April 2, 1989

Potomac Fever.... 2C

DONALD KAUL



Colleges ask: 'What elephant?'

WAS IN Ames the other day, looking for a shortcut to Sioux City, when I ran into a young friend.

"Clem," I greeted him. "Great to see you. How have you been?"

"Good, O. T., really good. I just got my degree from the I. S. and U." lowa State University?"

"The very same." "That's terrific Clem; congratulations. What was your major?"

"Remedial reading." "Oh, you learned how to teach remedial reading?"

"No, I learned how to do it." "Wait! Do you mean to tell me that when you entered Iowa State University, you didn't know how to read?"

"You don't have to be insulting; of course I knew how to read. Fourthgrade level. I could've got up to fifth

OVER THE COFFEE

grade but I got injured the night before the exam.'

"Poked in the eye?"

"No, sprained my index finger." "How in the world did you get into a school like that reading at a fourthgrade level?"

"I got a Rhodes scholarship." "A Rhodes scholarship?"

"They named it after that Lafester Rhodes basketball fella of a couple of years back, the one Time magazine wrote about the other week. The one who read at a sixth-grade level and that was after he almost graduated. I figured if he could go to college, I

"Yeah, but he was a good basketball player."

"So what? As my lawyer explained to the Iowa State admissions office, it is a violation of the anti-discrimination laws to let fellas like Rhodes into school and keep DBUPs like me out." "What's a DBUP?"

"A Dumb But Uncoordinated Person. Not all dumb people can run fast or jump high, you know. Why should we be the only people not allowed to go to college? My lawyer said he wouldn't be surprised but that I could sue Iowa State for \$1.5 million in future lost wages if they didn't let me in. So they let me in. Gave me a full scholarship too, just like Lafester."

"You hired a lawyer to get into college?"

"Sure. I may be dumb, but I'm not

stupid." "What are you going to do now?" "I thought maybe I'd go to graduate school at the University of Iowa. I

program in slow pitch softball." "Do you think you can get accepted at the University of Iowa?'

heard they have a real strong master's

"Well, that's a question. We all know what high standards they have over there: higher than the Big Ten's, higher than the NCAA's, higher than God's. Their president said so. Still, I think I can do it."

"How?" "My lawyer says that they have something called a Harmon Fellowship that's made for people like me." "DBUPs?"

"You said it. You see, O. T., everybody in this great country of ours has a right to a college education, regardless of race, creed, national origin or intelligence and I'm going to get mine."

"Clem, did you ever think of going to law school?"

"Oh no. You have to read at an eighth-grade level to get into law school. I know my limitations. It's been good talking to you O. T. but I have to be going. I'm on my way to the library to practice reading."

"What's your favorite book so far?" "The one I'm reading now: 'Dick and Jane Have a Baby.' I like a little plot to my books and this one is a doozy. I can hardly wait to see how it turns out."

"I wish you all the luck Clem." "Thanks O. T. but I don't need luck. I'm a college graduate.

University officials have, in general, adopted "The Jimmy Durante Defense" in dealing with the revelations that some of their prize athletes adopt study programs as intellectually demanding as an Easter Egg hunt.

The defense is named after a scene in a Durante movie in which he is attempting to sneak out of a circus while leading an elephant on a rope. A guard says: "Hey buddy, where are you going with that elephant?"

Durante does a double-take and

says: "What elephant?" We've always had scandals involving academics and athletics. The main difference is that where once university officials had the good grace to be embarrassed and apologetic when their schools were caught cheating, the current breed simply does a double-take and says:

"What elephant?" None of this would be happening if the Board of Regents were alive.

Mes Moines Sunday Register

More Pau Rum Is Seized by Local Booze Squad RULING BOARD

TIC 2,000 BOTTLES

By GEORGE MILLS



That Des Moines Register headline May 26, 1929, hit the state of Iowa like a thunderbolt. Big Ten faculty representatives meeting in Chicago voted the drastic action "for the violation of rules prohibiting subsidizing of athletes." Another basis for the ouster was a belief that the Iowa faculty was losing

control of university athletics. That conclusion was based on a recent substantial increase in the power of alumni in operation of the athletic program and the forced resignation of Athletic Director Paul E. Belting.

The ouster took effect Jan. 1, 1930.

The action meant the severing of athletic relations with all other Big Ten schools and the cancellation of scheduled games in all sports. Actually, Iowa was out of the conference

only one month. The university capitulated to conference demands and was reinstated. But the suspension had a devastating effect on Iowa athletics that was felt for some time.

The immediate casualties included 14 athletes who were declared ineligible, including 1930 captain Mike Farroh, sensational halfback Oran "Nanny" Pape and four regulars on Coach Rollie Williams' basketball team, who were lost in mid-season. Football coach Burt Ingwersen was left with only three letter winners for his 1930 team and with but one conference opponent, Purdue.

Other flare-up followed in '50s

Another less spectacular flare-up took place in 1958 over the fact that some big-name football players often skipped classes in which they were enrolled. They escaped failing grades of "F" by canceling their registrations as soon as football season ended.

Such happenings of the past are being recalled now that lowa in effect has been on trial in federal court in Chicago. Two sports agents, Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, are being tried on charges of extortion and fraud and racketeering. They are accused of getting football stars to sign pro-football contracts in return for cash while still competing at the college level. Former Iowa back Ronnie Harmo received \$54,000 while still on the Iowa team and former back Devon Mitchell said he was paid \$3,400.

Both also succeeded in staying eligible at lowa by taking patsy courses with little relationship to academics.

In the 1929 blowup, Iowa wasn't the only Big Ten institution under scrutiny for athletic practices. One official said other conference members "have violated conference rules and regulations, but such evidence seems conclusive against Iowa." Other schools named were Wisconsin, Northwestern, Indiana and Ohio. Another report said Chicago was the only school completely clean. (Chicago dropped out of the Big Ten in 1946.)

Angry Iowans protest ouster

Anger welled up all over Iowa over the university ouster. W. C. Stutslager of Lisbon, member of the state Board of Education, said: "It is absolutely incredible. I feel that such action is entirely unwarranted." Some 250 incensed students were said in one report to have been talked out of attacking the home of former Athletic Director Belting, who was widely blamed for the Big Ten action. Belting said the students did throw eggs and bricks at his house and he had to call the police.

In an editorial headed "Calling the Kettle Black," The Register said: "That fact is, none

George Mills is an Iowa historian and former Register political writer.

of the Big Ten schools dare face the issue of amateur and professional squarely and mark a broad line between them that will be religious-

Shocking story of slush fund

The second-day Register headline in the 1929 shocker said: "'SLUSH FUND' IN S.U.I OUSTER." By 1989 standards, the fund doesn't seem to have been very slushy. The total distributed to athletes through Iowa City businessmen seems to have been in the vicinity of \$10,000, which would be \$100,000 in purchasing power now.

What figures did come out didn't indicate very high athletic compensation for the most part, and the money the athletes got was supposed to pay for jobs they held which were financed through Iowa City businessmen. The athletes were said to have been paid whether they worked or not.

Mayed McClain, a big Indian fullback, received \$60 a month for a "real-estate census" of Iowa City. That job was regarded as a joke. Pape, who was married, also got \$60 a month. Where he proved to be an embarrassment to lowa was in having played pro football before he enrolled in the university. Minnesota charged Pape with professionalism before the 1929 season. Iowa conducted an investigation and cleared the player. Pape proceeded to defeat Minnesota with a long run late in the 1929 game, as he also had done in the 1928 game.

lowa afterward conceded on Pape's "own admission" that he had played pro ball. Two other players, identified only as Fuhrman and Kelsh, also had played professionally and were declared ineligible. The university, however, tried to get Fuhrman reinstated because he had played under his own name and had not tried to hide his identity under an alias. It isn't known whether the Fuhrman effort was successful but probably not. Pape had played as a pro under an assumed name.

Pape, incidentally, lost his life a few years later while serving as an Iowa highway patrolman. He was shot by a bandit. Though fatally wounded, courageous Pape shot and killed the bandit. He was the first state patrolman to die in the line of duty.

The largest reported Iowa compensation for players apparently went to one Tom Stidham. Big Ten Commissioner John Griffith said an alumnus provided Stidham with transportation to Iowa City where he was met by a Mr. Goltman of the Iowa Supply Co. The player was taken to a fraternity house where a group of men offered him \$75 a month. But he said he expected \$100 a month, so it is reported he was paid \$100 a month in "checks signed by (a) Mr. Williams." Griffith also said Williams reportedly took care of Stidham's university tuition and fees at the business office.

It seems piddling now but publicity was given to the fact that a number of players had signed notes for their tuition payments, the average note being \$45. Under the tougher conference rules in effect then, a player wasn't supposed to even get his tuition paid. owa made the point that non-athletes also were permitted to sign notes for tuition in those days. Reports indicated at least some athlete notes never were paid.

Embattled figure during scandal

An embattled figure in the controversy was Belting, the resigned athletic director.

Belting said University President Walter Jessup forced him to resign because Belting had refused to divert athletic funds to subsidize athletes. Belting issued a statement saying his discharge meant surrender to the power of evil in athletics.

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A statement issued by three major prestigious Big Ten athletic directors expressed belief that Belting was not responsible 'for the condition that has resulted in the action taken by conference faculty committee." The other directors were Alonzo Stagg of the University of Chicago, Fielding Yost of Michigan and George Huff of Illinois.

But there were indications that Belting had had a hand in an athletic-fund creation.

Furious alumni accused Belting of treachery. Editor W. Earl Hall of the Mason City Globe-Gazette was one of three alumni appointed to the university athletic board prior to the ouster action. In an editorial discussing the 'slush fund," Hall declared: "The fund in question bears the soiled fingerprints of Mr. Belting, the former director, who squealed when he lost his job because of the many stupid things he did. Without the knowledge of consent of anybody, he diverted funds from his department and established the loan fund in an Iowa City bank."

There is no question, however, but that the alumni did succeed in down-grading the office of Iowa athletic director.

Edward H. Lauer was appointed to succeed

Belting but alumni pressure apparently succeeded in getting Jessup to name track coach George Bresnahan to a new position of director of intercollegiate athletics. Commissioner

Griffith took a dim view of that appointment.

a hand in touthell

He said "a small group of alumni" was reported as "having boasted" they were going to get Bresnahan that job, with the result that some in the Big Ten felt "sovereignty resided" in those alumni "rather than the university

Another charge that came to the surface said the university registrar had not "for some years" certified the scholastic eligibility of athletes, "that this matter was taken out of the hands of the registrar by the president of the university to permit greater freedom of certifying athletes for conference competition."

Iowa conceded this was true and said that function was taken over by the athletic board "during the directorship of Howard H. Jones

BIG TEN Please turn to Page 3C

The Des Moines Register 'SLUSH FUND' IN S. U. I. OUSTER Stagg Discloses STARS RISE HIGH BROKE FAITH IN AVIATION ERA Factor in Action WITH BIG TEN



Grading athletes

IN CONNECTION with grades and eligi-L bility, basketball coach Frank "Bucky" O'Connor endured an unpleasant experience in the athletic department in the late 1950s. He taught a course in basketball coaching. One student was a football player who almost never came to class. The guy wasn't doing very well in his other studies, either.

A football coach turned the heat on Bucky to give the player an "A" to help offset poor grades elsewhere.

O'Connor gagged at that request but finally reluctantly gave the player a "C." He didn't deserve even that but the football staff wasn't grateful.

Bucky was an unpopular person in lowa City circles for a while. - George Mills

Who said writing a column was easy?

By LINDA ELLERBEE



no time to you but when I think of what I didn't know about column-writing six months ago, well, all I can say is, sometimes I wish I didn't know now what I didn't know then.

For example, in the beginning I wasn't aware I was about to commit an unnatu-

ral act. It didn't occur to me there were people who would think it perverse for a television person to write a newspaper column. But there were people who thought just that. "Why are you doing this?" they asked.

Who asked? Mostly, they fell into two categories: those who worked in television and those who worked at newspapers.

Or, if you want to get specific, 12 TV critics, 11 local anchors, 10 talk shows types, nine network execs, eight aging producers, seven syndicators, six city editors — Five Hostess Twinkies - four call-in nerds, three media moguls, two political cartoonists and Lloyd Dobyns, my dearest friend in all the world, who used to be on TV (before most of you were born) and had

Six months may seem like a brilliant career at the networks but gave it up (one more weekend wonder who disappeared overnight) and became a shepherd, instead.

That's who asked. After a while I began to understand that what half of them really meant by the question was, "After 16 years in television, do you know how to write?" while the other half really meant, "After 16 years in television, can you afford the pay-cut?"

Can you guess which half was from TV and which half was from newspapers?

Wrong. In fact, the only people in print or broadcast who did not ask me anything were the reporters. They didn't have to.

They knew what I was up to and that it has very little to do with any differences between television and newspapers, even less to do with writing and nothing at all to do with money (as anybody at this newspaper can tell you).

It's a medical matter.

I'm doing this for my health. You see, when you're a reporter, you are paid to get the facts, but facts are hard to get; they don't come when you call, they hide in crowds, won't take orders, can't be trusted and don't stay put. What's worse, too many of them

will sure drag a good story down.

As bad fortune would have it, facts count. Opinion doesn't. And objectivity, though impossible, is desir-

able. Opinion is not. Which is why reporters are paid to keep theirs to themselves. This is good for journalism but bad for jour-

You do have opinions, you do think, and if you can't stop thinking (some can, in which case they are known as editors; it's a technical

AND SO IT GOES

term) and you can't do anything else, you get constipated.

Journalistically, I mean.

Stuff builds up inside you and keeps on building and you know what's going to happen next and that's why God, who hates a mess as much as anybody, created commentary.

Now I get to vent my spleen before my spleen explodes. I know, spleen-venting has nothing to do with constipation.

That's the problem with potty metaphors. They don't travel well.

But you get my drift. In fact, it would be a perfect job, if it weren't for the hard part. Not the writing part.

Not the deadline part, although nobody warned me that when you write a weekly column, a week comes around every three days. Not the space limitations part.

Not even the-editors (you know who you

are)-who-decide-once-in-a-while-that-thefirst (or last)-four-paragraphs-of-yourcolumn-will-never-be-missed part. All those parts are the easy part.

The hard part is that if you're getting paid to say what you think, they expect you to know what you think.

Sometimes it is more than hard. Sometimes it is, as you and I have learned from my first six months of column-writing,

too much to ask. Even of a television person.

Linda Ellerbee writes a syndicated column and is a television commentator.