think almost 30 years now.

00:04:01 **Marc**

So, it's been an amazing journey for me and this little suaree into the museum and the museum business has been really interesting for me as well. I've really enjoyed it though.

00:04:13 **Tania**

That's amazing. Almost 30 years, congratulations.

00:04:15 **Marc**

Thank you.

00:04:17 **Tania**

And I know you also have a big family history here at Mt. SAC, so that's really amazing. So, we want to talk about the museum today. So, maybe you could share with our listeners what started the idea for the Douglas Smith Museum.

00:04:32 **Marc**

Yeah, so you touched on the family history a little bit, so I'll give you a little background because that directly kind of ties into the museum. So, mother was a drew and he was a Track and CrossCountry coach here. He was Mt. SAC's second Track and CrossCountry coach, Hilmer Lodge was the first.

00:04:52 **Marc**

My dad became a full-time professor here in 1963, which was the year I was born. So, I grew up following him around the track and campus and all of those things. So, I got into a little different area though. I got into the water sports and he was into land sports.

00:05:08 **Marc**

But that being said, the year he retired, I believe it was '94 or '95, somewhere around there, was the year I got hired as an adjunct professor here on campus. The former aquatics coaches had retired that year. So, I got hired, I was formerly at Walnut High School, but I got hired here.

00:05:31 **Marc**

And it was about that time that my dad and I started talking about the Heritage Hall concept, which was to be a lecture hall or a banquet space in a museum of Mt. SAC athletics history. And that kind of went on for a number of years, brainstorming through that, working with a number of different members of the foundation throughout the years, working with a number of different architects.

00:05:57 **Marc**

And it really took on a lot of steam once we knew that the gym and the pool and the stadium were going to be redone. We had been fundraising throughout that 30-year period of time. And once we kind of knew that the stadium and the gym were going to get built and conversations with the college, the college was going to build Heritage Hall and would come up with the difference between what the cost of that was and what we had fundraised.

00:06:22 **Marc**

So, it worked out really good. The Department of Kinesiology moved over to Heritage Hall as well. The museum then kind of took off and thank goodness for COVID - I don't want to get too far ahead of myself, but with COVID, that was right about the time that we really needed to start hitting the ground running on designing the museum and identifying what was going to be in each aspect of the museum.

00:06:47 **Marc**

So, that's kind of how it started. And that kind of gets us to the point where we didn't know it was going to be called the Douglas Smith Museum at that point. That wasn't until just prior to completion, was Doug Smith made a large donation to name the museum after himself just before he had passed away.

00:07:06 **Tania**

Thank you so much for that historical context. It really is so interesting how long something like this can take from an idea to having the space. So, you mentioned Douglas Smith already. Can you just give us a little bit of a background, who he was?

00:07:23 **Marc**

Yeah, so Doug Smith was a track enthusiast from the area. Doug Smith's father was in the area, I believe he grew up in the Covina area. Father was a pole vault record holder at Pomona College, I believe, back in the '50s or something like that.

00:07:41 **Marc**

Doug, I believe went to Charter Oak High School or Covina High School - one high school local high school in the area. And he had since moved away from the area, moved out towards the beach. He was a teacher in the LA Unified School District for a number of years, but he was a huge collector of anything and everything.

00:08:01 **Marc**

And he amassed one of the most complete collections of track and field magazines and memorabilia of probably anybody around. And he became friends with my dad, and through time, they kind of decided that it would be a natural fit. He donated a number of items in addition to a good amount of money to name the museum after himself.

00:08:26 **Marc**

And I said before, just before he passed away, but that's kind of how that naming process came about, was it just seemed like it was a natural to be named after him because he was such a collector of track and field items. Even though the museum is about athletics as a whole, there is some special connections to track and field and the special events that Mt. SAC has as well. So, he felt a close tie to those.

00:08:51 **Tania**

And we'll get to talking about some of those items that we can see in the museum in just a moment. But while we're talking about names, you also mentioned the Hilmer Stadium, which Heritage Hall is right next to. So, while we're at it, you might as well educate our listeners also about who Hilmer Lodge was.

00:09:07 **Marc**

Yeah, so Hilmer Lodge was Mt. SAC's first Track and CrossCountry coach, it's 1947. He was a journalism professor, and then became the Track and CrossCountry coach. The reason Hilmer is so well-known around the track and field world was because back in his time, there were no such things as what we now call all weather tracks.

00:09:32 **Marc**

All weather tracks to us now mean a rubberized track surface that you can run on, no matter what the weather is like. But back in the old days when they made out a cinder or dirt, whenever it rained, those things were unusable. And Hilmer came up with a recipe, if you will, of some local Southern California minerals and items where he used volcanic ash.

00:09:59 **Marc**

He used a specific kind of rock, he used a specific kind of sand and they were all from kind of local Southern California area. And he developed what was to become the very first all-weather track. Meaning that when it rained, it would drain very quickly and it would dry out quickly.

00:10:17 **Marc**

So, once he came up with that, Mt. SAC became world famous for its track, and a number of big meets came to Mt. SAC in the early sixties. Many world records were established on the all-weather track and that kind of got Mt. SAC on the map in terms of track and field, and notoriety in that field.

00:10:40 **Tania**

So interesting. Of course, as a geologist I find that even more fascinating. So, thank you so much for sharing that too. So, now, let's turn our attention to the Douglas Smith Museum. So , what can people see when they walk into that museum?

00:10:54 **Marc**

So, the museum is, in essence, it's a history of Mt. SAC athletics. So, even when you walk into the lobby of Heritage Hall, you'll start to see some of the successes of Mt. SAC athletics over the years.

00:11:10 **Marc**

One of the things that you'll see is some state and regional supremacy awards that our athletics program has won, based on championship performances each year by teams, or we ranked amongst other community colleges around the nation. And we've won, gosh, I think 11 of those supremacy titles.

00:11:30 **Marc**

So, when you walk into the lobby, you start to see those. And then as you come in through the Douglas Smith Museum, you can see all our state championship trophies, you'll see our national championship trophy that we won from 2015. And we really kind of get into a timeline, the historical timeline of the college, of the local area of Mt. SAC athletics, of our special events, of the world records that were established on our campus in track and field.

00:11:58 **Marc**

We have, which isn't quite functioning yet, I'm still working on technology side of it, which is touchscreens in which you can touch on a date and you'll be able to get video and photos and stories on each of the events that took place that are in our timeline.

00:12:15 **Marc**

We also have some historical items and we have some old lighting from the stadium as well, the old iconic lights. We've saved some of the original bleacher seats from the stadium and utilized them in different areas of the museum as well.

00:12:27 **Marc**

We've got some sections on just the academic successes that we've had on campus through the conference, statewide achievements, and national achievements academically. Some of our national and state student athletes of the year are recognized in there, but there's a lot of different items in there.

00:12:47 **Marc**

We have a section that we show our special events, our CrossCountry Invitational, which is now, I believe 73 years running the CrossCountry Invitational, which is the world's largest continuous running CrossCountry Invitational in which we have between 20 and 25,000 athletes every year run on our CrossCountry course over the course of two weekends. We also have the Mt. SAC Relays section.

00:13:12 **Marc**

We have a section in there too, which has proved to be more interesting than I thought it was going to be. But it was the history of the running shoe as seen through the eyes of our special events, where we have a number of different evolutions of the CrossCountry and track and field shoes.

00:13:29 **Marc**

We have a section that kind of honors our Olympians. We have a number of Olympians come through Mt. SAC, and we've got their medals and their uniforms, and their stories, and those things in the museum as well. We have our Hall of Fame in the museum as well, where we honor those that were inducted into our Hall of Fame, our Athletics Hall of Fame.

00:13:49 **Marc**

And of course, we have a section on our Women's Athletics Programs, which evolved since even before Title IX, but Mt. SAC was kind of on the forefront of women's sports in California as well, the community college level. So, there's a lot of things to look at in there and a lot of stories in there.

00:14:09 **Marc**

And some of this is still being developed as well. COVID was wonderful as I said, because we had some extra time to kind of devote to this, but it's been almost a year since we opened the museum, and I haven't had a chance to do too much updating of that museum since we've been back at school. So, I'm looking forward to getting some time and doing some more things in there.

00:14:30 **Tania**

Well, from what I've gotten to see in there, it really is such a beautiful space. Very, very pretty. So, thank you for giving us this little walkthrough. As someone who's been in there, I could see all the items in front of my eye, and I certainly invite others to go check the space out. But what are some of your most treasured items that you have on display there?

00:14:53 **Marc**

Gosh, that's a tough question. There's so many different items that people have donated that we have in the museum. There's the bronze star from some Vietnam veterans who were injured in Vietnam. We've got the rubbing from one of our former student athletes that was killed in action in Vietnam as well. Those are very valuable to us. Those represent kind of the selfless act that those young men had done in going over and being a part of that.

00:15:25 **Marc**

We've got some Olympic medals that some of our former student athletes have won. We've got their Olympic uniform. We have one of our former student athletes, Geoff Vanderstock that set a world record in the Olympic trials in 1968. And we've got his medal acknowledging the world record. We have the shoes that he set that world record in. We've got the photo of him crossing the line. And so, that's kind of neat as well.

00:15:51 **Marc**

There's all kinds of interesting little things. We've got some quite valuable shoes that people have donated since we opened the museum with really, really interesting stories. Who would've thought that shoes would have an interesting story, but it's been a lot of fun. So, there's so many different items in there.

00:16:08 **Marc**

I know I'm going on quite a bit, but I'll tell you, there's one photo in there that we kind of called the Ice Cream Diplomacy, which was the first time that People's Republic of China and Taiwan competed in the same venue together at the same time, and that was negotiated just before the Mt. SAC relays.

00:16:27 **Marc**

When China and Taiwan found out they were competing together, they said they couldn't compete and it was kind of negotiated over some ice cream bars, and that they were able to compete in the same event together. And it worked out to be quite good.

00:16:42 **Marc**

And the State Department had called after the event and was quite surprised to hear that that happened. But the story of that is in there as well with some photographs of it. But there's a lot of really cool kind of stories in there that if you just take the time and walk around, you'll be able to read some of those.

00:17:00 **Tania**

I agree, it was really worthwhile spending some time there because the history, 75 years of just amazing history there. And I was lucky enough that you gave us a tour with a small group as we walked through there, and it was so helpful. So, I hope that our listeners, after listening to you here, it will give them some pointers as to what they can be looking forward to and paying attention to.

00:17:28 **Tania**

I'm going to jump ahead here with a question, because I hope people are very enticed to go see the space. So, when can people actually go see the museum? I know you said it's a work-in-progress and there's all these things that you still want to add, but how can people go see the museum?

00:17:46 **Marc**

Yeah, I think you can go any time as long as the Division of Kinesiology, Athletics and dance is open. And I think they're open every day 8 or 8:30 until 5 or 5:30. So, even though the museum doors may be locked, if you just go into the Division of Kinesiology and you request to be able to walk through, they'll open it for you.

00:18:07 **Marc**

Then anytime we have an event, if it's a meeting that's taking place in Heritage Hall, in the lecture hall space or the banquet hall space, the room will be open as well. And if somebody wants special tours, we can make those arrangements too.

00:18:22 **Marc**

So, most of the time, if you just go over to the Division Office and communicate with them that you'd like to get in and see it, they'll allow you to go in and see it.

00:18:32 **Tania**

Well, that's wonderful. And so, I want to kind of start closing our conversation here. So, you mentioned all the donations and things and like any museum, you probably have a lot of things also in the background and it's hard to choose, and you said you still have the vision of the touchscreen. So, I'm curious, like what are some of your future dreams and plans that you have for the museum still?

00:18:55 **Marc**

That's a great question. Yeah, I'm realizing I don't want to say I was the sole source, but I was very closely tied to the design of the museum and figuring this out. We have been working on it for a number of years, but when you get right down to it and you figure we have to have A, B, C, D, E, you have to have all these items in place and it has to flow together.

00:19:15 **Marc**

Once you actually put it into place, you realize that it's going to be this ever-evolving process. So, there's always going to be, I think, new items coming in. One of the great things that we see from this is as people come in, there's connections. They realize, "Oh, I have something that might fit in here."

00:19:35 **Marc**

You know, just kind of stories like that of people that have items. As a matter of fact, we were doing my dad's memorial service in the room named after my parents. And a number of people had come back, one of them brought in a pair of shoes that were very significant and they said, "Hey, make sure that you put these in the museum." And they've got a great story behind them too.

00:19:56 **Marc**

So, there's always things that are coming along. We've got quite a large archive room and we're always kind of just sorting through those items. And I think that the big thing will be we want to get that technology in, that's very easy to update.

00:20:09 **Marc**

We'll also be able to have that on our athletics website where people can kind of log on, they can see those things, they can learn more about our Hall of Fame, they can learn more about the timeline. All of those items that we have, that'll be on the electronic side of things that would be able to access through our athletics website. So, it's just going to keep evolving from month to month, I think.

00:20:33 **Tania**

And that's fun too, because then people can keep coming back and they'll get to see new things. Which you'll get to the point that you'll have special exhibits rotating. Who knows?

00:20:44 **Marc**

Yeah. As matter of fact, we've had a request to do a special exhibit already for Athletic Trainer Month, which is coming up. So, our athletic trainers would like to do a special exhibit in there that we're working on now. So, you hit it up right on the head. We're going to continue evolving and have some special things come in. And so-

00:21:04 **Tania**

Well, I appreciate all your dedication, hard work for this. It's really a gorgeous space. I invite everyone to go over there and now, our amazing wellness center is open too, so people can go exercise and see the museum. There's lots to do on that side of campus now.

00:21:21 **Tania**

So, before I let you go to all your important water events here, is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't talked about yet?

00:21:30 **Marc**

Yeah, I would encourage everybody if you haven't been over to the new precinct of athletics over on the south side of campus, to come over and take a look - and if you do get a chance, come into the museum and we'd love to see everybody over here. So, there's so much over here now. So, yeah, thank you.

00:21:48 **Tania**

Thank you so, so much, Marc, for your time. And again, everyone just go see that beautiful space. Thank you, Marc.

00:21:57 **Marc**

It's my pleasure. Thank you so much for having me on.

00:22:02 **Christina**

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast, and don't forget to share your favorite episodes.