



# UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

## DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

---

For IMMEDIATE Release  
March 20, 2017

### Chancellor Gallagher Names Heather Lyke Pitt Athletic Director

*Lyke arrives at Pitt following an impactful tenure at Eastern Michigan.*

**PITTSBURGH**—**Heather Lyke**, whose leadership of athletics at Eastern Michigan University garnered national praise, has been named athletic director at the University of Pittsburgh by **Chancellor Patrick Gallagher**.

Lyke has an exemplary record of 22 years in increasingly high-level roles in collegiate athletics administration. She served as Vice President and Director of Athletics at Eastern Michigan since 2013. Prior to her EMU tenure, she was a ranking athletic administrator at Ohio State for 15 years. A native of Canton, Ohio, Lyke additionally held posts at the University of Cincinnati and with the NCAA.

Lyke found the beginning of her professional path during her days as a scholarship student-athlete at the University of Michigan, where she captained the Wolverines' Big Ten champion softball team. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Michigan and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Akron School of Law.

Lyke will be the first woman to hold the full-time athletic director post. Pitt appointed its first A.D., **Charles S. Miller**, in 1911, 106 years ago.

"Heather Lyke's track record exemplifies her dedication to student-athletes. She has a passion for success in the classroom, on the playing field and in life after graduation," said Gallagher. "She is the perfect person to lead our Department of Athletics into a new era of excellence, and I am thrilled to welcome her and her family to Pitt."

"There was incredibly high interest in the position from seated athletic directors and top deputies," said **Dr. Randy Juhl**, Pitt's acting athletic director and chair of the search committee that recommended candidates. "But as we proceeded, Heather's breadth of experience, her achievements at EMU and her fit to the values of the University and our region made the committee's recommendation an easy choice."

"It is an incredible honor to accept the director of athletics position at the University of Pittsburgh," Lyke said. "I am grateful to Chancellor Gallagher and the search committee for the opportunity to lead this athletic department filled with dedicated student-athletes, coaches and staff. Pitt has such a storied tradition and great expectations. I am thrilled to be part of Chancellor Gallagher's team. There is a tremendous pride in the Blue and Gold, and we will work extremely hard to make our alumni, donors, community and University even more proud. With all of us working together, I am confident we can build winning teams and a winning culture for Pitt Athletics."

At Eastern Michigan, Lyke oversaw a department that sponsors 21 varsity sports with more than 550 student-athletes. Her tenure witnessed high levels of achievement not only in the competitive arena but also academically and from a fundraising standpoint.

—more—

## **add one...pitt athletics**

Highlights of Lyke's work at EMU include:

**Mid-American Conference Excellence:** As a member of one of the nation's most competitive athletic conferences, Eastern Michigan annually distinguished itself in the MAC under Lyke's watch. During her tenure, the Eagles captured 16 MAC team championships, garnered 17 MAC Coach of the Year awards and had nearly 400 MAC All-Academic honorees. For the first time in school history, Eastern Michigan was honored with the MAC's prestigious Cartwright Award for all-around athletic department excellence (2013-14) and the Jacoby Award for female athletic excellence (2014-15).

**A revitalized football program, on the field and in the stands:** Behind a record-setting offense in 2016, the Eagles achieved a 7-5 regular season and earned a berth in the Popeyes Bahamas Bowl, EMU's first postseason invitation in 29 years. Eastern Michigan had a 100% increase in total season ticket growth from 2014 to 2016. Moreover, the football program boasted the top team grade point average in the MAC for the second consecutive year.

**Record-breaking academic success:** With Lyke's unyielding emphasis on classroom performance, Eastern Michigan achieved a record 81% Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for 2015-16. During the 2016 fall semester, Eagles student-athletes earned the highest term (3.238) and cumulative (3.266) grade point averages in the history of EMU Athletics.

**High-impact fundraising initiatives:** In 2014, Lyke conceived and implemented "Eagles Pride," the first annual fund in Eastern Michigan Athletics history. Providing financial support for all EMU teams, Lyke's vision for engagement produced record-breaking results with the highest number of donors and most cash received in program history. Lyke garnered the largest cash gift in the university's history (\$6 million) in 2017.

**National recognition for athletic department efficiency and effectiveness:** Last September, Eastern Michigan received the Excellence in Management Cup presented by Texas A&M's Laboratory for the Study of Intercollegiate Athletics. The "EM Cup" annually recognizes the athletic department that best maximizes fiscal resources through championship victories. EMU ranked No. 1 out of 128 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools for 2015-16.

**Enhanced Eastern Michigan facilities:** Lyke spearheaded numerous capital improvement projects for EMU Athletics. Perhaps the highest profile was the installation of college football's first gray Revolution Field Turf playing surface in 2014. Dubbed "The Factory" in honor of the region's automobile industry history, the field was selected No. 2 among all colleges in a USA TODAY fan vote (behind only the University of Tennessee). Lyke additionally created a future vision for EMU's athletics infrastructure with "The Championship Building Plan," a facility master plan that is set to transform Eastern Michigan's athletic department and set it up for long-term sustained success.

A reflection of her undergraduate studies in education, Lyke is enthusiastically dedicated to helping younger professionals in their growth and advancement. She is a frequent speaker and presenter at national conferences and serves on the Board of Directors of Women Leaders in College Athletics.

In 2014, Lyke became the first woman to chair the NCAA Men's Lacrosse Committee. She additionally chaired the Mid-American Conference's Cost of Attendance Task Force.

—more—

## **add two...pitt athletics**

From 1998-2013, Lyke worked at Ohio State, where she was a member of the athletic department's executive team and a lead figure in the development of the Buckeyes' strategic plan. Lyke directly oversaw 10 of Ohio State's 36 athletic programs and had oversight of all facets of the athletic councils involving budget, revenue generation, facilities and OSU's golf course operations.

She additionally supervised the Buckeyes' sport performance division, which included the strength and conditioning coaches, athletic training staff and sports medicine staff. Lyke also developed Ohio State's first student-athlete internship program, "Bucks Go Pro."

During her Ohio State tenure, the Big Ten Network tapped her expertise as a color analyst for softball telecasts from 2009-13.

Prior to Ohio State, Lyke served at Cincinnati as the assistant athletic director for compliance as well as the senior woman administrator from 1996-98. She began her career at the NCAA as an intern in the enforcement and student-athlete reinstatement department from 1995-96.

Born and raised in Canton, Ohio, Lyke starred at GlenOak High School in volleyball, basketball and softball. She accepted a softball scholarship from Michigan, where she lettered four years as a first baseman and was an All-Academic Big Ten honoree. She was a two-time team captain and helped Michigan to the 1992 Big Ten championship.

Lyke and her husband, David Catalano, have three children: Elle, Sophie and Eli.

## **LYKE PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**Hometown:** Canton, Ohio

**Education:** University of Michigan, Bachelor's of Science in Education (1992); University of Akron School of Law, Juris Doctorate (1995).

**Family:** Lyke and her husband, David Catalano, have three children: Elle, Sophie and Eli.

## **LYKE COLLEGIATE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE**

**NCAA**, 1995-96, enforcement intern.

**CINCINNATI**, 1996-98, Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance and Senior Woman Administrator.

**OHIO STATE**, 1998-2002, Associate Athletic Director for Sport Administration, Compliance and Camp Operations; 2002-12, Associate Athletic Director for Sport Administration; 2013, Senior Associate Athletic Director.

**BIG TEN NETWORK**, 2009-13, Softball Color Analyst.

**EASTERN MICHIGAN**, 2013-17, Vice President and Director of Athletics.

**PITTSBURGH**, 2017, Athletic Director.

**#H2P** | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)