

My tribute to John Streif

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Three years ago, I was in Kansas City covering the CBE Classic along with three of my colleagues at *The Daily Iowan*. The Iowa men's basketball team was participating in this event and played Texas and Wichita State.

After the Hawkeyes' game against Wichita State that second night, the four of us went to grab dinner after we all finished up our coverage. We went to a bar-and-grill across the street from the Sprint Center and ordered wings. As we finished eating, we all asked for separate checks. The waitress came back and said all four orders were taken care of. At first, we were in disbelief. Moments later though, we figured out what happened.

Earlier that night, we saw John Streif at this restaurant and were briefly chatting with him and a few of the basketball managers. One of the guys I was with realized Streif had paid for our meals and almost immediately, the four of us approached him at the bar to thank him.

On Thursday, the UI sent out a release saying Streif is retiring from his positions as athletic trainer and travel coordinator, effective Jan. 2, 2013.

Having now covered Iowa football the last six years and Iowa men's basketball the last four, Streif is as nice of a person as I've met. Not just among those working within the Iowa athletics department. I mean, ever. Period. That night in Kansas City, he didn't have to pay for four 20-somethings' food orders. But he did because that's the type of person Streif has always been and still is today.

I can't think of a single instance where I saw him and he didn't say 'Hi' or even shake my hand while greeting me. Heck, as recently as last week, he saw me from a distance over at Carver-Hawkeye Arena and waved hello.

Earlier, I mentioned how Streif also coordinated the UI's travel. When I was the *DI's Pregame* editor, he went out of his way to assist me with planning road trips. If he had an extra room available wherever the football team was staying, he always held a reservation for me and the party I would be covering that road game with.

In 2008, Streif gave 21-year-old me one less thing to be concerned about during the months our newsroom couldn't be used because of the flood that hit Iowa City. For that and everything else he has ever done for me, I'm forever grateful to him.

But the stories I told are just a few. Over the years, I've heard similar stories about Strief from many others. There was a party held in his honor at the Iowa Memorial Union back in May 2010. The list of attendees was a "Who's who?" in the Hawkeye football and basketball worlds.

([Here's the story](#) I wrote from that event in 2010 that pretty much sums up what he meant to those who played and coached at Iowa. I should also mention shortly after this was published, I received a hand-written note from Streif thanking me for the article and I still have that note in my possession today.)

Every football and basketball player I've ever spoken to loved him. I remember talking to a former football player once who said Streif was the only trainer he would ever allow to tape up his ankles before practice or before a game, simply because he felt he was always in good hands whenever Streif worked on him.

Every coach held Streif in high regard. I remember one of Ferentz's press conferences a few years back where he talked

about the 2001 Alamo Bowl – his first bowl as Iowa’s head coach. He mentioned how he took note of everything Streif had to do behind the scenes just to make sure every facet of the team’s trip to San Antonio went smoothly. After the Hawkeyes won that game, Ferentz presented Streif with the game ball.

He is so beloved at the UI that Ronnie Lester, one of the school’s all-time basketball greats, requested the training facility at Carver-Hawkeye Arena be named in Streif’s honor as he donated \$100,000 to the arena’s renovation project that was just completed last year.

Shortly after news broke Thursday of his retirement, former Iowa basketball player Duez Henderson tweeted “[He is IOWA](#),” with a link to the school’s release. In fact, athletics director Gary Barta is quoted in that very release saying “To many, he is the face of Iowa athletics.”

Whenever I think about Streif, his acts of kindness are what first come to mind. Not just the ones he has displayed towards me over the last six years, but towards everyone I know who has ever crossed paths with him – athletes, coaches, administrators, other reporters, Hawkeye fans, you name it.

He was the consummate professional while also being as compassionate a human being as one can meet. There’s no doubt in my mind he’ll continue to be the same genuine person post-retirement that he was long before I ever met him.

Like many others, I wish John Streif nothing but the best and look forward to seeing the UI recognize him with the proper send-off he deserves.