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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MICHIGAN'S VIC HEYLIGER NAMED WCHA 1950S COACH OF THE DECADE PRESENTED BY ANDERSON'S PURE MAPLE SYRUP

Michigan bench boss led the Wolverines to four NCAA titles in the WCHA's first five seasons

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – Dec. 9, 2020 – Former Michigan head coach **Vic Heyliger** has been named the Western Collegiate Hockey Association's Coach of the Decade for the 1950s.

Heyliger, whose coaching tenure at Michigan predated the founding of the WCHA, led the Wolverines to a record of 110-29-6 (.779) in six seasons of WCHA competition from 1951-52 to 1956-57 and won four NCAA championships (1952, 1953, 1955 and 1956) during that span. His teams compiled a 74-21-3 (.771) mark in WCHA games, winning one WCHA title outright and sharing second with four runner-up finishes. Individually, Heyliger was honored with the Spencer Penrose Award in 1954 as the national coach of the year.

The Concord, Mass., native began his coaching career at the University of Illinois, posting a 39-19-3 (.664) mark from 1939-40 to 1942-1943. He bookended his Illini tenure with two seasons playing for the Chicago Blackhawks (1937-38 and 1943-44).

An All-American at Michigan who set the then-school record for career goals at 116, Heyliger returned to his alma mater as the school's head coach in 1944-45 and led the Wolverines to a 118-32-7 (.774) record and two NCAA titles (1948, 1951) prior to the school joining the WCHA's forerunner - the Midwest Collegiate Hockey League - as a founding member in 1951-52.

Heyliger left college coaching after guiding the Wolverines to a runner-up finish at the 1957 NCAA championship. Following stints coaching West Germany (1962, 1963) and the United States (1966) at the world championship, Heyliger accepted a job as the head coach of the club hockey program at the Air Force Academy in 1966. He became the Falcons' first varsity head coach in 1968-69 when the Academy elevated its program to NCAA status. In six seasons as the varsity coach from 1968-69 to 1973-74, he led Air Force to an 85-77-3 (.524) mark as an independent program.

Heyliger retired with a 23-season career mark of 352-157-21 (.684) following the 1973-74 season. He was inducted into the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame in 1974 and the University of Michigan Hall of Honor in 1980. In 1982, Heyliger was presented with the Hobey Baker Legend of College Hockey Award and received the John MacInnes Award in 1982.

Heyliger passed away in 2006 at the age of 94.

Heyliger is the first of seven Coach of the Decade honorees that will be announced by the WCHA during the 2020-21 season. The WCHA is also honoring an outstanding player and selecting an All-Decade Team for each decade as the league celebrates 70 Years of Excellence.

For more on the 1950s and the rest of the WCHA's history, visit wcha.com.

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Vic Heyliger Year-by-Year

Season	School (Conference)	Overall	Conference	Standing	Postseason
1939-40	Illinois (Independent)	3-11-0			
1940-41	Illinois (Independent)	17-3-1			
1941-42	Illinois (Independent)	10-4-2			
1942-43	Illinois (Independent)	9-1-0			
1944-45	Michigan (Independent)	3-6-0			
1945-46	Michigan (Independent)	17-7-1			
1946-47	Michigan (Independent)	13-7-1			
1947-48	Michigan (Independent)	20-2-1			NCAA Champion
1948-49	Michigan (Independent)	20-2-3			NCAA Third Place
1949-50	Michigan (Independent)	23-4-0			NCAA Third Place
1950-51	Michigan (Independent)	22-4-1			NCAA Champion
1951-52	Michigan (MCHL)	22-4-0	9-3-0	T-2nd	NCAA Champion
1952-53	Michigan (MCHL)	17-7-0	12-4-0	T-1st	NCAA Champion
1953-54	Michigan (WIHL)	15-6-2	12-3-1	2 nd	NCAA Third Place
1954-55	Michigan (WIHL)	18-5-1	13-5-0	2nd	NCAA Champion
1955-56	Michigan (WIHL)	20-2-1	15-2-1	1st	NCAA Champion
1956-57	Michigan (WIHL)	18-5-2	13-4-1	2 nd	NCAA Runner-Up
1968-69	Air Force (Independent)	6-12-0			
1969-70	Air Force (Independent)	11-17-1			
1970-71	Air Force (Independent)	15-11-2			
1971-72	Air Force (Independent)	25-6-0			
1972-73	Air Force (Independent)	16-16-0			
1973-74	Air Force (Independent)	12-15-0			

Other Top Coaches of the 1950s

Murray Armstrong, Denver: Led the Pioneers to a 58-29-5 (.658) mark in the 1950s and the first of five national titles and seven WCHA regular season crowns he would win with the Pioneers in his 21-year career. **John Mariucci, Minnesota:** Compiled a 102-60-6 (.625) record and two regular season WCHA titles with his home-grown Golden Gopher teams in six seasons from 1952-1959 ... Left the Gopher bench for one season in 1955-56 to guide the United States to a silver medal at the 1956 Winter Olympics in Cortina, Italy. **Bob May, North Dakota:** Led the Fighting Sioux to a 44-17-2 mark from 1957-59, winning one WCHA title and one NCAA crown.

Celebrating 70 Years of Excellence

The WCHA will celebrate 70 Years of Excellence throughout the 2020-21 season. The league will name all-decade teams and players and coaches of the decade for each of its seven decades. The teams and individuals will be selected by a panel of current and former WCHA staffers and media members who have or are currently covering the WCHA. More than 200 nominees were submitted for consideration by the 21 schools that have called the WCHA home since 1951.

About Anderson's Pure Maple Syrup

Anderson's Maple Syrup Inc. is proud to continue its 90-year tradition of producing, processing, and packaging consistently high-quality pure maple syrup, organic pure maple syrup, and other maple products. For more information, visit Anderson's Pure Maple Syrup.

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About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association Men's League

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association, among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in all of collegiate athletics, is marking its 69th season of men's competition in 2020-21. The 10-team NCAA Division I conference consists of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (Chargers), the University of Alaska Anchorage (Seawolves), the University of Alaska (Nanooks), Bemidji State University (Beavers), Bowling Green State University (Falcons), Ferris State University (Bulldogs), Lake Superior State University (Lakers), Michigan Technological University (Huskies), Minnesota State University (Mavericks) and Northern Michigan University (Wildcats). For more information, visit wcha.com.

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