

RECOGNITION OF PEEL S. HAWTHORNE '80
SENIOR ASSOCIATE ATHLETICS DIRECTOR/SENIOR WOMAN ADMINISTRATOR

Peel S. Hawthorne is a luminary of this university: inspiring colleagues since she arrived on campus nearly 50 years ago. As a star athlete, she led her teams to new heights. She returned to Alma Mater as a brilliant and inspiring coach before casting her beam even wider as the Senior Woman Administrator. Colleagues describe Ms. Hawthorne as a leader who is “decidedly on your team — all in for everyone’s success.” William & Mary is so fortunate to have Ms. Hawthorne on our team. At every chapter of her life, she has been all in for us.

A two-sport athlete in lacrosse and field hockey, Ms. Hawthorne was among the first Division I female athletes to compete at William & Mary. She captained Tribe lacrosse as a senior and helped lead both her teams to great success. During her four years playing field hockey, the Tribe garnered 37 shutouts. That record still stands – the most in school history.

After graduation, Ms. Hawthorne left William & Mary to pursue coaching; to our lasting good fortune, we lured her back. In 1987, she accepted the role of Tribe Field Hockey Head Coach and lit up the field. Only the 13th coach in Division I Field Hockey to earn more than 300 wins, she earned two NCAA at-large selections with her teams. She was named “Coach of the Year” by the CAA, the Alumni Association and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In 2013, Ms. Hawthorne pivoted and stepped into senior leadership as “the coach of coaches.” As an administrator, her portfolio is vast – including overseeing the administration of all William & Mary’s 23 Division I sports teams and Title IX compliance. She leads student support services for 500 talented student-athletes.

Ms. Hawthorne is known for competitive excellence, and for ensuring that students, faculty and staff flourish as they pursue it. She brings vision, creativity and kindness to work every day. In the words of a colleague, “Peel is that person who truly believes that sometimes you need to step out of your comfort zone to help make changes even if that means taking time out of your day. She always leads by example and her willingness to help solve a problem and then lead the way to fix it is quite amazing.”

Ms. Hawthorne’s leadership illuminates so many parts of this university. She was elected President of the Professional and Professional Faculty Assembly in 2016. She led in planning the university’s year-long 100 Years of Women celebration and is a charter member of the Society of 1918. She served on numerous strategic committees, including the President’s Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Assault and Harassment and the Retention and Graduation Working Group.

In 2020, Ms. Hawthorne was inducted into the W&M Athletics Hall of Fame. In 2023, the Athletics Department received the university’s Building Connections & Bridging Differences Award – a testament to Ms. Hawthorne’s unflagging commitment to belonging. Earlier this month, William & Mary celebrated Ms. Hawthorne’s 2024 Shirley Aceto Award for excellence in service to the campus community.

In June 2024, Ms. Hawthorne retires from William & Mary. Her colleagues will miss her. Yet we are comforted by her assurance that she is not going anywhere and will hold her to that promise. At games, meets and matches – and every joyful gathering – Ms. Hawthorne will always be sought out and cherished.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Visitors commends Peel Hawthorne for her outstanding leadership at William & Mary, which spans nearly five decades as a student-athlete, coach and administrator;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Visitors hereby expresses their deep appreciation for Ms. Hawthorne's achievements in uplifting the university's values of belonging, excellence and integrity through her work and leadership;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Visitors extends warmest wishes to Ms. Hawthorne and her family as she begins this new chapter in her life; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the Board and a copy of the same be delivered to Peel Hawthorne with best wishes from a grateful Board.