As head coach John Ware enters the 2003 season, he becomes the second-longest tenured coach in Truman football history, tying the legendary Don Faurot who also guided the Bulldogs for nine seasons.

Ware has high hopes about the upcoming season, regardless of the plethora of new faces on offense.

"I'm optimistic about the offense's ability," Ware indicated. "Although it will be young, it will be talented. The question is not if, but when they will catch on to our schemes and become effective for us."

Ware will rely on the defense for continuity. "I think we'll be in a situation where the defense could help carry the young offense," he said. "We probably have as good or better senior leadership than we've had in a while and they should be able to help the team through thick and thin."

He has led the 'Dogs to a 50-37 (.575) record over the last eight seasons and is 45-27 (.625) in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association during that span. With the third-most wins in school history, behind Faurot's 63 wins and 16-year resident Red Wade's 99, Ware has left an indelible mark on Bulldog football. His teams have posted seven winning seasons, including 2001's eight-win campaign.

"One of the primary things that gives me satisfaction is the kind of student-athletes we coach," Ware said. "We have a special kind of student-athlete who loves football but realizes the importance of academics. I enjoy seeing the success they have on the football field, but I also like seeing how they grow as people and the success they enjoy once they leave Truman."

Ware began as head coach in 1995 as the Bulldogs' 19th taskmaster. In addition to his duties as head coach, His focus on the field has been as Truman's offensive line coach, a job he has enjoyed for nearly two decades.

Seven years ago, Ware's efforts as O-line coach paid off when Jarrett Anderson received the Harlon Hill Trophy, awarded to the NCAA Division II Player of the Year. Anderson rode Truman's offensive line to an NCAA DII record-setting 2,140 yards in 1996, leading the nation in rushing (194.5 ypg) and scoring (15.3 ppg).

Ware served as assistant head coach in charge of the offensive line for eight years at Truman before taking the head job in '95. During his tenure as assistant head coach, Truman compiled a 38-19 record from 1990-94, including three postseason games.

In addition to his duties as assistant head coach, Ware served as offensive line coach and strength and conditioning coordinator. He is a certified strength and conditioning specialist and a member of the National Strength Coaches Association.

He came to the University in 1985 as a graduate assistant in charge of strength training and the defensive line. Ware became full-time in '86.

He has coached four offensive linemen to all-America status and recruited four other all-America Bulldogs, including another great running back, Chad Guthrie, who topped the Bulldogs' single season rushing list with 1,649 yards until Anderson took the honor in '96.

Ware played football at Drake University (Iowa), where he was an all-America and first-team all-conference offensive lineman for the Bulldogs. He also collected academic all-America and all-league honors and performed in the 1981 Blue-Gray All-Star Classic.

In 1981, Ware signed with the San Francisco Forty Niners as a free agent and played in four exhibition games before getting cut.

He received a bachelor's degree in 1981 from Drake and a master's degree in '87 from Truman, both in psychology.

Before coming to Truman, Ware served as line coach and strength and conditioning coach for a season in Ottumwa, Iowa, his hometown. He was also an all-state lineman for the Ottumwa High School Bulldogs.

Ware was a five-time U.S. Senior National Powerlifting champion. He was the 1989 world record-holder, lifting a total of 2,427 pounds, and the 1991 world powerlifting champion. His best lifts in the three powerlifting events were 1,000 lbs. in the squat, 630 lbs. in the bench press and 840 lbs. in the deadlift.

He is married to the former Melissa Thomas ('87) who is the Director of Athletics Media Relations at Truman.


**Erik Kruppe, Linebackers**

Erik Kruppe begins his second season as a full-time coach on the Bulldog staff, but was a volunteer coach in 2001, while teaching special education at Kirksville High School.

He serves as linebacker coach after helping with the inside linebackers his first year. Kruppe also serves as film coordinator, in charge of state-of-the-art digital film breakdown.

Kruppe earned a bachelor’s degree from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1999, and completed a master’s degree in special education at Northeastern Illinois University in 2001.

He coached at North Park University in Chicago from 1999-2000, and helped coach at Maine East High School in the summer of 1999.

Kruppe was a linebacker at Illinois Wesleyan from 1995-98, and is a native of Niles, Ill.

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**Matt Copeland, Associate Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator**

Matt Copeland enters his seventh season as a coach for the Bulldogs, and his second as the team’s offensive coordinator. Copeland served as an offensive assistant at Truman his first three seasons before a two-year stint as defensive line coach. He has also served as associate head coach since 1999.

Copeland coached football and basketball and taught English at Highland (Mo.) High School for a year before joining the Bulldog staff.

He performed as a tight end for Truman from 1991-95, earning second-team all-America recognition in 1995. Copeland led the team in receiving in ’94 and ’95. He caught 107 career passes for 1,354 yards and ranks 10th in receptions and 15th in yards among Bulldog career leaders.

Copeland was a unanimous first-team all-MIAA pick in ’95 and a second-team pick in ’94. He was also a second-team Verizon academic all-America, as well as earned academic all-MIAA honors in 1994 and 1995. Copeland was a member of two national playoff teams in ’92 and ’94 and served as a team captain in 1995. He was named to the Truman 1900-1999 all-century football team.

Copeland earned a bachelor’s degree in English in 1995 from Truman, and completed his master’s degree in education at the University in 2001. Originally from Rock Island, Ill., Alleman High School, he is married to the former Suzann Sellon (’00, ’02). They have a 12-year-old daughter, Paige, a 10-year-old daughter, Jarrett, who is 4-years-old, and Noah, who will be 2-years-old in January.

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**Jeff Jacques, Defensive Line**

Jeff Jacques joined the full-time staff prior to the 2002 season after serving as a volunteer coach in 2001. Prior to the ‘01 campaign, he spent two seasons as a member of the University of Missouri-Rolla Miners coaching staff.

Jacques is no stranger to Truman. Before his stint at UMR, he spent a year as the defensive coordinator at Kemper Military Junior College in Boonville, Mo., but prior to that was a member of the Truman defensive coaching staff for three seasons as a volunteer assistant. He also helped coach football for a season at Kirksville High School.

While at Missouri-Rolla, he first coached the running backs and then moved over to coach the defensive line. Jacques assisted with the tight ends at Truman in ‘01 and moved back over to defense in 2002 to again coach the linemen. Jacques also serves as strength and conditioning coordinator for the Bulldogs.

He earned a bachelor of arts degree in teaching from Buena Vista (Iowa) in 2001, and a B.S. from Truman in 1996. Jacques and his wife, Krista (‘89), both Kirksville natives, have a 10-year-old daughter, Kelsey, and a son, Jarrett, who is 4-years-old.

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**Matt Nelson, Defensive Coordinator/Special Teams/Defensive Backs**

Matt Nelson began as a Bulldog coach in 1999 after two years as a graduate assistant coach for the Bulldogs. He served as co-defensive coordinator a year before assuming the sole responsibility of coordinator for the defense last year. Nelson works mainly with the defensive backs, as well as serves as special teams coach and is advisor for the Purple Pride spirit group.

As a graduate assistant at Truman, Nelson worked with the linebackers and defensive tackles, and continued his work among the linebackers before taking over the secondary.

He finished a four-year career as a linebacker for Truman in 1995. Nelson was second in tackles that year (81) and posted a career total of 185 stops and five quarterback sacks. He was a member of the ‘92 and ‘94 NCAA playoff teams and was voted a team captain in 1995.

Nelson was a three-time member of the academic all-MIAA team. He earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Truman in 1995 and completed a master of arts degree in English at Truman in ‘99.

Nelson is a native of Rockford, Ill., and attended Auburn High School were he was an all-conference performer. He is married to the former Susan Johnson.

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Scott Bailey
Volunteer Assistant Coach Running Backs

Scott Bailey begins his second year as a part-time coach for the running backs. He attended Pittsburg State University (Kan.) and graduated in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in engineering technology. Bailey was a four-year starter at PSU, spending two years as a linebacker and his final two seasons at tight end.

He coached the Miami (Mo.) High School football team to a 9-1 record and a state runner-up finish in 2001. He is currently the manager of the Kirksville branch of Bank Midwest.

Russ Foster
Part-Time Assistant Coach Midfielders

In his first season as a part-time coach for the Bulldogs, Foster will bring plenty of experience to the table. He was a teacher at Milan C-2 School for 16 years and served as the head football coach for three seasons before resigning to take a job in the private sector in 2003.

He was a three-year letterman for the Missouri Valley College football squad and earned a bachelor's degree from the school in 1978.

Mike Harris
Part-Time Assistant Coach Tight Ends

Mike Harris, in his second season as an offensive assistant, transferred to Truman after earning second-team all-league honors as a member of the Phoenix College football team. In 2000, he played in six games at tackle for the Bulldogs and started seven games in 2001 before sustaining a career-ending injury. Harris is from Chandler, Ariz., and attended Dobson high school where he was an all-state performer. He graduated this past May from Truman with a degree in business.

Judd Lienhard
Student Assistant Coach - Defense

Lienhard will help coach this season after completing his career with the Bulldogs in 2002. He was a three-time all-MIAA pick, including earning second-team status his final season. Lienhard led the team with 98 total tackles and 17 tackles for losses last year, completing his career with 309 total stops.

Lienhard, a native of Louisiana, Mo., is completing a degree in exercise science.

Michelle Boyd, Head Athletics Trainer

Michelle Boyd is in her 10th year as an athletic trainer at Truman, but enters her third as the head athletics trainer after serving as an assistant under Clint Thompson for the seven years prior to taking over.

From 1992-94, she was the head athletics trainer at Quaker Valley High School in Leetsdale, Pa. Boyd was an athletics trainer for wheelchair athletics at the University of Illinois Rehabilitation Education Center in 1992.

She received a bachelor's degree in kinesiology in 1992 from the University of Illinois (Champaign) and a master's degree in exercise physiology from the University of Pittsburg (Pa.) in 1994.

Troy Garrett, Assistant Athletics Trainer

Troy Garrett will serve as the main athletic trainer for football.

He is entering his fourth season as a full-time trainer at Truman, after a two-year stint as the head trainer at Southeastern Oklahoma State from 1998-2000.

Garrett earned a bachelor's degree in exercise science in 1995 from Truman and a master's degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1998.

He is a native of South English, Iowa.

John Bailey, D.O., Team Physician

Dr. Bailey earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Truman and a Doctor of Osteopathy degree from the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1990.

He was an orthopedic resident in Rockaway, N.Y., before entering an orthopedic and neurosurgical spine fellowship at the University of Missouri-Columbia. His specialty training includes sports medicine.

Chris Main, D.O., Team Physician

Dr. Chris Main earned a bachelor's degree from Truman and a Doctor of Osteopathy degree from the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine.

He completed his orthopedic surgery residency at Des Peres and St. Louis University Hospitals. Dr. Main has worked with many professional athletes and specializes in orthopedic sports medicine.

Purple Pride

A spirit and support organization for the football team, Purple Pride members host recruits on campus visits, as well as perform many other support services for the team. Members decorate locker rooms, serve as ball persons at games, chalk sidewalks promoting games and sell chair backs, programs and Bulldog apparel at home games. They are also a valuable resource to the football office, helping to coordinate mailings as well as performing other office tasks. Purple Pride is advised by assistant coach Matt Nelson.

2003-04 Purple Pride Members: Stephanie Rice, president; Michaela Leverenz, vice president; Katie Arnold, secretary; Karen Bohackand and Katie Chierek, social; Mandi Howe and Elizabeth Osby, fund raising; Marley Doyle and Emily Kirchner, recruiting; Natalie Preston and Katie Schertzer, decorations; Nicole Hatchet and Melissa Storms, tailgate; and Melissa Riehl, Melissa Seifert, Jessica Walter and Courtnie Wilson, game day. Other members are Dhara Amin, Jenny Comrie, Jen Galle, Darah Geisz, Mary Glenn, Laura Jenkins, Jennifer Kempfner, Alice Lasco, Katie Martinek, Sandy Montgomery, Sarah Mullford, April Owens, Jenny Schellman, Amy Whitaker, Jennifer Wollbrink and Elaine Wright.

Support Staff