HALL OF FAME BANQUET
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It's been a long time since a Chase Manhattan Board member received something so wonderful from the President of the First National City Bank. I'm deeply grateful to all concerned for the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame's Distinguished American Award for 1975. I wish I could be as funny as Bob Hope, as All-American as Brud Holland, as winning as Vince Lombardi, or as poetic as Archibald McLeish in saying thanks. At least, like all of them, I can be equally as humble in receiving this fine award.

We all have to be ourselves, and I cannot be myself, except by speaking from a long association with the University of Notre Dame where I have spent most of my adult life since I first went to college there as a freshman in 1934. I had, like practically all young Americans, played football on a neighborhood team called the Robineau Terriers. Only one of the Terriers made the varsity at nearby Syracuse University and I didn't have a prayer at Notre Dame, in a manner of speaking. However, fifteen years later, I found myself Chairman of the Faculty Board in Control of Athletics at Notre Dame -- official custodian of that great football mystique dating back to Jesse Harper and the immortal Knute Rockne.

As I found out soon enough, from the inside, there was no great mystery about the mystique. Even tonight, twenty-six years later, I can remember the principles I inherited, and to which I have ever since then tried to be faithful, in the conduct of inter-collegiate athletics at Notre Dame.

1. A university is first, foremost, and always dedicated to higher education. That is why it was created, why it exists, why it does everything it does, including football.

2. The players are first of all students who have been admitted to the University to be educated. Playing football is indeed, for them, an important part of their total education, but if they are not taking standard courses, progressing as all other students are towards a degree in four years, with the required average achieved each year, there is no football for them. A corollary of this is that I have always taken a dim view of jock courses, red shirting, and similar means of using and demeaning football players.

3. Athletes receive one benefit from the University -- a good education and nothing more -- not a job for their father, not a scholarship for their brother or girl friend, not a room in a hall for athletes, no special rules, no cash under the table; a good education, no more, no less.

4. Once given this offer, the only way they can lose it is to perform badly, academically or in disciplinary matters. If athletes perform badly, as students or campus citizens, the axe should fall on them as quickly and equitably as on every other student. On the other hand, if athletes get hurt the first day of practice, if they decide for good reasons not to play football, no matter, the offer is good for four years, the NCAA notwithstanding.

5. The coaches are, like other members of the faculty, essentially educators. As long as they follow the rules, educate well, and over the long run win more than they lose, their tenure

should be secure in the university. The few sophomoric alumni who expect constant miracles should be kept off their backs, and good coaches should be cherished as articulate and honored members of the university community -- sharing its high purposes and enjoying their work as other faculty do.

Added to these simple five principles which I inherited in 1949 and have promoted ever since, there needs to be, of course, one other essential ingredient which we call spirit. It exists wherever good competitive sport holds sway, it differentiates the amateur from the professional; it is expressed in Notre Dame's fight song, "What though the odds be great or small, old Notre Dame will win over all," it makes the difference between good and great athletes. In sports, as in life, spirit is indispensable.

All this may sound corny in the year 1975, but I'm corny enough to believe it. Of course, we don't always win, but over the years, even with these simple yet tough principles in vigor, we did win a few National Championships and, more importantly, we graduated hundreds of varsity lettermen who were in all their lives imbued with discipline, spirit, and a will to win. In a quite discouraged and discouraging world, I ask, what's wrong with that? Ninety-nine per cent of those who had this experience, including most former football players in this room tonight from other universities, would play varsity football again if they were given the chance to relive their college and university experience.

Sports Illustrated once looked long and hard at a ~~post-collegiate~~ survey we at Notre Dame had made of the post-collegiate careers of our varsity athletes. I quote their conclusions: "They had done exceptionally well: their income level was above that of college graduates in general, their jobs were mostly in the professional, managerial, and owner categories, domestic tranquility and civic virtue were rife, and nostalgia and loyalty to Notre Dame overflowed on all sides." (S.I., Dec. 1, 1956, p. 36). The reporter who wrote this, Robert Coughlin, was honestly skeptical of our survey, so he personally surveyed a like sample of those who had not answered the survey, less than half of those queried. His results, and I quote again: "It must be said again, and not without chagrin, that the statistics gathered from the additional players merged into the pattern of the original Notre Dame survey and largely reinforced its findings. With the worst of intentions, Sports Illustrated could locate not a single jailbird, convicted rapist, forger, swindler, or even anyone to fit the common belief that football players often turn out to be hod carriers in the end." (Ibid., p. 36)

Coughlin, who also queried the '37 and '46 varsity athletes of Yale, Georgia Tech, Ohio State, and Southern California, concludes his two-part article on a theme with which I enthusiastically agree: "Intercollegiate football has been on the list of suspicious activities among educators for a long time. There are legitimate criticisms to be made of it, no doubt, but among them is not (and he underlines not) that it impedes the practical purpose of education for its

players. The foregoing data makes that completely clear. And so ends a legend." (Ibid., p. 64)

It is a relatively unknown fact that the living legend of American football almost ended before it really began, and that it took a President of the United States to give it a second birth. Football has never lacked critics. In 1905, the game was dominated by the big three, Harvard, Yale and Princeton. The anti-football faction of that day was determined to kill it -- it was admittedly a bit neanderthal at that time. Before the 1905 season began, President Teddy Roosevelt invited to a White House Conference the coaches of the big three, Harvard's Bill Reid, Princeton's J. B. Fine, and Yale's Walker Camp. They all agreed to eliminate biting, gouging, kicking, and other fine points of the current game in the coming Fall season. President Roosevelt himself assured the press that henceforth football was to be a gentleman's game.

Even so, as the season progressed, Coach Reid had to appeal to the President for help when he learned that Harvard's Board had voted secretly to cancel the Harvard-Yale game. Teddy pulled out that chestnut, too -- he persuaded the Board to relent. Incidentally, he had a son on the Harvard freshman team.

Roosevelt again became involved during the season when in the Pennsylvania-Harvard game, Bartol Parker, Harvard's center, was kicked you know where and then punched the kicker. The referee only saw the punch. Parker was thrown out of the game and Coach Reid was called to the White House.

"Did Parker really slug him?" asked Roosevelt.

"What would you have done, Mr. President, if someone kicked you in the you know where?" asked Reid. End of discussion.

Came the Harvard-Yale game. All went well in the first half. Then, in the third period, Yale deep in its own territory, was forced to kick. Harvard's Frank Burr signaled a fair catch. Yale's Captain, End Bob Shevlin, either didn't see or ignored the signal. He nailed Burr who was knocked cold with a broken nose and carried off the field, as the Harvards poured on the field yelling revenge.

Major Higginson, a leader in Harvard's anti-football faction, then ordered Reid to take the Harvard team off the field for good. Reid, again counting on Roosevelt's support, ignored the order, played out the game, and, unfortunately, lost to Yale 6-0.

That did it. Immediately after the game, President Elliot of Harvard announced that his school would play no more football. Yale followed suit, as did Princeton. Even President Butler of Columbia announced "the abolition of football to prevent gentlemen engaged in the game from assassinating each other." A couple of hundred other schools around the country declared likewise. It looked like the end of football -- seventy years ago.

One man saved the day. President Teddy Roosevelt saw the potential values of football well played, more clearly than the educational leaders, and, one might add, modern critics. The game had much to offer America if good rules could be established and kept. Teddy Roosevelt informed the nation that a conference of 28 major colleges and universities would be convened at New York Uni-

versity at the end of the season to write those rules. They wrote 19 of them, satisfied even President Elliot, and Yale, and Princeton, and everyone else. Football survived as a gentleman's game.

I would say to you tonight that our national life has been enriched by this unusual Presidential intervention in the field of sport. But the lesson must be clear to us all. Rules are important -- in our personal lives, in our social lives, in our national and international lives, and on and off the playing field as well. While I have been involved deeply over the years in keeping the rules observed at Notre Dame, in my other life outside of Notre Dame, my chief concern has been for equality of opportunity for all Americans. One great reason that I have defended football -- within the rules -- is that here, as nowhere else, equality of opportunity reigns supreme. Whatever your nationality, color, race, or religion, if you performed well on the football field, you played and you won. Here is a lesson for all the nation and the world, too. We all need equal chance to perform, but given that, we must perform well and with spirit, to win. In this bicentennial year I pray that America and her ideals may always win.