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April 25, 2001

Letter To The Editor  
c/o Des Moines Register  
P. O. Box 957  
Des Moines, Iowa 50304

Dear Editor:

Congratulations to Bill Reichardt for his op-ed piece "Coaches' use of humiliation, fear is intolerable" on Sunday, April 22. He has inspired and encouraged those of us who long for the day when student/athlete is no longer an oxymoron, when professional sports looks elsewhere for a farm system and where money counts for less in the lubrication of the sports engine.

But I think Bill's thesis would have benefited by the inclusion of additional positive role models. Bud Wilkinson was one of these. Here's a letter from a former member of one of his Oklahoma teams:

*The great truths which I was able to observe through watching your conduct are the most valuable things [that] will leave the university with me.*

*You have showed us how to be gentlemen at all times ... To conduct myself as a man in the face of any adversity, any temptation, and especially in the face of the easy way out ... has been the greatest lesson I have learned ... This lesson will go with me wherever I may be sent in life. I hope that someday I, too, will be able to maintain such an example as to help others discover the true meaning of life.*

*May you always meet with good fortune, sir, and may you continue leading others as you have led me ... You will always have my gratitude, my respect and admiration, and my sincere friendship.*

His methods worked: Wilkinson's teams won twelve straight conference titles, three national championships, and his record of 47 consecutive victories will never be broken. His obituary in the Des Moines Register was headlined "Longtime Coach Dies at 77: Sooner Legend Wilkinson Remembered as Class Act."

Sincerely,

William J. Peverill