

Sports network

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ahjortsb@tulane.edu



Tulane University alumni and faculty in sports careers, from left: Mike Tannenbaum, Gabe Feldman, Barbara Farris and Andrew Loomis. (Feldman, Farris photos by Paula Burch-Celentano; Tannenbaum: Jonathan Willey / Miami Dolphins; Loomis: Chris Schwegler)

Tulane has a long-standing reputation for turning out high-quality athletes who go on to succeed in professional sports. Lesser-known are the accomplishments of Tulane alumni off the field of play. Across the WNBA, NFL and NBA, into the world of sports law and beyond, Tulane is making a splash behind the scenes in major sports organizations.

THE STUDENT-ATHLETE

Barbara Farris, who graduated in 1998, has made the most of her career as a player and a coach. The 6-foot, 3-inch [former Tulane women's basketball standout](#) and 2003 WNBA champion currently splits her time between her duties as head coach of the New Orleans powerhouse John Curtis Christian High School women's basketball team and as an assistant coach for the WNBA's New York Liberty.

Discussing the differences between coaching at the secondary and professional

levels, Farris says the WNBA operates as a business model. Coaching (and mentoring) high school athletes is different: Coaches encourage personal growth and skill development during one of the most important phases of a young person's life.

"I preach the importance of being a student-athlete first because for the majority of them, they'll be done with basketball when they graduate. I want them to have good memories here, and go on to prosper in college," Farris says.

As the star of the Tulane women's basketball team from 1994–98, Farris knows about the significance of being a student-athlete—she always emphasizes "student." Even though Tulane heavily recruited her for her basketball skills, her academic future was a priority.

"I always tell my students that basketball was my Plan B—the WNBA didn't even come into existence until my junior year. Plan A was to get my degree," Farris says.

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[To read more about Barbara Farris as well as alumni Andrew Loomis, Mike Tannenbaum and Gabe Feldman, click here.](#) This story originally appeared in the [December 2015 issue of Tulanemagazine.](#)

Preparation, team spirit and hard work are keys to success in big-time athletics on — and off — the field of play.