

USD's Domestic, Sexual Violence and Stalking Project endorses 'Voice of Hope' legislation

The University South Dakota School of Law's Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence & Stalking Project (DVSSVP), a law school student organization, formally endorsed Professor Roger Baron's effort to change South Dakota law through the establishment of a "unilateral no fault ground for divorce."

The president of DVSSVP, Deb Morris, made the announcement today, observing that Baron has been advocating for a true no-fault divorce law since 1990.

"The time to come forward with this endorsement is now," said Morris.

She stated that the adoption of the type of law encompassed by Baron's proposal has been proven as an effective tool toward the reduction of domestic violence in other states.

Reliable data indicates that the overall incidence of domestic violence was reduced by one-third in other states after they adopted unilateral no-fault divorce.

This data further establishes a significant decline in female suicide and homicide rates.

"This is another example of our outstanding faculty and active student body at USD Law.

The School of Law and the University do not take positions on legislation but our students have an amazing opportunity to witness legislation and participate in the preparatory process first-hand," said Tom Geu, dean of the law school.

"Our student organizations provide a valuable vehicle for students to participate in real-life activities which directly affect our state, the legal profession and which enrich their educational experience as a whole."

The current push for action stems from increased public awareness and outcry for change

as a result of the op-ed piece written by Baron and his daughter, Shawna Baron (a clinical psychologist), "Domestic violence victims hindered by fault-based divorce law," published in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader on Oct. 9, 2014.

The current draft of the proposed law has been titled "Voice of Hope."

This title was recommended by Roger Buechler whose sister Tania Aesoph was slain by her husband in 1999.

Tania Aesoph's story inspired Roger Baron to propose changes, once again, to the

current South Dakota divorce statute.

Tania Aesoph endured years of mental and emotional abuse. She ultimately lost her life at the hand of her husband in 1999 after inquiring into a divorce and learning that the law was not favorable to her.

Tania's siblings are supporting Baron's efforts and they wish to emphasize that the new legislation, if enacted, will provide "Hope" to South Dakota's domestic violence victims in the future.

- Courtesy of USD News

SUCCESS

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doing football and men's basketball. Thayer, 29, is in year two of giving USD women's basketball fans a dose of exuberance as he calls their games from Des Moines, Iowa to Seattle, Washington to Lawrence, Kansas to Brookings.

They both have had different careers as one is a long-time veteran of the trade and the other is a young up-and-comer. What they have in common is that they both made it to Vermillion and are giving it their all to provide the best play-by-play announcing for Coyote fans.

That's been one heck-of-a deal for the city and the university.

Joe is back in the USD saddle

Van Goor was born and raised in Yankton and graduated from the high school in 1978. He would attend the University of South Dakota for a year and later Mount Marty College and St. Cloud University.

He actually got involved in radio after his sophomore year in high school, securing a part-time gig with a Yankton station.

He would ultimately work in stations in his hometown, Hot Springs, and St. Cloud, Minnesota, during his early days behind the mike.

He would begin covering sports in 1984 as he did play-by-play work for WNAV 570AM in Yankton.

"Supposedly the first game I ever covered was the annual Knox County invitational, boys and girls basketball tournament, simply known as 'The Knox,'" Van Goor said. "It was a Bloomfield Queen Bee-Crofton Lady Warrior basketball game. It was not a good game. A classmate of mine from Yankton High School was coaching Bloomfield at the time and this was when they were still playing with the big basketball and they still had a jump ball. They must have had 30 or 35 jump balls in the game. That far outdid the number of shots put up in the game."

He reported on high school football, boys and girls basketball, wrestling, and track and field. He would also do play-by-play of both USD and South Dakota State, the latter for one year. Van Goor also covered Mount Marty sports and American Legion baseball.

To say Van Goor, who is in the third year of a five-year contract to cover USD sports for KVHT, was busy, would be an understatement. He is an independent contractor through Learfield Communications.

He previously worked with USD sports as the voice of the Coyotes in 1990-91.

Before getting back in the play-by-play chair at the beginning of the 2012-13 college athletic season, Van Goor was the sports director for Five Star Communications and the programmer for ESPN Radio 1570 AM and a staff announcer for classic hits KVHT 106.3FM as well as

the sports director for the two latter stations.

Van Goor was fortunate to not have to move around too much as many in the business find themselves doing.

He held his post as the sports director for 19-plus years before being able to be the play-by-play man for the Coyotes again.

"When 106.3 got the rights to broadcast football and men's and women's basketball, unbeknownst to me I was a part of the package," Van Goor said.

"So when they got the five-year contract I was included in that. I was doing Yankton and Vermillion High School sports and Mount Marty College and there is no way you could do both, so I went to do full-time work for Coyotes football and men's basketball."

One thing is for sure, the move has been a welcome one to the coaches Van Goor deals with including new Coyotes' men's basketball coach Craig Smith.

"Joe bleeds red, he's all in," Smith said. "It's almost like Harry Caray for the Cubs...he only sees it one way. He's a great ambassador for USD. He's great for me, because there is no doubt where his loyalties are at."

Smith sees plenty of Van Goor and he and the USD players appreciate the radio man's presence.

"He's a fun guy to be around and he keeps everybody loose," Smith said. "He's easy to talk to, he has a great persona to him. He has a quirky sense of humor that makes him enjoyable to be around. He's always got a smile on his face. He's been awesome to be around and I can't think of a better guy to work with."

Van Goor who, like Thayer, has made his living covering small town sports, sees growth in the USD sports community and the challenges it faces.

"My second stint with the Coyotes is when they are fully eligible in Division I and you find that many of the same people that I saw 30 years ago at games," Van Goor said. "It's just now you have to be more inventive. People want to be entertained with more than just what is happening on the court or on the field. When they were Division II the basketball teams would play doubleheaders. The women would play first and the men would play second and at halftime you would have little kids come out and shoot for pizzas."

"Now everything is visual and audio and shoot for a million dollars. You have to be really inventive to get people to a game now."

Thayer has picked up quite a few lessons from the veteran Van Goor.

"It's hard not to learn anything from Joe," Thayer said. "Joe's been around for a long time doing this, especially in this area. You learn a lot from someone who has been around it, especially for as long as Joe has. When I got here he helped me adapt to the area and I was fortunate enough to shadow him and understand how this all works."

Jon finds his place

Thayer is a fixture on KVHT and ESPN Radio 1570AM where he hosts his morning show "On the Jon" Mondays-Fridays starting at 9 a.m. He has also become synonymous as the voice of the Coyote women's basketball team.

He also did what many young professionals in his field do: make a lot of moves to places for quick stops in search of that one job that he could finally settle in on.

Before that he grew up in the small town of Eustis, Nebraska, and eventually went to Doane College located in Crete, Nebraska, where he graduated in four years.

His first job out of college came in Holyoke, Colorado where Thayer worked for a year.

"I did everything," Thayer said. "There were two of us that worked at that station - me and a salesperson."

He left there to move on to a new job in Grand Island, Nebraska to work for the College Fan Sports Network where he would cover NIAA sports.

"We travelled all over the country," Thayer said. "We went to places like Helena, Montana to Rome, Georgia to Williamsburg, Kentucky to Azusa, California."

The operation was closed after the finish of the athletic season, but Thayer and another College Fan Sports Network alum decided to travel and still do football despite the shutdown.

"He bought all of the equipment and asked me if I'd help him do it through the football season before I knew I needed to find a job," Thayer said. "So I got a job in radio sales in Beatrice,

Nebraska and spent about eight months or so doing that."

Thayer ultimately began doing freelance stuff in hopes of securing a full-time on-air position.

"I was at the Nebraska state softball tournament covering a game and I got two phone calls and two voice mails from stations asking if I'd have a conversation with them," Thayer said. "One of them was in Ray, Colorado and the other was in Chadron, Nebraska. I ended up moving to Chadron."

Thayer got to cover sports there in seven months and was able to get involved with coaching youth baseball and helping with church groups before a call came and he ultimately arrived in Yankton in 2012.

Now he is the sports director at the KVHT stations, programmer for the AM side while also enjoying the opportunity to host his own talk show.

As for the USD women's coverage, that is actually just a part-time job he got hired for through Learfield, but one he is fully invested in.

Now he is enjoying his longest tenured stay and the process didn't come at any large expense.

"(The process) can be tough, the only place that I really got connected to people at was Chadron right before I came here," Thayer said. "It's tough when you have to move. You are constantly starting over, you are just trying to get to know people and getting used to it and then you are going somewhere else. It's the nature of it I guess."

Thayer also never gave up too quick despite some quick stops and a small one that took him into radio sales.

"I wasn't doing the on-air stuff and I was doing OK with the sales stuff, I was actually good at it," Thayer said. "But I didn't like it as much. I kind of got to that point where I was starting to wonder if this was the right career for me. For some reason I stayed with, got another opportunity, and it ultimately led me to here."

Here includes bringing a fun vibe to the USD women's basketball program.

"I can tell you that we love John travelling with us and he adds a lot of flavor to the bus trips, he's a lot of fun," USD women's basketball coach Amy Williams said. "He does a great job with what he does and is a fun person to be around."

Williams herself never gets to listen to the broadcasts for obvious reasons, but she does have a unique situation when it comes to getting full scale reports of the play-by-play performance by Thayer.

"My dad listens to every broadcast and watches every game and every week he reminds me how 'you don't know how lucky you are to have John Thayer doing your games,'" Williams said. "He's listened to a lot of different radio broadcasts. He's pretty clear that John does an excellent job."

Thayer says that being a part of the USD sports nation has been a good one.

"It's a great opportunity and I am a person who is always looking for ways to get involved and do more things," Thayer said. "I thought it was a good opportunity for where my goals are and I was fortunate enough to get the job."

"Since I have been here, the football, the basketball and everything else you can see over the last three years the teams are improving and the athletic department is getting better. It's a Division I college, who doesn't want to be around that?"

Van Goor met Thayer right before the younger professional was about to fill his soon-to-be vacated sports director shoes.

"The first time I met Jon was through the interview process and he had a solid background,"

Van Goor said. "He has solid play-by-play skills and he was able to relate."

What they mean to USD The relationships the two men have built within the USD community has been one of camaraderie, fun, and plenty of humor.

That has led to good natured ribbing, but in the end when it comes down to the merits of the job, the two get plenty of plaudits.

"They're hacks, their voices are terrible, they crack, and they don't know what's going on," USD athletic director David Herbster said with most definitely his tongue-in-cheek. "They have a great voice and they homer in a way that is still objective in a way. The quality of a radio announcer is if you can close your eyes and see what you are hearing. With those guys, I can."

"They get in and get to know the coaches and are a part of the Coyote family," Herbster said. "You wouldn't know if they were any different than any one of our staff."

That is what helps make a successful broadcaster: to work well with the people you are assigned to talk about and bring into the homes and cars of every listener.

"A large part of this business is relating to the teams that you are covering," Van Goor said. "You have more access to a team traveling with them and doing all their games."

Thayer believes that so far his career is a success. "I have been able to cover college athletics at different levels," Thayer said. "When you get the opportunity to be able to cover it at the higher level you had to have been able to do something successful to get there."

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