

Sayers Winning Tradition Began In Grade School

CARBONDALE, ILL. — When Gale Sayers, named recently as athletic director at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, was going to Howard Kennedy Grade School in the heart of Omaha, Nebraska's Black ghetto, he took on a winning tradition.

He was a star performer for two years — with his older brother Roger (who beat Bob Hayes twice in the 100-yard dash while competing for Omaha University), on two Howard Kennedy football teams which were citywide elementary champs.

He also teamed with his brother to lead Roberts Dairy to two Omaha Midget Football League titles.

"I've been a winner all my life, and I don't want to be associated with a losing program," Sayers said in explaining why he decided to accept the AD-post here "I feel the people I've talked to here are winners."

The 33-year old Sayers will assume the position at the university effective Aug. 1.

He has been serving for the past 3½ years in the athletic department of the University of Kansas, where he enjoyed a brilliant career as a running back in the 1960s.

He succeeds Doug Weaver, who resigned earlier this year to become athletic director at Georgia Tech.

Sayers said he chose SIU because of the "academic and athletic traditions" of the school, a member of the Missouri Valley Conference.

"I'm interested in the total program, not just football," he said, noting he would spend much of his first six months on the road, telling people about the program.

His selection by SIU, which has an enrollment of 21,200, was announced by George Mace, vice president of university relations. Mace said Sayers was chosen from a field of five candidates, including Paul Lambert, SIU basketball coach; Leo Cahill, former general manager of the World Football League Memphis Southmen; Bill Belknap, associate director of athletics at the University of Arizona, and Dale Foster, athletic director at the University of Dayton.

"We feel Mr. Sayers can make the greatest contribution to our athletic program," said Mace. "He is being hired because he possesses the attributes that seem to us best suited for the athletic directorship at this university."

Sayers' exciting seven-year career with the Bears was interrupted and finally cut short by a series of knee injuries. He was named to the all-National Football League team five of those years.

In a poll of sports writers, he was named the greatest running back in the first 50 years of professional football.

After retiring from the Bears in September of 1972, Sayers joined the Kansas staff in early 1973 as an assistant to the athletic director. The Omaha native was twice an All-American at Kansas.

Sayers remained in the post until July, 1974, when he became assistant director of the Williams Educational Fund, an athletic department fund-raising operation.

Sayers broke or tied eight NFL records. His rookie year of 1965 was a brilliant one as he ran for 22 touchdowns, six in one game. The season mark was later broken by the Buffalo's O.J. Simpson, but the one-game total still stands as a modern record.

Sayers is a model for Sears-Roebuck and Co. and is a commissioner of the Chicago Park District. His civic activities have included chairmanships of the Kansas Heart Fund, the Raw

Valley March of Dimes and South Side (Chicago) Chapter of the American Cancer Society. Between 1968 and 1970, Sayers headed Mayor Daley's "Reach Out" program for underprivileged youth. He is the author of two books, "I Am Third," and "Offensive Football."

Sayers has bachelor's and master's degrees from Kansas. His graduate degree is in educational administration. He's also a registered stockbroker.

He is married to the former Ardie Bullard, originally of Omaha, and is the father of six children — Gary, Guy, Gaylon, Gayle Lynne, Scott and Timmy.



HEFTING THE MALE...A female cadet at West Point hefts a male cadet over her shoulders as she participates in field exercises here recently. Lt. Gen. Sidney B. Berry, superintendent of the academy, said one of the explanations by women cadets who resigned during the basic training was: "It's a man's world and I am losing my femininity."

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