

UTR

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After "the day of infamy," college life wasn't quite the same at NTAC, but the memories of that era are still very special and very vivid to alumnus Lloyd Clark.

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Alumni coffers are swelling and alumni board pledges support to more PUF campaigning.

**ON THE COVER:** Photographer Peggie Mazziotta captures the spirit of the recently donated Trussell collection with a still life of objects from the Mississippi plantation.

**INSIDE THE COVER:** Homecoming saw fire and it saw rain this year, but the drizzle didn't dampen spirits one bit. Photo by Mike Drake

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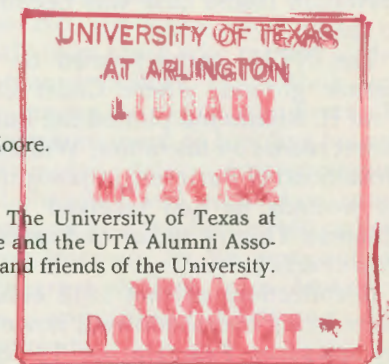
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# Freewheeler athlete's motto

*"If you want to do it, just try it"*

By DONNA DAROVICH

Chris Cooper still recalls his first thought the moment that his tiny sports car finally came to a stop after careening out of control and tumbling over and over and over on an Indiana road in 1977.

"I knew right away what I had done," the UTA student says, referring to the injuries he received in the accident which left him wheelchair-bound.

"My first thought was, 'Well, I'll just find a desk job,'" he says, "but it just wasn't in me." And it's easy to understand why not.

Cooper had been a versatile athlete in his hometown of South Bend, Ind. — a basketball guard, football defensive back and baseball centerfielder. He had just finished his first year at Central Florida Junior College on a baseball scholarship.

After a year of rehabilitation, Cooper, 26, worked out what would be his attitude about his handicap.

"I'm not starting over," he says he told himself. "I'm just picking up where I left off."

He had already taken the courses in his major, physical education, that required the full use of his body and was now ready for the theory side of his degree plan.

His sister who was living in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and her friends, suggested UTA, where, they told Cooper, he would find Jim Hayes, UTA's director of Educational Support Services Office and coach of the Freewheelers wheelchair basketball team.

"Hayes told me, 'if you want to do it, try it,'" Cooper says.

So Cooper came to UTA and kept his P.E. major, becoming UTA's first handicapped student to major in that field.

Cooper is in his third year on the Freewheelers, playing guard, but wants to branch out.

"Just one sport is too monotonous," Cooper says.

So he says he's going to try his hand at tennis. A fellow UTA handicapped student, Randy Snow, recently won a national wheelchair tennis title, and Cooper believes it's a sport he'd like to try.

The Indiana native says he's glad he came to UTA. "The attitudes toward the handicapped are good," he says, "and the campus is accessible. People also know about people in wheelchairs and have a good attitude toward them."

"Besides," the muscular athlete says, "I know a degree from UTA will be respected anywhere I go. I've always heard that."

Cooper says he wants to stay in the Dallas-Fort Worth area after he graduates in about a year, but won't be discouraged if jobs for a handicapped physical education major don't come right away.

"I've got patience," Cooper says. "after my injury, I developed a lot of patience."

