

KU Memorial Unions
News Release
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Jim Ryun book signing at Oread Books

October 22, 2008 (LAWRENCE, Kan.) – Jim Ryun, Kansas Track and Field Olympian, will sign the book, "What It Means to Be A Jayhawk," on Saturday, Nov. 1 from 9-11 a.m. in Oread Books on level two of the Kansas Union at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. The event, which occurs before the Kansas Football game versus Kansas State University, is free and open to the public.

In Wichita, Kan., Jim Ryun became the first high school athlete to eclipse the four-minute mile--a record he held for 36 years, and owned world records in the half-mile and mile runs. He was a member of the U.S. Olympic Team for the 1964, 1968, and 1972 Olympic Games. As a freshman at KU in the fall of 1965, according to the rules of that time, Ryun was ineligible to compete on a collegiate level, yet he continued to set world records. In 1966, "Sports Illustrated" named him Sportsman of the Year, ABC's "Wide World of Sports" deemed him Athlete of the Year, and he won the James E. Sullivan Award in honor of his selection as the top amateur athlete in the United States. From 1965 to 1967, Jim Ryun was the AAU Outdoor Mile Champ and the 1967 NCAA Mile Champion. He set three world records in 1966 in the 880-yard run, the 1500-meter run, and the mile run. In 1967, Ryun ran the mile in 3:51.1 minutes and set a world record that he would hold for eight years. In all, Kansas won the Big 8 Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Team titles in each of Ryun's three seasons at KU, and the Jayhawks won the NCAA indoor title and finished second in the outdoor category in 1969.

"I've been asked about what stands out for me as an athlete. I would say it was being part of the KU team. We lived together in the dorm, we studied together, we trained together, we competed together. My fondest memories are of activities we did together as a team."
- Jim Ryun, from "What It Means to Be a Jayhawk"

After graduating from KU with a bachelor's degree in photojournalism, Ryun moved to the west coast and competed in track and field events on both amateur and professional levels. After retiring from competition, he represented Kansas in the U. S. House of Representatives from 1996-2007. He continues to conduct Jim Ryun Running Camps, speak publicly, write books, and assist the hearing impaired.

In "What It Means to Be a Jayhawk, Bill Self and Kansas' Greatest Players" (Triumph Books), edited by Jeff Bollig and Doug Vance, men and women from many eras and sports share their appreciation for the time they spent at KU. Jim Ryun's profile and essay appears in the chapter on the '60s, including other great sports figures of that era

such as Bob Timmons, Ryun's high school and college track and field coach.

The KU Bookstores are located on level two of the Kansas Union at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. The selection and events at Oread Books, a division of the KU Bookstores, are reflective of the campus community, always current and representing diverse points of view. As a nonprofit organization in the division of Student Success, the KU Bookstores gives all proceeds back to KU through student programs, services and activities.

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