

Ivana Rich

becomes Edward Waters first woman athletic director

Page by Alexis Black

There's no greater feeling than getting the call you were eagerly anticipating and receiving a position that aligns with your passion.

Dr. Ivana Rich received a call on Oct. 21 entailing that she had been offered the role of Edward Water University's New Associate Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics. Her experience proves her to be an excellent fit for the position.

"For me to get that call, I don't know, I was really in awe, overly excited of feeling proud, and just ready in every way to embrace the new opportunity," Rich said.

Rich will be the 10th Athletic Director in over 155 years of school history and the first African American woman to hold the position.

Surprisingly, she did not always envision herself in this position.

When Rich was an undergraduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University, she intended to become a doctor and later changed her mind to become a judge. After graduating in 2010 with a criminal justice degree, finding jobs within her field was challenging. Soon after, she landed a volunteer coaching position at Chowan University, where her athletic career began.

"I kind of knew that I had found my calling, that I was going to have a career in athletics from there because it came natural to me," Rich said. Rich obtained her Master of Science degree in Sports Management from Virginia State University, her Master of Arts degree in Human Services Counseling from Liberty University, and her

Doctorate of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of South Carolina. After seven years, Rich leaves Norfolk State University, where she's held numerous positions, including the acting athletic director, associate athletic director for external relations, senior woman administrator, the department's diversity and inclusion officer, and deputy Title IX coordinator.

Rich continues to leave an impact and lasting effect on those she interacts with, including the athletes she coached in the past.

There are approximately 535 student-athletes and 16 intercollegiate varsity sports at Edward Waters. Rich plans to bring in a mental health counselor to train staff and coaches on mental health first aid training to address the mental health crisis in society proactively.

"From a long-term standpoint, I'm thinking about creating a powerhouse and sneaking up on people because we are a small institution, but small and mighty," Rich said.

Rich's motivation stems from her six-year-old daughter, Melanie Rich, and her mom, someone whose footsteps she continues to follow. Her mom was the first person in their family to earn a Doctorate from VSU and is currently faculty there. They both share a passion for working at HBCUs.

"And when I say do the job, that's any job that is presented to us; we should always be preparing for our next role in the current role that we're in."

