

Bill McCartney, Promise Keepers Founder, Legendary Football Coach, Dies at 84

Bill McCartney, founder of famed men's ministry Promise Keepers and Hall of Fame football coach who led the University of Colorado Buffaloes to the team's only national championship, died Dec. 10 at 84 "after a courageous journey with Dementia," his family announced.



"Coach Mac touched countless lives with his unwavering faith, boundless compassion, and enduring legacy as a leader, mentor, and advocate for family, community, and faith," the family said in its statement.

"As a trailblazer and visionary, his impact was felt both on and off the field, and his spirit will forever remain in the hearts of those he inspired."

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McCartney coached CU from 1982-1994 and remains the winningest coach in the team's history. In 2013, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. After beginning his career at the secondary level, he became the first-ever high school coach to be hired by the University of Michigan's Coach Bo Schembechler.

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But it was his founding of national men's faith organization Promise Keepers in 1990 that propelled him into a different spotlight. Following his conversion from Catholicism, per the

Promise Keepers website,

Bill McCartney founded Promise Keepers on his faith in Christ, his connections with other men of God, and his belief in the tremendous power of the spoken word. He created the 7 Promises of a Promise Keeper to guide men toward living with integrity, in community with one another.

Promise Keepers became known for its large-scale men's events, generally held in stadiums across the country. The ministry encouraged men to be loyal to Jesus Christ, faithful to their wives and active in their churches. McCartney wrote several books directed to men, including the best-selling "Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper." He resigned as president in 2003 to care for his wife, Lynne, who died in 2013, but retained his affiliation with the ministry.

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CU athletic director Rick George, hired by McCartney in 1987 as his recruiting coordinator, said in a statement:

I am very saddened at the passing of Coach Mac. I was fortunate to be able to say goodbye to Coach in person last week. Coach Mac was an incredible man who taught me about the importance of faith, family and being a good husband, father and grandfather. He instilled discipline and accountability to all of us who worked and played under his leadership. The mark that he left on CU football and our athletic department will be hard to replicate. My thoughts and prayers go out to Mike, Tom, Kristy, Marc and their families. I have many fond memories of Coach Mac and will hold those close to my heart. God bless Coach Mac.

McCartney is survived by four children, Michael, Thomas,

Kristy and Marc; 10 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Information on a memorial service is pending.

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