



**Joanne Widness**  
**SOU Volleyball**  
**Coach, 1969-87**

Joanne Widness, the school's second most winningest volleyball coach, is considered the architect of the successful Raider volleyball program.

Widness, who retired in 1988 following 23 years of service to the university as a faculty member, guided the Raider spikers to a 358-275 mark over 18 seasons as head coach, including six conference or regional championships and eight 20-win seasons.

Her 1971 team claimed the Northwest small college championship — the school's first women's team title in any sport.

In 1977, SOU beat three NCAA Div. I teams, won 17 straight matches and placed seventh at the AIAW national tournament.

The 1978 team tied for the first-ever Cascade Conference championship, while the 1981 Raiders won 24 consecutive matches and posted a school-best 44-9 record.

Widness and SOU captured a fifth Cascade Conference championship and returned to the 40-win plateau (40-14) again in 1983.

A total of 17 all-stars, including Cindy Skillman, the school's first women's All-American, competed for Widness, who was inducted into the SOU Sports Hall of Fame in 1994.

Widness resides in Ashland and has started a second career as an inventor and entrepreneur.



*Joanne Widness was one of the first coaches in the West to win 300 career matches. She finished with 358.*



**Paul Elliott**  
**SOU Volleyball**  
**Coach, 1991-2006**

Paul Elliott, who retired after the 2006 season, finished as the school's most winningest coach and compiled a program-record 381 wins while guiding SOU to four NAIA Tournament berths, four regional championships and three Cascade Conference crowns in his 16-year tenure.

Elliott's teams never endured a losing season, and all 16 qualified for postseason play, including 11 trips to the regional tournament. Buoyed by an unprecedented 16 consecutive regional tournament wins between 2001 and '04, the Raiders placed ninth at the NAIA Championships in 2001, '02 and '04. SOU, which ranked as high as No. 7 in the NAIA top-25 polls during his tenure, went 105-29 between 2001 and '05 (.784) to cap a streak of nine consecutive 20-win seasons.

Only the second coach in school history ever to surpass the 300-win plateau, the eight-time conference or regional coach-of-the-year honoree climbed to 16th on the NAIA victory list after the 2006 Raiders finished with an 18-9 mark. His .697 winning percentage (381-166) is the seventh-best at the national level among coaches with at least five years of NAIA experience.

No coach has tallied more Cascade Conference regular-season victories than Elliott, who went 175-47 against league foes (.788).



*Paul Elliott finished his 16-year tenure as SOU's winningest coach. He totaled 381 wins in his SOU coaching career.*