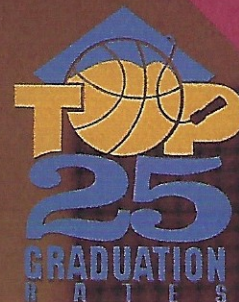


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Dr. Myles Brand,
President,
National Collegiate
Athletic Association



Academics and Athletics: **Playing** for the **Same Team**

High expectations greeted Dr. Myles Brand when he became president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in January 2003. As the fourth president of the nation's most powerful amateur sports organization, Brand has the distinction of being the first to have been a college president. As president of Indiana University, the veteran administrator gained national attention in 2000 for firing the controversial Indiana University-Bloomington basketball coach Bobby Knight over professional misconduct. A few months after the Knight firing, Brand urged broad reforms of college athletics during a highly regarded speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. That speech later proved instrumental in helping position Brand at the top of the NCAA presidential candidate list during a seven-month search in 2002. "Reform and advocacy are the dual guideposts to our future success," he declared in the annual NCAA address shortly after taking office at the NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis. With those words and more, Brand has sent the message that the NCAA is committed more than ever to the academic success of student-athletes in American higher education. This month, the NCAA board is expected to approve an "incentives/disincentives" plan designed to bolster graduation rates by holding individual colleges and universities responsible for the academic performance of its student-athletes.

To carry out reforms that put academics first and foremost, Brand, whose NCAA contract runs through 2007, draws upon his long career that spans from the Indiana and University of Oregon presidencies to his early days as a philosophy professor. He has also served as chairman of the board of the Association of American Universities. In late March just as the NCAA college basketball tournaments were getting under way, *Black Issues* spoke to Brand about the leadership challenges he faces.

BI: How would you describe the progress, or lack of it, on reform and advocacy, the two principles you outlined in your first annual address as NCAA president as your top priorities?

MB: I think we're making excellent progress on academic reform. What we really want to do is have student-athletes who have the full opportunity to get an education at our fine col-

leges and universities. And we already have in place higher standards for initial and continuing eligibility. For example, what we've done is raised the required number of core academic courses necessary to be eligible to play as a freshman, and we've put less emphasis on the SAT scores. ...

In addition, when a student-athlete comes to our campuses, we want to make sure that they have every opportunity to graduate. That

NCAA president discusses the challenges of leading the organization in an era of academic reform.

BY RONALD ROACH

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MYLES BRAND

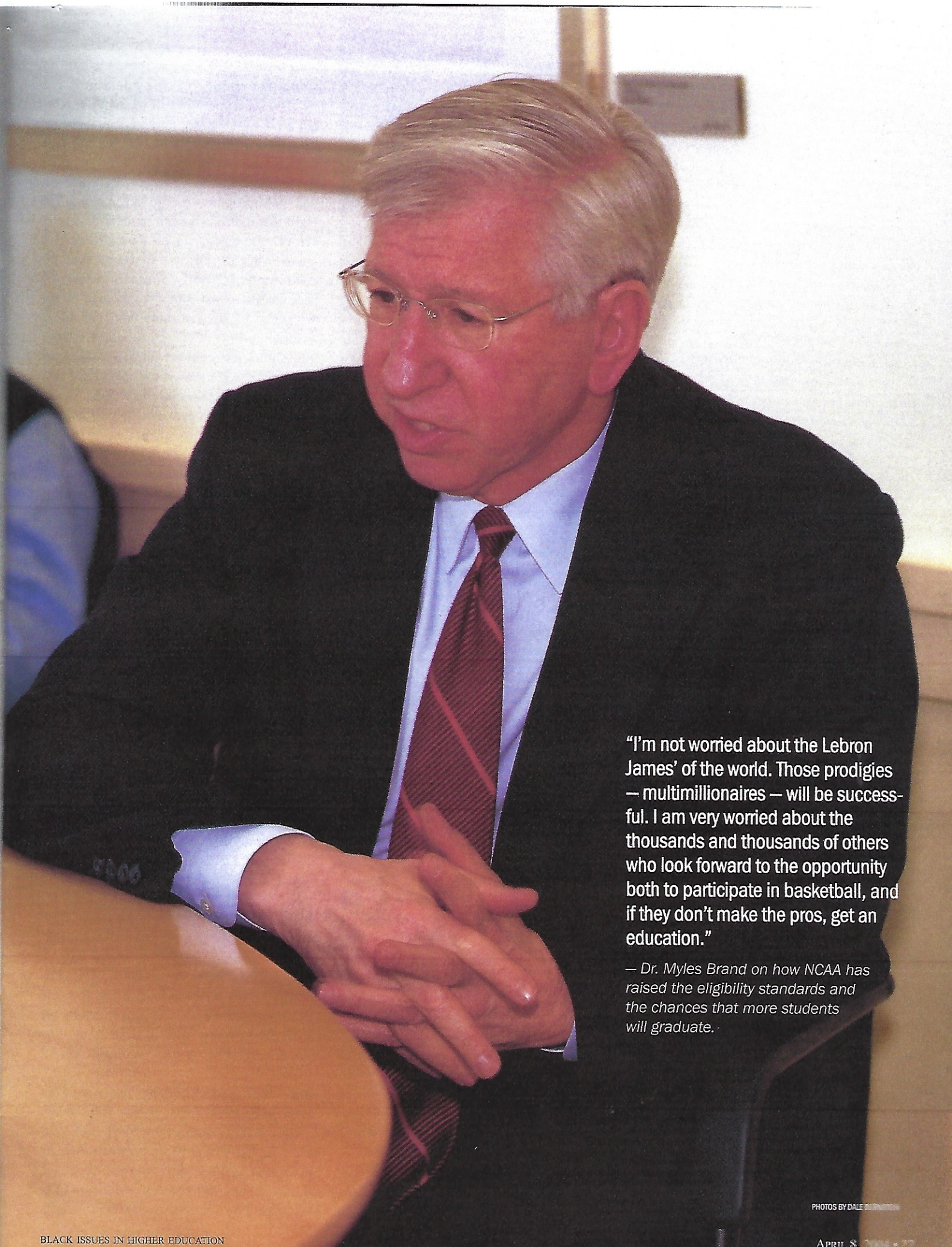
POSITION: President, National Collegiate Athletic Association, Indianapolis

AGE: 61

EDUCATION: B.S., Philosophy, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Rochester

means taking a curriculum that is going to lead over time — five years — to graduation. And so we're requiring that a student-athlete make 20 percent progress each year toward a degree. That's a higher level of requirement than in the past, which only focused on the number of courses one would take, not actually making progress toward the degree.

We've raised both the initial continuing eligibility standards and the result of that is going



"I'm not worried about the LeBron James' of the world. Those prodigies — multimillionaires — will be successful. I am very worried about the thousands and thousands of others who look forward to the opportunity both to participate in basketball, and if they don't make the pros, get an education."

— Dr. Myles Brand on how NCAA has raised the eligibility standards and the chances that more students will graduate.

PHOTOS BY DALE [unreadable]

to be, I think, better-prepared students coming to our colleges and students more likely to graduate.

I'm not worried about the LeBron James' of the world. Those prodigies — multimillionaires — will be successful. I am very worried about the thousands and thousands of others who look forward to the opportunity both to participate in basketball, and if they don't make the pros, get an education. ...

So (the) initial continuing eligibility piece for academic reform has already been put in place. The next step, the key step is going to take place this April when we have an "incentives/disincentives" program. If you can think of the eligibility standards as holding the student-athlete accountable, then the incentive/disincentive program holds the program and the school accountable. In other words, if a basketball program doesn't graduate at a certain level compared to the other students at the institution, then they will be warned. And if that doesn't work, maybe take away some scholarships. If that doesn't work, that could prevent them from playing in the postseason NCAA (tournament for) basketball. There's been even some discussion of even more severe penalties like (suspending) the program. But the point is we have to hold the teams, the athletic department and the school accountable for academic performance of the student-athletes.

Now the advocacy issue that you speak about is more difficult. We've seen over this past year coaches, programs, student-athletes, even presidents who are frankly misbehaving. Some of the misbehavior has been scandalous. And as a result, it's very difficult to advocate for college sports when all those mishaps are getting a great deal of publicity. Nonetheless, I think we're doing better and better clarifying the nature of the college game, saying what's special about collegiate athletics — that it involves student-athletes, not paid professionals, and that the way we want to make sure the future of college sports is sound is to ensure that it has a collegiate look to it, that it's really college sports at its best and not third-rate professional sports.

BI: *How do you think having been a college president, an academic dean, faculty member and scholar has helped you in your current position?*

MB: I think the academic experience, most especially having been president of two universities, (the University of) Oregon and Indiana University, has given me the sense of the

role of intercollegiate athletics within the academic enterprise. It's given me firsthand experience and knowledge about what we can expect of student-athletes and what we can expect of athletic programs. It gives me a comfort level of understanding the academic enterprise that others who come through the athletic track may not have achieved.

On the other hand, it makes me work doubly hard to learn the athletic side of the house, which is not as well known to me as to many others.

BI: *Why do you think we haven't seen more Blacks hired as head coaches of Division I-A football teams?*

MB: I've been discussing this with the Black Coaches Association, and in particular the executive director, Floyd Keith, about what the issues are. It seems to me that the underlying issue, the one that's making it most difficult for highly qualified African American coaches to rise to the head coaching level is the search process itself. The search process sometimes is very short and not entirely open. It doesn't allow a full and fair consideration of talented individuals, and as a result of that the BCA has undertaken what they're calling a "report card," which will focus in on whether the search process really does provide a fair and open consideration of all the talent that's there.

I think that my own view is that one of the leading causes of not having adequate numbers of African American head coaches in football is the search process itself. ... To the credit of the BCA and particularly the leadership group, its board, they have understood this activity and have worked on trying to change the search process.

At the same time, I think the NCAA has a role as does the BCA and other groups to provide educational opportunities for aspiring African American coaches so that when the call comes they're fully prepared to take advantage of it and succeed. We've been invested in doing that. We've run the coaches academy (which we started this past winter).

BI: *Some might argue that commercialism of college athletics has increased in the short time you've presided over the NCAA. How can the NCAA help foster an image of college athletics that keeps amateurism in the forefront?*

MB: Just because we have large media contracts, pre-eminently the CBS (college) basketball contract, that doesn't mean that college

sports is a moneymaking operation. The NCAA, the home office of the NCAA, is really a pass-through for those dollars to the institutions. So 95 percent of the CBS contract is redistributed to the universities and colleges, and we just use about 5 percent for administration of the programs here in Indianapolis. The rest is distributed to the campuses and they use that money to help support their athletic programs. After all, only two programs, (the) so-called revenue sports, football and men's basketball on most campuses, operate in the black. But yet they're many more programs, including women's programs, and Olympic sports, track and field to name a few that need to be supported through whatever revenues come in. So that money is redistributed.

The fact of the matter is overall college sports is a losing proposition. It takes in a remarkable \$4 billion a year in revenues, not just from media but from the selling of seats, tickets. But it spends \$5 billion a year supporting student-athletes. And so I think it's a mistake to believe that there's a lot of revenue coming in. That goes not just for the small schools but for the big schools as well, namely that it's difficult to meet all the costs.

I think student-athletes have a wonderful opportunity to get an education, the most important reason they come to school, but also to participate in high-level sports. While they're on campus, whether they're in basketball or football or track and field or baseball or any other sport, they have the world's best coaching, and they receive that as well as a scholarship. Those student-athletes are very well-prepared for the world after college, and the investment of their time in athletics is well-compensated by the education they receive, the coaching they receive, and the position they're put in as a result of moving on from there, hopefully with a degree.

BI: *In light of the legal case of the Colorado skier and football player Jeremy Bloom arguing against the NCAA's ban on earning income from the status as an athlete, how does the NCAA counter the perception that the sports establishment profits greatly while the most visible athletes in the revenue-generating sports may seem unfairly compensated?*

MB: There's a whole range of issues here, but let me just address a few of them. The Bloom case (is one) of a young man who's both a talented football player and a talented skier. As he has said publicly, and his agents have said, he wants to be able to use his visibility in football to get endorsement contracts. That case

was taken to the courts and he lost. We have rules about the fact that you can't use your amateur standing within collegiate sports to make money. That (would make you) a professional.

It's not that he can't play both sports. He can. He just can't use his visibility in football to enhance his marketability as he's trying to do. Moreover, his claim that he would have no ability to ski if he didn't do that — because skiing is an expensive endeavor and he needs special coaches; he's an Olympic-level skier obviously — well, again, that's not true because the Olympic committee is prepared to pay him to do that. He just wants to make a lot of money now. He should wait like everyone else (until he or she) gets out of college. That's an extreme case. He's appealing, but right now the judgment stands.

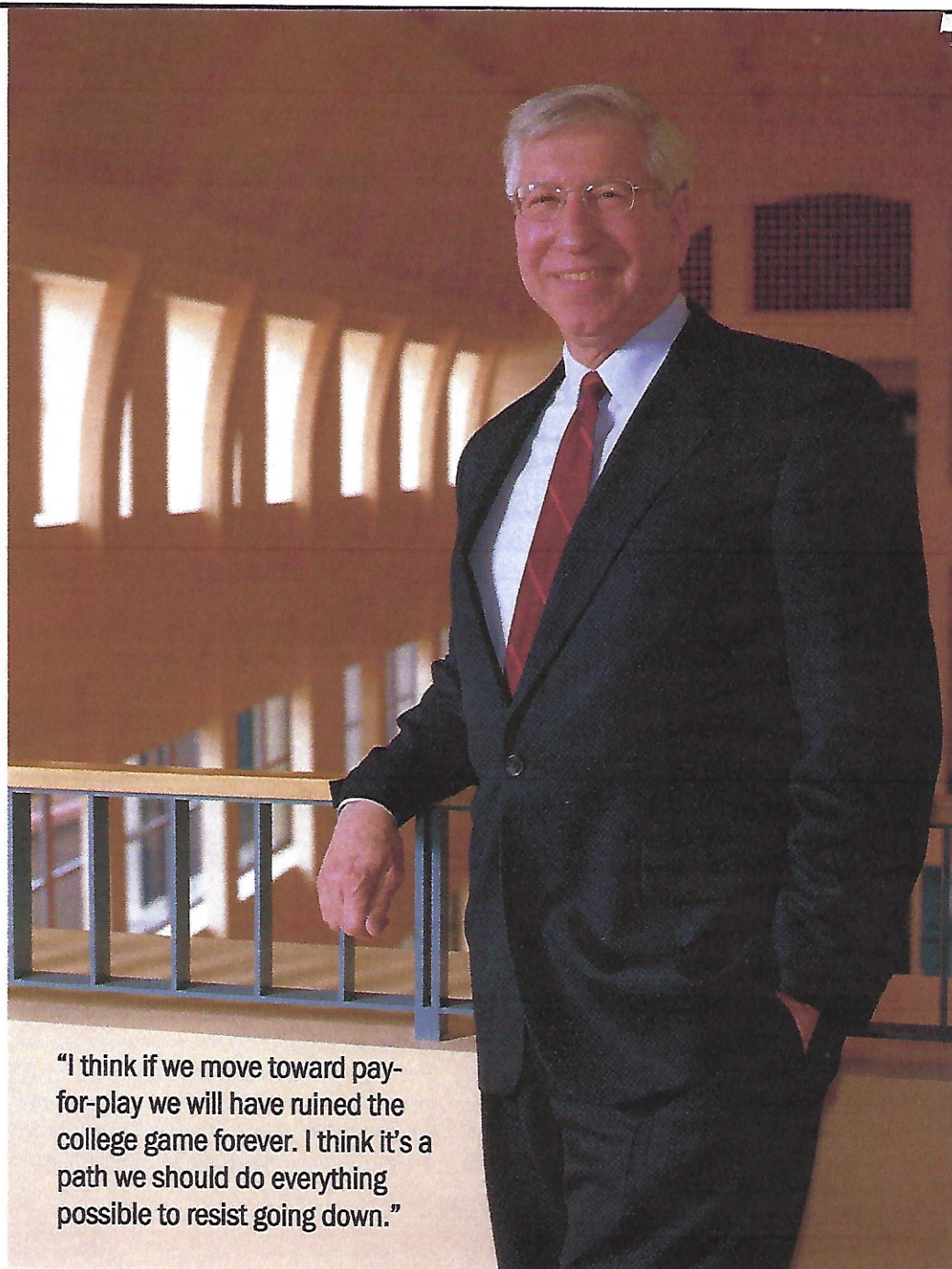
In the case of selling shirts, uniforms with your name and number on it, that's a trickier one. That one is open to debate, I think, whether the schools should be permitted to do that, to profit off of students. You can't on the one hand, however, let the student-athletes receive that money because it really does turn them into professionals. But should the schools be profiting off the selling of the shirts? I think that one is a tougher call. That one's open to question and the discussion is still ongoing in that case.

BI: *Do you see the example of coaches getting sports apparel contracts making the situation unfair for student-athletes who not only don't benefit from the sales of replica jerseys but have to wear apparel such as athletic shoes to fulfill the contracts their coaches have with the sports-apparel makers?*

MB: No I don't. Because just like other employees, people who are employed under contract by the university, they have the ability (to establish) consulting arrangements. Whether you're a physician and you have a consulting arrangement with a hospital, or say a private practice plan, or you're in business or a humanities professor who sells his textbook, there are lots of kinds of relationships that people employed by universities have on an ongoing basis, business basis. It doesn't carry over to student-athletes.

I don't see any problems with coaches. We would have to single out coaches from everyone else employed by the university. Student-athletes are not employed by the university and are in a different category.

BI: *Can you envision any kind of pay-for-play*



"I think if we move toward pay-for-play we will have ruined the college game forever. I think it's a path we should do everything possible to resist going down."

arrangement coming to college sports?

MB: I think if we move toward pay-for-play we will have ruined the college game forever. I think it's a path we should do everything possible to resist going down. You can think of sports in two main lines in this country.

One is the professional model where you have people who sign contracts to play. They're being paid for what they do on the field. That's a business arrangement. The other is a collegiate model in which students attend college and are permitted to participate in college sports in high-profile programs both they and the fans enjoy. But that's the collegiate model. There's all the difference in the world between the professional model and the collegiate model.

Just think of it from a fan's perspective.

The college fan in a basketball game is an entirely different breed from those who attend professional games. Professional games don't have the same level of identification with the players and the school from which they come that you find in the college game. There's something very special about the college game where the players are clearly representing their school. So that's a very different model.

If we start to pay players, we couldn't compete with the professional levels, which are paying millions of dollars. I think what we would do is to take wonderful college sports and turn (them) into third-rate professional sports at a level practically lower than the minor leagues. Why would we do that? Why would we spoil the superb game of college sports whether it's in football or basketball or

Creating a Successful Student-Athlete

Discipline, focus and hard work are just a few attributes, says advising expert Dr. Ruth Darling

By KENDRA HAMILTON

Critics of big-time college sports have been working for decades to control the rampant rise in commercialization on campus — and to hold the line on academic integrity. But the balancing act is a difficult one — as 2003, a year that saw academic scandals at St. Bonaventure University, University of Georgia and Fresno State University, to name just a few, amply attested.

Black Issues interviewed one of the great champions in this area: Dr. Ruth Darling, president of the board of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and member of the NCAA academic, eligibility and compliance cabinet that advised a sweeping new set of reforms put in place in fall 2003. Darling is also associate provost at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and director of the school's Thornton Athletic Student Life

Center. The university has produced standout scholar athletes like Peyton Manning, the Indianapolis Colts quarterback who graduated with a No. 1 ranking in his speech communications major, and Kara Lawson, named last year's female Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar by Black Issues In Higher Education.

BI: What do you think the challenges are in the current academic advising environment for the student athlete?

RD: We have to remember that the student athletes are extraordinarily passionate about their sports, and that is why they have chosen, in many cases, to attend a given institution. Research shows that they connect with the coach, are drawn to the facilities, are attracted by the number of times they will appear on television — these are all very important issues

women's hockey? Why would we want to spoil that game just so that we would pay players a little bit of money?

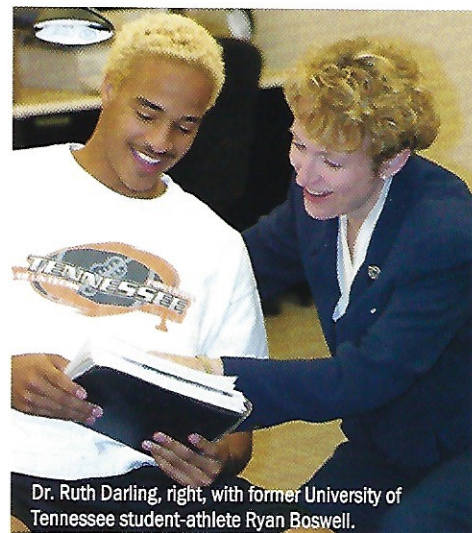
If they want to be professionals; if they want to get paid for what they do, that's legitimate, that's okay. They just need to do it somewhere else — in the professional leagues if they're good enough to make it. It won't happen in college.

BI: In response to athletic recruiting scandals at the University of Colorado and other places, the NCAA will soon propose a new set of recruiting guidelines for colleges and universities. What can the NCAA do in addition to adopting new rules that will help foster a positive campus environment around recruitment and student-athlete life at individual colleges and universities?

MB: The NCAA is a national organization, and we can make certain rules about what's

permitted and what's not. In the case of recruiting, our rules have usually been (a student-athlete) can only stay on campus a certain number of hours, can only spend so much money. We have not made rules about what behaviors are permitted and not, thinking that the campuses themselves will make sure that common sense and good judgment pervade. Well, it doesn't always, as we know.

And so now we're going to have to take some steps in making rules about behavior on recruiting visits and other areas as well. We've set up a special task force to do that, and we will not have a football recruiting season without those new rules being in place. But having done that — this is the most important point — it won't be sufficient, because the first line of defense is always the campus. And these are local issues, local problems. The coaches, the presidents, the boards of trustees of each of these institutions have responsibility for the



Dr. Ruth Darling, right, with former University of Tennessee student-athlete Ryan Boswell.

to a Division I athlete, especially one who is thinking about a possible pro career. Academic advisers must consistently integrate the student's athletic passion with the goals of learning in a higher education culture.

What does it mean to be a successful student? What does it mean to be a successful athlete? It requires the same set of skills and abilities. It demands discipline; it demands focus; it requires setting goals and meeting those goals; it requires being able to face adversity, and it requires meeting challenges aggressively and with integrity. Successful student athletes approach their sport in this manner and must approach their studies and degree progress in the same way.

There are a number of institutions that are moving their academic support programs, as the University of Tennessee has done, from the ath-

letic to the academic side, to ensure the good behavior of those student-athletes as they have for the behavior of all students.

There's only so much you can do from a national level. It has to be locally controlled. What we can do is encourage the presidents who need to be on the leadership position on each campus, provide them with information, background data, national rules. But they themselves are going to have to be the leaders locally to resolve the problems.

BI: Can the NCAA help address the issue of diversity among Title IX-driven gender equity efforts in athletic departments, particularly as they relate to the hiring of African American women?

MB: Indirectly is the answer rather than directly because Title IX pertains only to gender equity; it does not talk about race equality. But having women move into leadership positions

letic department into an academic affairs unit. This is an important reform that was recommended by the Knight Commission. The NCAA supports this change. Academic support programs need to be placed within an academic affairs unit, the unit ultimately responsible for student learning and development on college campuses.

BI: *What do you feel is the secret to motivating young people to see themselves as student-athletes rather than just as athletes?*

RD: I've worked with a number of student-athletes over the years who would say, "OK, I'm going to be a psychology major. But I'm really going to play pro or compete professionally. So it doesn't make any difference" (what I do or how I perform in school). I'll suggest, "Let's think about this a minute, about what this major will teach you about being that pro football player. You're going to learn about motivation, you're going to learn about persuasion, you're going to learn about figuring out how people think. All of these skills and the knowledge will help you out on the field. And whether you end up on the field or coaching or in the corporate world, you will take this knowledge with you." Often, their eyes light up. "Oh, I never thought about it that way." I think helping students make this connection is one of the most important things we

for example, to let that student or that T.A. write that paper for them?

RD: I keep trying to tie it back to what they have to do to be successful as an athlete and successful in life. You can't have someone lift your weights for you. You can't have someone else go in and memorize the playbook for you. You've got to go to class and fulfill your responsibilities as a student-athlete with integrity and pride. The bottom line is that connection: If you're not a student, you can't be a student-athlete. They must make progress on their degree. Sometimes, if anything, that is the hook.

BI: *What do you see as the best thing to have happened and what do you think is the biggest challenge?*

RD: I think it is the same answer to both questions. The NCAA, in the academic progress toward degree requirements have established a new set of academic initiatives that were implemented starting with the fall '03 freshman class. (These will include incentive and disincentives that may result in schools losing scholarships or even eligibility for postseason competition if they don't meet certain academic progress rates.) I was a member of an NCAA consultants' group that worked on these standards. We reviewed data, from a 10-year period, for student-athletes who had graduated. The question was asked, "At certain points, where were the students relative to their academic progress?" We also asked, "Was it possible to predict academic success based on that progress or benchmark?"

The group carefully reviewed the data and proposed legislation that was adopted. At the end of every year there are benchmarks that students must meet in satisfying academic progression requirements. These requirements are more rigorous than they have been in the past and will certainly present challenges to all involved in D-I collegiate athletics. Probably the most significant change is that, by the end of a student-athlete's sophomore year, he/she must complete 40 percent of a specified degree program. We must work very closely with the students and their academic advisers to keep as many doors open as we can in relation to their choice of major. As college students, they must be allowed to maintain a certain degree of flexibility to change their minds. Changing, learning and growing is what college is all about — we should not unnecessarily restrict that type of learning in a student-athlete's experience. And at the same time I think this is one of the best initiatives currently being implemented. It is an attempt to change the culture: the students, those few who come in thinking they can be a student-athlete but not a student; and also the attitude of some coaches who might neglect the academic goals of our undergraduates.

I often use the metaphor of a three-legged stool or a pyramid to illustrate a model for student-athlete academic learning and support — one of the strongest structures you can build. You need the coach; you need the academic adviser/faculty, and you need the student-athlete. If any one person fails to fulfill his/her responsibility and fails to be academically accountable, that stool is going to tip over, the pyramid will collapse. ■

BI: *How do you help students to resist academic pressure in an environment where there is a lot of pressure to do things the easy way,*

not just on teams but in athletic programs and through the whole university can be helped by Title IX, and with that will come African American women as well.

I think something indirectly the NCAA can do in terms of producing more diversity within the field of women sports is to make sure we look at opportunities in sports that are attractive to African American women. Right now we don't have enough women playing on most campuses to satisfy Title IX, so we have to increase opportunities for women to play. Which sports we choose to emphasize might be helpful.

So, for example, just to take what some might find as a surprising example is bowling. Bowling turns out to be an emerging sport. It involves urban women — young women, often African Americans, who enjoy the sport. To the extent that we can be promoting a sport that is attractive to young African American women, we can create diversity within the context of Title

IX, even if Title IX itself does not require it. Now I'm just using bowling as one example, but there are other good examples out there as well.

And similarly when we're trying to assure that women coaches have every opportunity, we want to be able to identify in as sound a way as we possibly can African American women coaches who can then rise to positions, whether it's in women's basketball or the other sports, and therefore act as role models to attract other African American young women to play. So I think there are things we can do even if it's not required by Title IX.

BI: *How would you assess the impact of being in a relatively new headquarters on NCAA operations and its public exposure as well as the effect it has had on the local higher education environment and the city of Indianapolis?*

MB: I didn't have the privilege of serving in

Kansas City before we came to Indianapolis, so I only know the Indianapolis (perspective). The NCAA is well appreciated in the state; it's well appreciated in the city. I believe its national visibility has been enhanced by being in Indianapolis. The state and the city are very supportive of what we do. There's a tremendous positive working relationship between the city and the NCAA. After all, they provided the funding for this building. I think our rent is a dollar a year. They provided a long-term rental agreement just to attract the NCAA here, and they've been more than hospitable. So I believe it's been positive. The physical building itself is a first-class building, so we're very pleased to be here.

From my own personal view, it meant that I could continue to live in Indiana, and my wife could continue to teach at Indiana University at Bloomington. It's worked out personally for us. ■