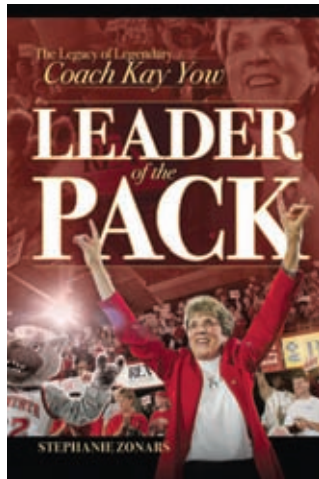


BY STEPHANIE ZONARS

## Rewards of a Life Well-Lived

**W**hen you think of your coaching legacy, what vision comes to mind? Championship trophies? A litany of winning seasons? A court, field or building with your name on it? Those achievements leave a mark, but striving for a legacy rooted solely in external accomplishments may leave you looking back one day with regret.

In *Leader of the Pack: The Legacy of Legendary Coach Kay Yow*, 35 former Wolfpack players tell stories of lessons they learned from the former North Carolina State women's basketball coach, who understood that her most important legacy was not the Olympic gold medal, 700-plus victories or Kay Yow Court, but rather the impact she made on people's hearts. Leaving a meaningful legacy like Yow's doesn't just happen—it takes forethought and intentionality. Here are three steps to a legacy worth leaving:



### KNOW YOURSELF

Develop self-awareness by learning your temperament or gifts through assessments like DISC, Myers-Briggs or StrengthsFinder. Refine your strengths and align yourself in roles and responsibilities that maximize them. Discovering who you are also helps you understand who you're not.

Yow knew herself and allowed her unique gifts to strongly influence her coaching style. In *Leader of the Pack*, former player Summer Erb tells a story about visiting N.C. State as a potential transfer when her coach was abruptly fired after her freshman year. When Yow told her that she wouldn't try to replace her former coach, Erb broke down and cried. That was all she really needed to hear. Coach Yow knew that being her best meant being herself. Similarly, leaving your best legacy means bringing your gifts, passions, values and dreams to bear on your sphere of influence.

### KNOW YOUR GOAL

When you're gone, what do you want others to say about you? How do you want to be remembered? Your answers will help you "begin with the end in mind." Honoring God and serving/loving people were a few of Coach Yow's goals. When she lost her battle with cancer last January, more than 1,400 people attended her memorial service (also broadcast on live television in Raleigh), an indication that with God's help she had indeed served and loved people well.

### KNOW YOUR PLAN


Most coaches don't hold practice without a plan, so why approach something as important as your legacy without one? Evaluate your life today in light of your desired legacy. What is working? What needs tweaking? Intentionality is the key.

Part of Coach Yow's plan was to stay in touch with her former players through hand-written



▲ **Dreamer:** N.C. State head coach Kay Yow motivated and inspired her players on the court, and also after her death. A new book talks about leaving a legacy and bases that idea on the life of the legendary coach who passed away from cancer earlier this year.

notes and cards. In *Leader of the Pack*, numerous players tell how much it meant that she sent personalized birthday and Christmas cards to every single former player—every year. She didn't leave important relationships to chance, but had a plan for developing and maintaining them.

Strong, powerful legacies don't just happen—they require self-awareness, a goal and a plan. If you want a legacy beyond trophies and record books, take time to know yourself, your goal and your plan, and one day you will look back and see the rewards of a life well-lived. 



Stephanie Zonars owns *Life Beyond Sport, LLC* where she provides life coaching and team building services to help coaches discover life balance and inspire team chemistry. Her second book, *Leader of the Pack: The Legacy of Legendary Coach Kay Yow*, is available now at [www.coachyowleaderofthepack.com](http://www.coachyowleaderofthepack.com).