

1-21-2008 Social Justice

1 (File: 20080121mwm)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Welcome to "Mondays With Myles".

3 Dr. Brand, most don't associate college sports with
4 social justice. Why do you?

5 DR. MYLES BRAND: When I gave the convention speech
6 not long ago, one of the sections of the speech was the
7 obligations that intercollegiate athletics and universities,
8 as a whole, have towards social justice.

9 Universities are places in which people should be able
10 to advance on the quality of their effort and the quality of
11 their natural talents. And everybody should have an equal
12 opportunity to do so. That's what university is about.

13 And, of course, athletics is part of it. Athletic
14 departments are part of universities. They are not separate.
15 And they have to follow the same mission and principles. And
16 so it's true in athletes, as well as it is for the rest of the
17 university, that social justice, advancement, success on the
18 basis of hard work and actual ability, should be the only
19 thing that counts -- not skin color or gender.

20 JOSH CENTOR: Well, speaking of those, you have put
21 great emphasize on Title IX and minority issues. How are we
22 doing there?

23 DR. MYLES BRAND: We're doing better than we did in
24 the past, but we still have a long way to go. And it's
25 different in each case.

1 In Title IX, we have seen a sixfold increase in the
2 number of young women who are playing college sports since its
3 passage in 1972. And young girls now are growing up
4 understanding that they have every opportunity to play sports,
5 and they don't even give it a second thought.

6 Having said that, it's still not equality. It's still
7 not equity in the case of women in sports. Over 56 percent of
8 the scholarships are going to men despite the fact that there
9 are more women in college than men.

10 There are attempts to rollback Title IX. For example,
11 in the federal administration we've seen that.

12 So there is still a lot of work to do. The
13 distribution of resources and opportunities yet aren't
14 parallel and close to what we would expect if we were doing it
15 on the basis for natural talent and ability.

16 JOSH CENTOR: About a week and half ago at the NCAA
17 convention, you moderated the keynote luncheon. Tell me about
18 it.

19 DR. MYLES BRAND: It was a great keynote luncheon. We
20 talked about the kinds of issues we are talking about now,
21 social justice in athletics. Bill Rhoden, the commentator
22 from New York Times, was there; Gene Smith, who is the AD of
23 Ohio State, and Nancy Zimpher, who is the president of the
24 University of Cincinnati. It was just a great opportunity for
25 those people to exchange views and also take questions from

1 the audience.

2 If I had to pick, say, what was the most poignant and
3 important issue raised, I think it was all about presidential
4 leadership. Nancy Zimpher pointed out that we are not going
5 to get the kind of changes that create social justice in
6 athletics and indeed in the entire university until presidents
7 step up.

8 Now, the good news is that many are. The bad news is
9 it's still hard work, and there is still a long way to go.
10 And one of the points I emphasized in my speech, and it
11 certainly wasn't the first time I said this, is the fact that
12 in the bowl football subdivision, 119 schools, we only have
13 eight football head coaches of color, only six of whom are
14 African Americans. That's absurd. More than half the players
15 in that division in football are African Americans. Many of
16 the assistant coaches and a number of the coordinators are.
17 The talent is there. It's an embarrassment for all of
18 intercollegiate athletics that we don't have a better use of
19 the talent that already exists in intercollegiate athletics
20 football.

21 JOSH CENTOR: How far does the role of social justice
22 go for college sports?

23 DR. MYLES BRAND: Social justice has to be part of our
24 fiber of why we do the things we do. We should always be
25 aware of making sure that everyone is treated fairly, that

1 there are opportunities created, and that people advance on
2 their own merits. And to the extent that we have biases or
3 obstacles in the way of doing that, we have to continually
4 fight to get past those. And the fact of the matter is while
5 we have done much better than we have done in the past, say 50
6 years ago, to think that we have succeeded is a mistake.
7 There is progress, sometimes a little forward, a little
8 backward; sometimes too slow, at least in my belief, for
9 what's really needed. But we have made some progress. We
10 still have a long, long way to go.

11 JOSH CENTOR: There are folks who will say that the
12 NCAA should just keep its nose out of this type of stuff and
13 concentrate on the games -- what happens between the lines.
14 What do you say to them?

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, I think they missed the point of
16 intercollegiate athletics. The point of intercollegiate
17 athletics is to help individual student-athletes, in
18 particular, grow and to gain a sense of justice, to gain an
19 understanding and have a conscious about fairness for all is
20 an important lesson that can be learned in athletics. And if
21 we don't use athletics, as well as other opportunities in the
22 university, to teach that to student-athletes, we are missing
23 our opportunities. We are missing the learning opportunities
24 that we have to provide.

25 Managing games is one of the things we do, in

1 championships at least. But helping educate student-athletes
2 is the main thing we do, and education includes a sense of
3 justice.

4 JOSH CENTOR: Thank you for this important
5 conversation.

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's a pleasure.

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