

Doris Harrington returning to AU campus for first pitch at new softball field

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ALFRED, NY Doris Harrington, former chairperson of the Alfred University Physical Education Department and an AU Athletics Hall of Fame inductee, will be on campus Friday to throw out the first pitch at the University's new softball field.

Alfred University will host Houghton College on Friday, April 19, for a 3 p.m. doubleheader, weather permitting, on its new on-campus field. The facility, located adjacent to Merrill Field, has a two-story press box, home and visitor bullpens, spacious dugouts, and bleacher seating and meets requirements for hosting championship tournaments.

Harrington was instrumental in providing increased opportunities for women to participate in intercollegiate athletics at AU. She was appointed an instructor in the Alfred University Physical Education Department in 1961 and eight years later she was appointed department chairperson. At that time, the University had very few opportunities for women students to compete in sports. Over the next decade, thanks to the efforts of Harrington and former athletic directors Paul Powers and Gene Castrovillo, that changed.

In 1971, with the completion of the McLane Center, AU started a men's and women's swimming and diving program. Five years later, women's volleyball was added, with Harrington serving as the program's first coach. Basketball was added in 1977; soccer in 1980; softball in 1994; and lacrosse in 1995. Today, Alfred University fields 11 women's varsity athletic teams.

Harrington retired from Alfred University in 1985. She was inducted into the AU Athletics Hall of Fame in 1987.

The AU softball team, in its 20th season this spring, opened play at its new field on Sunday (April 14) and swept a doubleheader from visiting Penn College. Until this season, the team had played nearly all its home games at Hornell High School, 15 miles north of the AU campus. A handful of games were played in Wellsville and at the Alfred State College field.

Fittingly, the Saxons have a chance to host a postseason tournament on their new field. AU, with a 7-3 record in Empire 8 Conference play, is in second place in the league standings, behind Ithaca (Harrington's alma mater). The winner of the Empire 8's regular season title earns the right to host the four-team league championship tournament, the winner of which gets the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III championship tournament.

Alfred has two conference games remaining on its schedule, a doubleheader Saturday at St. John Fisher. Ithaca with whom AU split an April 5 doubleheader -- is 6-2 in league play and has Empire 8 doubleheaders this weekend against Elmira and Utica. Elmira is 5-3 in league play and has conference games against Ithaca and Stevens remaining on its league slate. Alfred split a twinbill against Elmira on Saturday.

