

SHELL JOINS HER TWIN BROTHER IN SBU ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME



Emma Shell '14

Track & Field
B.S. Biology (Environmental)

When talking about Southwest Baptist University track and field, if the last name Shell sounds familiar – it should.

Emma Shell, one of three SBU Athletics Hall of Fame inductees for 2021, joins her twin brother, Bill '14, '17 – a 2020 inductee – as a member of this elite group.

But, Emma Shell almost did not continue her athletic career in college.

“Honestly, I chose to attend SBU because that was where my twin brother (Bill) was wanting to go, so I just followed him,” Emma said. “I hadn’t actually planned on running track at SBU, or any college for that matter, because I never felt good enough to be competitive at the collegiate level. But, Coach Mac (Corey McElhaney) offered me a scholarship, so I took it.”

Like her brother, Emma Shell was a highly decorated track and field athlete at SBU. She broke seven records in four seasons as a Bearcat and holds the second-best program times in the 200- and 400-meter dashes. Emma also was a three-time All-American, a five-time USTFCCCA All-Region performer, a two-time USTFCCCA Academic All-American and a seven-time All-Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) honoree.

Emma credits coaches McElhaney and Andre English for her growth and success as an athlete.

“By far, my coaches were my biggest motivator in helping me navigate the student-athlete journey,” Emma said. “Coach McElhaney was always an encouragement to me and checked in often to make sure I was doing OK, whether that was with academics or athletics.

“But my biggest supporter and inspiration was my sprint coach, Coach English. He was somehow able to push me beyond anything I ever thought I was capable of. I owe him a lot for my success on the track.”

And, the support Emma received as a student helped prepare her for her career as a junior high and high school science teacher at Eagle Ridge Christian School in Cape Girardeau.

“The faculty at SBU were always so supportive and willing to engage,” Emma said. “If I needed help or just needed to talk, they made themselves available. As a stressed college student, that meant the world to me.

“The academics at SBU were very thorough in my content area, allowing me to feel more than adequately prepared to enter the classroom and share that knowledge with my students.”

Those characteristics are what make SBU unique, Emma says.

“It is a small school with the quality of a much larger school, in both academics and athletics,” Emma said. “I also think the caring nature and Christian character of its professors really helps set it apart.”



In addition to her responsibilities as a student-athlete, Emma also participated in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and on the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). Those connections she made have lasted a lifetime.

"I made lasting friendships with both my teammates and classmates," Emma said. "I met some truly amazing people that have changed my life for the better."

"Probably my favorite memories were our team-bonding dinners the night before a meet, as well as time spent in the training room before and after practice where we would compare all of our aches and pains."

One connection that has lasted the longest, aside from her brother, is with former teammate Corie Chuning, who also is a teacher at a school the next town over from Emma.

"Every time we get together, it's inevitable that we will end up talking about our time on the track, reliving all kinds of memories – good and bad," Emma said.

Emma says it is important for today's SBU student-athlete to remember that they are a student first and athlete second,

and to make sure they love what they do.

"Athletics might be more fun than academics, but it only encompasses a few years of your life," Emma said. "Your education will impact the rest of your life. Keep your priorities straight."

"If the day comes that you no longer get joy from competing, if you come to hate and resent the time spent doing it, have the clarity of mind to walk away from it and don't feel guilty about it."

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