

High school teammates follow Murray twins' NBA journey, 1B

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I.C. family among thousands bracing to lose FOOD BENEFITS



Emerson Hilton, 2, takes a bite of a strawberry as a predinner snack Thursday at his family's home in Iowa City. Cecelia Proffit and her family are bracing to lose their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits after a recent law passed by the Iowa Legislature that adds new requirements, including an asset test. (Geoff Stellfox photos/The Gazette)

New Iowa law requires families to meet asset test to receive SNAP aid

By Tom Barton,
Gazette Des Moines Bureau

IOWA CITY — Two-year-old Emerson Hilton smacks his ruby-stained lips and proudly holds out a juicy, bright-red strawberry of which he just took a big bite.

"I got a strawberry!" the toddler proclaims as he stands next to his mother, Cecelia Proffit, at the family's dining room table.

At the table, 4-year-old

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Harper Hilton places slices of Colby Jack cheese on a whole-wheat tortilla she carefully folds in half and pats down for a quesadilla to be fried up by her father. Nearby in the kitchen, father Conor Hilton squeezes a lime over a bowl of shredded

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Conor Hilton prepares a Mexican-inspired salad for his family Thursday at their home in Iowa City. "Conor has gotten really good at making leftovers not taste like leftovers," explains his wife, Cecelia Proffit, while discussing the family's need to make food stretch across more meals.

Campus partnerships booming

The collaborations are an 'incredible opportunity' for non-traditional students

By Vanessa Miller, The Gazette

Five years ago, a 37-year-old Rodell Jones was working as a Transportation Security Administration officer at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport — having pursued some higher education years earlier, but without landing a degree.

He had never been to Iowa — or even thought much about it — until considering the TSA's offer to earn a certificate in homeland security by taking online courses from a selection of colleges, including Des Moines Area Community College more than 1,000 miles away.

After earning that DMACC certificate in 18 months — all virtually from his home in Hagerstown, Md. — Jones kept going, pursuing an associate degree in criminal justice from DMACC, with an eye on an eventual bachelor's degree. He had planned to do that closer to home, transferring credits to a nearby four-year college, until a DMACC professor asked: "Have you thought about UNI?"

"He said, 'I don't know whether or not you know this, but they have a partnership with DMACC,'" Jones said.

That University of Northern Iowa partnership — called "UNI at Iowa Community Colleges" or UNI@IACC — was not just news to Jones, but was news to Iowa last year. Offering associate-degree earners from any of Iowa's 15 community colleges the option of seamlessly and virtually completing bachelor's degrees in high-demand areas, such as criminal justice, the program attracted 348 students in its first year and contributed to

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Rodell Jones

Beth Goetz has impressed colleagues as 'servant leader at heart'

Celtics' Brad Stevens, UConn's Geno Auriemma advocate for Goetz to be permanent AD at Iowa

By John Steppe, The Gazette

IOWA CITY — As athletics directors across the country navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Beth

Goetz could be found at a table outside Ball State's 22,500-seat Scheumann Stadium.

No, the then-BSU athletics director was not there for a football meeting or fundraiser.

Goetz was there for COVID-19 testing.

If any Ball State student — from accounting to zoology — needed a COVID-19 test, Goetz was working

the sign-up table. It was not a one-time occasion, either.

"She did that multiple days," said Haven Fields, a deputy athletics director at Ball State since 2019. "For her to sit out at the table, connect with students, spend time and sign them up so they can go and use our facility for testing just told me everything I needed to know about her as an individual."

The "servant leader at heart," as Fields describes her, did not stop there. Goetz also ran the scoreboard at basketball games during the pandemic.

"She's not going to ask you to do anything that she won't do herself," said Karin Lee, a deputy AD at Alabama who also worked with

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Beth Goetz
UI interim athletics director

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Goetz at Ball State. “People really appreciated her leadership because she was not larger than the job.”

Now, as Goetz, 48, prepares to officially assume the role of Iowa’s interim athletics director later this summer, her former colleagues from across the country share stories about the Hawkeyes’ next leader.

“I don’t think you’re going to find anybody that’s going to have a negative thing to say about Beth,” University of Connecticut athletics director David Benedict told *The Gazette*.

BRAD STEVENS IS ‘A HUGE FAN’

Goetz’s fans include Boston Celtics team president Brad Stevens, who worked with her when he led Butler men’s basketball to the national championship game in 2010 and 2011.

“I’ve told everybody that would listen everywhere she’s been and everybody I know that she’s one of the best administrators and leaders I’ve ever worked with,” Stevens said in a phone call with *The Gazette*.

Stevens described Goetz, who was an associate AD when they worked together at Butler, as a “super person with a super-high emotional quotient.”

“I’m glad that she has found such success in college,” Stevens said. “If she didn’t, I was going to try to hire her.”

Stevens has “constantly stayed in touch with her” as his career progressed from college basketball head coach to NBA head coach, to NBA executive of a team that was one win away from a trip to the NBA Finals this year.

When Goetz’s Cardinals played at Penn State in 2021, Stevens traveled to State College, Pa. — 368 miles as the crow flies from Boston — to watch the game and attend the Cardinals’ pre-game tailgate event.

“I’m just a huge fan” of Goetz, Stevens said. “I just really, really respect her as a leader and a person.”

GOETZ IS ‘WHO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR’

Goetz’s career stops include Butler, Minnesota and UConn. She was interim AD at Minnesota for a year and the No. 2 person at UConn.

“I didn’t treat Beth like a deputy,” Benedict said. “I treated Beth like an equal. She could have easily switched chairs with me.”

Benedict praised Goetz’s “direct and honest” approach with people — a “huge part of the business that we’re in when you’re trying to manage relationships with coaches.”

“It’s an art when you can tell people, ‘no,’ and have them feel good about the conversation still,” Benedict said. “Beth has that ability.”

She quickly gained the respect of Geno Auriemma, UConn’s 11-time national champion head women’s basketball coach.

Goetz, Auriemma said, was a “perfect addition to the UConn program” although he also knew “she wouldn’t be here long.”

“Somebody was going to come, and she would be an athletic director someplace relatively soon,” Auriemma said. “And as it turned out, that’s exactly what



Connecticut head coach Geno Auriemma (second from right) and associate head coach Chris Dailey (second from left) are honored with jerseys commemorating their 1,000th win as coaches of the women’s basketball team Dec. 31, 2017, before an NCAA college basketball game against Memphis in Hartford, Conn. Beth Goetz (left), then-COO of UConn athletics, and David Benedict (right), UConn director of athletics, look on. (Associated Press photos)



Then-Minnesota head football coach Tracy Claey's follows then-interim athletics director Beth Goetz (right) to the podium where she introduced him at a news conference Nov. 11, 2015, in Minneapolis.

happened.”

In her year as a Power Five athletics director — albeit with the interim tag — she hired Tracy Claey's first as interim and later permanent head football coach at Minnesota.

Claey's already had worked with Goetz on the football budget when he was Jerry Kill’s defensive coordinator and Goetz was the sport administrator for Minnesota football.

“If you go and meet with her, she listened, she had great comments and she almost always followed it up,” Claey's said. “I just never felt like she had her mind predetermined that, ‘This is how it’s going to be.’ She always took in everything.”

Claey's also valued Goetz’s coaching background — she was the head women’s soccer coach at NCAA Division II University of Missouri-St. Louis from 1997-2007 — as they worked on the budget and other tasks.

“If you’re a coach, that’s who you want to work for in an athletic department,” Claey's said. “She has walked in those footsteps and can give you advice and talk through things and relate to it.”

It was a sharp contrast from other administrators Claey's had worked with in his two-plus decades as a college football coach.

“Everybody wants to hire a used-car salesman or business guy to just raise money, raise money, raise money,” Claey's said. “She has a unique perspective.”

Her arrival at Butler in 2008 marked the end of Goetz’s coaching career, but her roots still are there 15 years later.

“I miss coaching every day,” Goetz said in January on Iowa Athletics’ HERkys Voice podcast.

As well versed as Goetz is on the perspective of coaches, she is not lacking in business ac-

men either.

When she took the helm at Ball State in 2018, fundraising for and building an indoor football facility was a key priority.

“Her predecessors were not able to make any progress for probably 10 years,” Geoffrey Mearns, Ball State’s president, said earlier this month.

But Goetz, in her three-year tenure in Muncie, did what others couldn’t and completed the \$15 million project.

“Oh, she’ll never get it done,” Lee remembered coaches saying.

“I think it was my favorite memory when I was able to go back to that coach and say, ‘Hey, you said she’d never get this done,’” Lee said with pride.

SUPPORT AWAY FROM THE OFFICE

Goetz “really cares when it comes to things that may be outside of the office,” as Ball State’s

Fields found out amid tragedy last year. Fields’ baby daughter, who was born premature at 32 weeks and five days, died in his arms.

For the rest of June, all of July and much of August, Fields could count on a text of encouragement from Goetz. The messages were usually in the afternoon and had a quote about keeping faith or other inspiration.

“She sent me a text every day,” Fields said in astonishment a year later. “Even when she was in another country, she sent me two because she wanted to make sure that I had received it. ... She never missed a day.”

Goetz, Fields said, “invested in my family.”

“Getting to know my sons, getting to know my wife,” Fields said. “It really made me feel like I had more than just a boss.”

Goetz attended some of his oldest son’s baseball games and was right “in the mix” with the parents in the crowd who were cheering on their own children.

“I appreciated those things more than she probably knew,” Fields said.

FROM STUDENT TO COLLEGE ADMINISTRATOR

Long before Goetz was fundraising for Ball State’s indoor athletics facility or hiring a head football coach at Minnesota, Goetz’s leadership was evident on the soccer pitch.

After two years at Brevard College in rural North Carolina, the defensive midfielder went to Clemson and competed on its inaugural women’s soccer team. She was the team captain for a roster of almost entirely freshmen.

“So she had her work cut out for her,” said Tracey Leone, Goetz’s head coach at Clemson. “She basically had a team of little ducklings following behind her. ... For a million reasons, our team would have followed her to the ends of the earth.”

Goetz — or as Leone and others at Clemson called her, “Goetzie” — was not a “boisterous personality” on the Tigers’ roster, but instead a “quiet competitor” and leader. She even played with a broken nose.

“When she spoke, everyone, including the coaches, hung on every word she said,” said Leone, who now coaches at Colby College in Maine. “She didn’t have to say a lot.”

The young team Goetz captained in 1994 remains Clemson’s record-holder for goals in a single season and is tied for the third-most wins in program history.

“So much of the Clemson women’s soccer program and kind of the foundation of that program has to do with Beth Goetz,” Leone said.

Goetz studied psychology at Clemson — “I was going to be a therapist,” Goetz said on the HERkys Voice podcast — but Leone advocated for her to instead pursue a coaching career.

“When you see a captain like that and a leader like that who can accomplish what she did,” Leone said, “you knew right away she was going to be a great coach and a great leader in the sports world.”

Goetz initially was an assistant coach at Missouri-St. Louis, a Division II school at the time, while she worked on her

master’s degree. Then when the head coach departed shortly before the 1997 season, Goetz began what eventually became an 11-year head coaching stint.

The bachelor’s degree in psychology and master’s degree in counseling “really did help me” as a coach, Goetz said on the podcast.

“In class, you pick a partner and go through these exercises,” Goetz said. “And I felt like that’s what I was doing when I got to coaching. I’m like, ‘OK, so how do I listen? How do I really hear?’”

By many accounts, it seems to have helped her as an administrator, too.

Lee, who was at Ball State with Goetz as one of her deputies, said Goetz “would ask us deeper questions than probably anybody else” when making decisions.

Lee is not referring to “tell me how you feel” questions that society associates with psychologists, but rather “a lot of detailed questions” about whatever Lee was proposing.

“I really had to come up with good reasons of why we should move forward with doing this,” Lee said.

Similarly in hiring decisions, Lee could not just say, “I don’t like that person,” or, “I don’t think that person is a good fit.”

IOWA’S INTERIM AD, AT LEAST FOR NOW

Goetz arrived at Iowa last September — almost nine months before her appointment as interim AD.

The move from leading a department to being Barta’s No. 2 person surprised some people in Muncie, Ind., but not Lee.

“People even asked me, ‘Why in the world would she go to Iowa?’” Lee said. “I knew that this could be an opportunity for her eventually. ... We all know the athletic directors that are probably closer to retirement versus the ones that are just starting.”

Four days after Iowa athletics director Gary Barta announced his retirement last month, Goetz signed a contract to be interim athletics director at Iowa starting Aug. 2.

The state Board of Regents officially approved the appointment Wednesday. According to the contract, Goetz will be paid a base salary of \$650,000.

“I’m not surprised one bit that Beth was named the acting athletic director at the University of Iowa because she’s been acting like an athletic director probably her entire professional life,” UConn’s Auriemma said. “I think that acting title is going to be coming off sooner rather than later.”

Iowa has not yet held a news conference since Goetz’s appointment as interim AD, but in a news release, the university said it plans to begin a national search in early 2024 for Barta’s long-term replacement.

The offer letter from UI President Barbara Wilson said Goetz “will be encouraged to apply” for the permanent role.

“They better name her the full-time AD,” Stevens said. “I don’t want to put any pressure on anybody, but she’s as good as it gets.”