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Athletics West has been a major force in American track and field. Brown, as much as anyone, is responsible for that.

When Brown first joined Athletics West in 1978, the club consisted of only 10 athletes, and its future was uncertain. But by 1980, the club had grown to 29 athletes. It was a good beginning but Brown felt much more was possible.

"The next step was to solidify the philosophy and to give the club some stability, a little more refined direction," says Brown.

That is what he set out to do when he became the club's administrator. "I knew where I thought the club should go, and when I was offered the job, I felt I should take it," Brown adds.

Brown says track clubs were formed in the U.S. with the intention of providing post-collegiate athletes the support they needed to continue in their athletic careers.

Brown feels, however, that most early track clubs fell short in this regard. He says the services they provided their athletes were limited, inadequate and, in some cases, unfair. Brown was determined to change that.

"We looked at what the athletes needed to reach their potential. We tried to break it into a fairly efficient support system," Brown explains.

The system Brown established was a broad one. No other club, prior to Athletics West, had tried to address itself to so many of the athletes' needs.

"Athletics West broke new ground," says Brown.

The club began providing its athletes with services such as travel arrangements, competition scheduling, medical services, coaching, and equipment. In addition, each athlete is given a food and rent subsidy, whereupon the athlete becomes a consultant to Nike.

Brown wanted the athletes to look beyond their athletic careers. "We didn't want them to leave the program with only competition as their resume," he says.

As a result, Athletics West has helped to find jobs for those athletes who wanted them. The club has also provided "a post-graduate scholarship" to

athletes who want to further their education.

But, this has not been a one-sided arrangement.

"The athletes provide us with exposure," Brown explains. "They are pretty good test subjects as far as equipment is concerned. A lot of the things you see in shoes and apparel came out of Athletics West."

The successes of Athletics West has been impressive. Brown points out two recent examples. The club placed 22 athletes on the U.S. team that went to the 1983 World Championships. The 1984 U.S. Olympic team had 20 athletes from Athletics West, including the likes of Mary Decker, Willy Banks, and Alberto Salazar.

Perhaps more importantly, Brown adds, Athletics West has given its team members support in non-athletic areas. For instance, 17 athletes with club assistance have earned or are in the process of earning post-graduate degrees. No other club has come close to matching such numbers.

"One of the good things Athletics West did was blaze such a good trail," Brown says. "When something comes along that's a state of the art, other companies try to emulate it. It enhanced all track and field in the U.S.," Brown adds.

He says he feels good about the role he's had in Athletics West. "The club has a good reputation. It's had good representation in international events. We've helped a lot of athletes come closer to their potential, and we've encouraged other clubs to support athletes better. I feel the contributions have been positive."

Despite his own accomplishments and those of Athletics West, Brown says he also feels good about leaving the club in order to return to school.

In response to how he thinks his reputation might affect the attitudes of his professors and fellow students he says "I think it might raise expectations, which is alright. I wouldn't want it any other way, that's sort of fun, it makes you dig down a little deeper."

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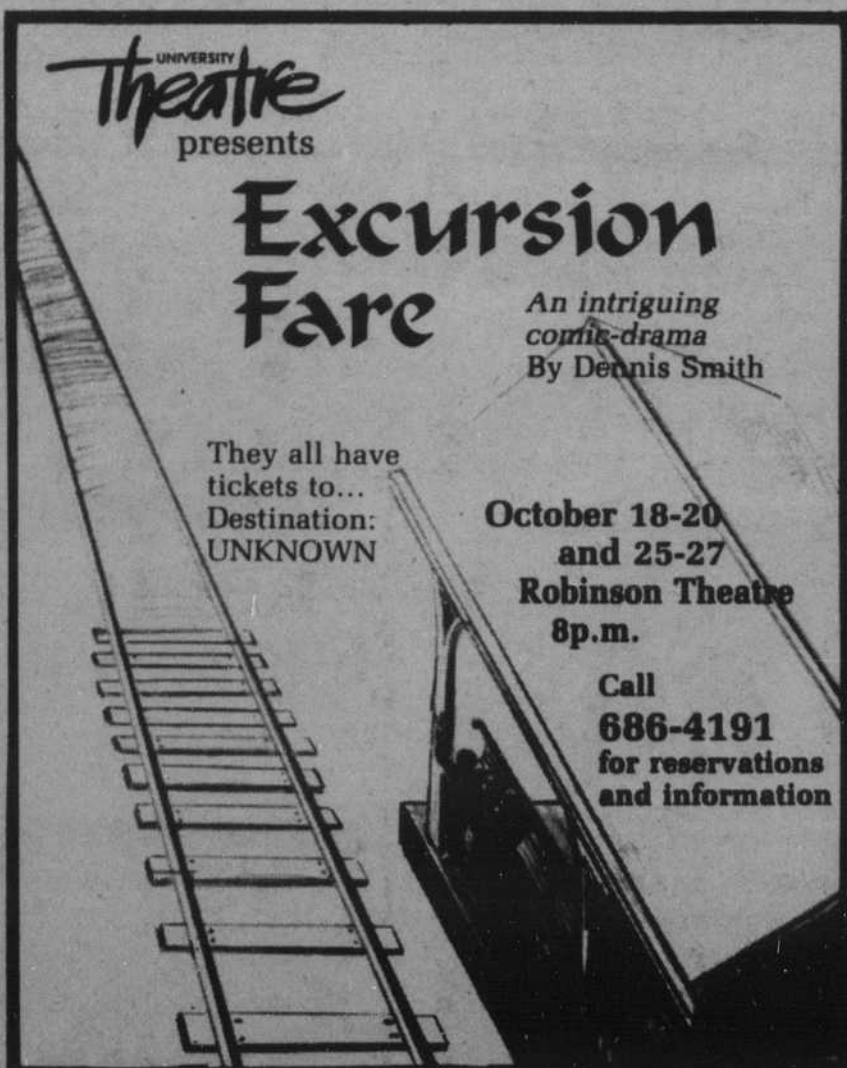
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