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A&M names first woman to Athletic Hall of Fame

By **KEN SURY**
Sports Writer

The late Paul "Bear" Bryant was the most familiar name announced Tuesday of the 1985 inductees to the Texas A&M Athletic Hall of Fame, but, ironically, not the most important.

Linda Cornelius Waltman, a track and field All-American for A&M from 1977-79, became the first woman athlete named to A&M's hall of fame. Not only was Waltman the Aggies' first woman inductee, she also became the first woman athlete ever to be named to a Southwest Conference school's athletic hall of fame.

"This is a very high honor for me," said Waltman during a special news conference to announce the inductees. "When I first found out, my first thought was that I was not worthy of such an honor."

A quick look at her accomplishments, however, would indicate she is more than worthy.

Waltman is considered one of the most successful pentathletes in the



Linda Waltman

history of the Amateur Athletes Union (AAU), winning the AAU Pentathlon National Championship in 1977 and placing third in '78 and fourth in '79.

While attending A&M, she set several school records as an individual and as a member of the relay team. Her long jump best of 19-foot-1/2 inches still stands as an Aggie record.

Waltman made the 1980 U.S. Olympic Team, but like the rest of the American Olympians, did not get to participate because of our nation's boycott of the Moscow Games.

She said the importance of her induction to the A&M hall ranks "right up there with making the Olympic team" in her life.

She also said being chosen makes her feel like a "ground breaker."

She should.

Waltman broke ground earlier in her career by being the first woman to earn a full athletic scholarship to A&M.

"I hope it opens the doors for other schools to recognize female athletes," she said.

But no school needs to be reminded to recognize the coaching accomplishment of the legendary "Bear" Bryant — Division I college football's winningest coach.

Bryant coached the A&M football team from 1954-57, after a short stint at the University of Kentucky. His first year at A&M, the Aggies struggled to a 1-9 record — his only

losing season in an illustrious 36-year coaching career.

But he turned the Aggie program around with a 7-2-1 record the next year, followed by a SWC Championship in '56 and a Hensel Trophy winner in running back John David Crow in '57.

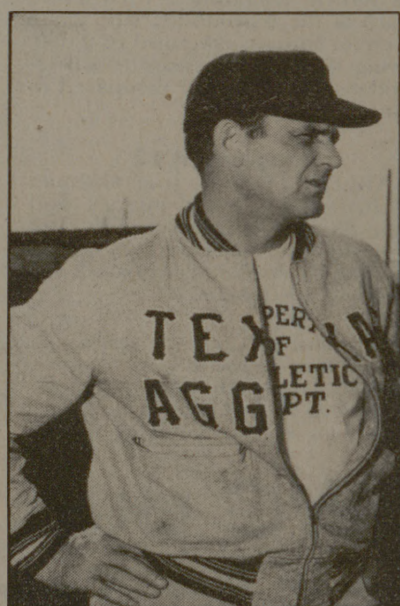
During his brief four years at A&M, Bryant amassed a record of 25-13-2, before returning to coach his alma mater — Alabama.

In addition to Waltman and Bryant, Jewell M. "Mac" McDowell, former A&M basketball star, and Ernest W. Pannell, a past Aggie football star, were also inducted.

MacDowell, a 5-8 guard, was selected A&M's Most Valuable Player in 1950. He also was named to the All-SWC team in '50, '51, and '52.

Pannell made All-SWC as a tailback for A&M in '39 and '40. After Pannell graduated from A&M, he served three years in the U.S. Navy before playing for the NFL's Green Bay Packers.

Waltman, Bryant, McDowell and Pannell will be formally inducted at the A&M-Arkansas football game



Paul "Bear" Bryant

lost to the Aggies in 1957. He also was named to the All-SWC team in '39 and '40. After Pannell graduated from A&M, he served three years in the U.S. Navy before playing for the NFL's Green Bay Packers.



Jewell McDowell

Annual Storewide Sale
Tues. Oct. 2 thru Sat. Oct. 5
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