

## University of Iowa Official Defends School's Actions on Harmon

Share full article

By Steve Fiffer, Special To the New York Times

March 9, 1989



See the article in its original context from March 9, 1989, Section D, Page 30 | Buy Reprints

VIEW ON TIMEMACHINE

TimesMachine is an exclusive benefit for home delivery and digital subscribers.

The New York Times Archives

### About the Archive

This is a digitized version of an article from The Times's print archive, before the start of online publication in 1996. To preserve these articles as they originally appeared, The Times does not alter, edit or update them.

Occasionally the digitization process introduces transcription errors or other problems; we are continuing to work to improve these archived versions.

Fred Mims, the University of Iowa assistant athletic director, told a Federal jury today that if the university had known that Ronnie Harmon entered into an agreement to be represented by sports agents during his junior year and accepted money from them, in his opinion it would not have permitted Harmon to play football in his senior season.

Mims said the university would have also revoked Harmon's scholarship. Harmon did not reveal such information to the university and did play, leading his team to the Big Ten Conference championship and an appearance in the Rose Bowl.

Mims testified during the second day of the trial of Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, the agents who are accused of defrauding a number of institutions, including Iowa, of scholarships and other money paid to student-athletes. Harmon, a star running back now with the Buffalo Bills, and a teammate, Devon Mitchell, are among the student-athletes. Mitchell also testified that he entered into an agreement with the two agents and received money before his eligibility expired.

Questioned by the prosecutor, Howard Pearl, Mims also sought to rebut Tuesday's implication by defense attorneys that the university was more concerned with athletic performance and raising money than it was with the academic performance of its football players. He also sought to rebut the defense contention that the university allowed Harmon to play even though he was academically ineligible.

Mims, who supervised the provision of academic services to the athletes, asserted that the graduation rate of Iowa football players was superior to that of the general student body and insisted that Harmon was academically eligible his senior year.

One regulation applicable to Iowa and the N.C.A.A. is that a student, in Mims's words, be "qualitatively and quantitatively progressing toward a degree."

Under cross-examination by Bloom's attorney, Dan Webb, Mims was hard pressed to describe how Harmon and Mitchell had advanced toward their degrees.

Taking such courses as billiards, coaching football, bowling and soccer his first year, Harmon, who earlier in the day testified that his education was "not a joke," achieved a 1.62 grade-point average. Only by going to summer school and earning a B in a course titled Fundamental Military Organization was he able to remain academically eligible for his sophomore season.

Webb further noted that at the end of his junior year Harmon had a 1.69 grade-point average and was placed on academic probation.

Harmon then took a course in watercolor painting over the summer to raise his grade-point average but earned a D, resulting in his being placed on academic probation. When Webb cited a document signed by Harmon's academic adviser that Harmon was not working toward a degree, Mims said the document did not mean what it said and that he was not academically ineligible to play football.

Mitchell's academic record was similar to Harmon's. One year he took a course in jogging but dropped it. During his sophomore year, Mitchell took 15 hours and earned three F's, one D, one C and an A. The A was granted for his participation on the varsity football team.

A version of this article appears in print on March 9, 1989, Section D, Page 30 of the National edition with the headline: University of Iowa Official Defends School's Actions on Harmon. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)



