

The Drake Group



Realizing the Promise
of College Athletics

A Tribute to Gerald Gurney (1951-2022)



The Drake Group is saddened to report that Dr. Gerald Gurney, who served The Drake Group as its President from 2014 to 2016 and as a member of its Board of Directors for twelve years, passed away on February 23, 2022. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife, Debra Stuart, and daughter Rachel.

In December of 2021, *The Drake Group Service Award*, established to recognize a member of The Drake Group “whose service and actions upholding and advancing the mission of the organization have been above and beyond expectations,” was renamed the *Gerald Gurney Service Award*, in his honor, and the award was bestowed upon Dr. Gurney as its first recipient.

Representing The Drake Group, he testified before Congress, enabling the construction of federal legislation and igniting Congressional pressure to improve health protection and academic outcomes for college athletes. A Professor Emeritus at the University of Oklahoma, Gerry educated generations of future athletics managers about critical issues in intercollegiate athletics. As a member of The Drake Group Education Working Committee, he co-authored over fifteen major position statements and numerous press statements on current issues in intercollegiate athletics, and with Drake Working Group colleagues, co-authored *Unwinding Madness: What Went Wrong with College Sports and How to Fix It*. Nationally recognized as an expert on NCAA rules and academic metrics, he brought this unique knowledge to the service of The Drake Group and members of Congress. In appreciation and with the deepest respect and thanks, we salute Gerald Gurney as an extraordinary educator of profound personal integrity

whose generous service has brought great distinction to the work and reputation of The Drake Group.

Gerald Gurney, Ph.D., was an Emeritus Professor of Adult and Higher Education at the University of Oklahoma (OU) where he taught and performed research in the subject areas of athletics in higher education, athletics academic reform and ethics in athletics. He was a regular commentary contributor in a number of national higher education trade journals.

Gurney previously served as the Senior Associate Athletics Director at the University of Oklahoma from 1993-2011. He was in charge of OU's student life center, academic services and sports medicine.

In 2007, Gurney chaired a joint NCAA/N4A task force on consulting to select and train consultants to visit NCAA member institutions needing assistance with improvement on Academic Performance Program results and academic support program assessment for NCAA certification requirements.

The OU Athletics Department was awarded the prestigious 2007 PRISM Award for managerial excellence in student-athlete development and was cited for excellence in the creation of its Psychological Resources for OU Student-Athletes (PROS) in its academic services program. The department also was awarded the 2005 Innovations in Mental Health Award for psychological programs and services for student-athletes from the Mental Health Association for Oklahoma County, Oklahoma. In 2007, Gurney was recognized by the Oklahoma Psychological Association with a Distinguished Citizen citation.

In June 2006, he received the Lan Hewlett Award from the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A). The award is considered the top honor in the profession.

In 2005, Gurney received the Outstanding Adjunct Professor of the Year award in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies for his outstanding teaching in the department. In 2006, he received the Distinguished Service Award for his efforts in implementing a master's degree program with an emphasis on intercollegiate athletics administration.

Gurney graduated cum laude from The Ohio State University in 1973 with a degree in English education. He earned his master's in student personnel work and counseling in 1976 from Ohio State and then received his Ph.D. from Iowa State University in higher education administration in 1980.

He began his career in athletics as an academic counselor at Iowa State University (ISU). He left ISU to become assistant athletic director for academic affairs at Southern Methodist University before serving as associate athletics director for academic support and compliance at the University of Maryland. Later, as assistant to the provost, his duties focused on campus retention efforts and undergraduate academic advising.

He served on NCAA Certification teams which conduct peer reviews of institutional adherence to operating principles for governance, equity and academic integrity since 1993. He was a member of the editorial review board for the *International Journal of Sport Management* since 1999.

He will be sorely missed by his friends and colleagues at The Drake Group.