

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Thomason Chosen To Take Over UT-Dallas Women's Basketball Program

**RICHARDSON, TX** (August 9, 2005) - The University of Texas at Dallas has announced the appointment of **Polly Thomason** as the new head coach for its women's basketball program. Thomason, who played high school basketball at Arlington (TX) Martin HS and was a member of a three-time American Southwest Conference (ASC) championship team at Austin College in Sherman, will officially begin her duties on September 1.

"Polly Thomason just stepped forward in the search process and made an extremely positive impression," said UTD athletic director **Chris Gage** in announcing the hiring. "Having played in the conference and coaching several years at (NCAA) Division III schools, she showed a very strong understanding of what it takes to build a successful program at this level. Additionally, we believe Polly's ties and familiarity with this area will be a viable asset in recruiting. And, finally, she just showed us a tremendous enthusiasm and positive attitude toward the job. I am confident she can turn this into a successful program."

Thomason comes to UTD after serving three years as an assistant coach at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio (2002-2004); and Chatham College in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (2004-2005). In addition, she served one year as an assistant coach at Austin College (1999-2000) before leaving to earn her master's degree at the University of Tennessee, where she also taught several physical education activity classes.

She earned a BA degree in exercise science and history from Austin College in 1999, and a master's degree in sports administration from the University of Tennessee in 2002.

"I feel like I am walking into a wonderful situation at UTD," Thomason stated. "Not only am I returning home and to the ASC, but I'm taking over a program with a great deal of potential. The players are hungry to win and so am I. The other sports at UTD have proven that the school can compete on both a conference and national level. It's time for women's basketball to do the same."

Thomas inherits a program that has never posted a winning record, and has recorded more than 8 wins just once in its seven-year history. The Comets, 52-121 in the last seven years, have won just seven games in each of the last three seasons.

"It will take some hard work, there's no question about that," Thomason said. "But no one will outwork us. I plan to put in every effort to make this program something the University can be proud of."

Thomason was a three-year letter-winner at Arlington Martin HS, where she was named all-district on a playoff team her senior season. She accepted a basketball scholarship to Frank Phillips University, an NAIA school in Enid, Oklahoma; transferring to Austin College in 1996.

The Lady Kangaroos won ASC titles in 1997, 1998 and 1999 while Thomason was a member of the team, and advanced all three years to the national playoffs. The team was ranked as high as 21st nationally and was twice recognized as a top 25 program nationally in academic achievement.

Thomason was also a standout track athlete in high school and college. She qualified for regional competition three times in discuss in high school and was the ASC shot put champion in 1997.

Thomason succeeds **Rachelle Leonard**, who began the UTD women's basketball program in 1998.

The University of Texas at Dallas, located in Richardson, has an enrollment of 13,700 students, and is a member of the American Southwest Conference and NCAA Division III. For additional information about UTD, please visit the university's web site at [www.utdallas.edu](http://www.utdallas.edu).