

Editors' Introduction to The Myles Brand Era at the NCAA: A Tribute and Scholarly Review

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The idea for this Myles Brand Era Special Issue of the *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport* originated in July of 2020—during the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting shutdown of teaching, travel, but not necessarily intercollegiate sports—as universities and the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) were debating as to whether to commence with summer practice for fall football season after the cancellation of spring championships including March Madness: both men's and women's. Suddenly sports was neither routine nor reserved only for the sports page or online media; questions of policy, (medical) ethics, and social justice moved front and center as some student-athletes were eager to practice while university presidents prohibited it. Or student-athletes refused to practice until they heard other conferences were returning to the field and did not want to be left out of tentatively scheduled national competitions. Parents spoke loudly on behalf of their children. Everyone looked for guidance to the NCAA. Campus administrators relented. Practices resumed—complete with tests, quarantines, and player protocols—while some people started asking variations of the rather simple question, “What would Myles have done?”

We can only surmise what results his leadership during a pandemic might have brought. Our speculation can perhaps be informed by studying his speeches and opinion pieces written over the span of a 40-year academic career, plus over 100 podcasts, several in-depth interviews, television appearances including U. S. Congressional testimony (over three hundred such items are available at www.mylesbrand.com, a site designed by Peg Brand Weiser), NCAA data and records, and by recalling personal conversations. Perhaps the more interesting question to be asked 12 years after his passing is not, “What would Myles have done?” but rather, “What have we done—individually and collectively on behalf of student-athletes—in the aftermath of Myles Brand's leadership?”

The legacy of Myles Brand includes the insightful essays by the authors in this special issue: all of whom dig deeply into continuing controversies within higher education, intercollegiate athletics, and the values, principles, and style of Brand's



leadership. They take up the gauntlet to dissect and disseminate Brand's lasting influence on the institution of the NCAA in terms of the decisions and policies enacted between 2003 and 2009 that continue to affect the well-being of today's student-athletes, the sustainability of high-cost intercollegiate competition, and now, the "threat to" or "abandonment of" (depending on your point of view) "amateur status" due to students' newfound economic agency and ability to profit from NILs (Name, Image, Likeness).

Our initial call for papers cast the scope of the project broadly: a special issue devoted to the living legacy of Myles Brand, the fourth president of the NCAA from January 1, 2003, to September 16, 2009, on any aspect of his presidency—philosophy, leadership style, initiatives, impacts, successes, and challenges. We urged consideration of a variety of themes: general historical conditions that affected Brand's tenure, biographical aspects of his life that influenced his work as NCAA President, comparisons to other NCAA Presidents, the effect of Brand's untimely death on the NCAA, and the evolution of the post-Brand years. Prefaced by some preliminary remarks and personal observations, it was natural to organize the issue in terms of Brand's three major initiatives of (1) improving academic standards, (2) increasing diversity, and (3) assuring both academic and fiscal sustainability. We are indebted to our contributors for their expertise, thoughtfulness, and high level of scholarship. We urge readers to continue the conversation beyond this issue after studying these provocative papers, all of which look forward into an uncharted future.

To begin, John R. Thelin presents an introductory preface, "From Chaos to Coherence: Myles Brand and the Balancing of Academics and Athletics," that fancifully casts Brand in terms of an imaginary campus mascot, namely, that of a Gryphon. For a scholar such as Brand who studied Plato and Aristotle, ancient Greek mythology is an appropriate place to start, particularly as the Gryphon was the guardian of light against the darkness known as chaos plus a composite of both mental/cognitive and physical/athletic powers. Thelin historically situates The Brand Era within developments in American higher education including the influential Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and posits Brand as leading the enterprise toward the light of reason and coherence.

Josh Brand provides personal insight into the armchair philosophy of "Myles Brand, My Father," recounting numerous conversations and debates over action theory, education, and sports. He notes the impact of their relationship as he tries to "pay it forward" (a phrase Myles used often in both family and collegiate settings) for the benefit of Josh's own two daughters. For readers unfamiliar with Brand's unwavering support of Title IX, a reminder is in order; his granddaughters were mentioned on numerous occasions in his speeches and in casual conversation as he fondly looked ahead to their future days in college.

As a fellow philosopher, co-author with Myles Brand, and professor currently teaching classes in the philosophy of sport, Peg Brand Weiser reveals the philosophical background integral to Brand's method of analysis and leadership style in "Life is an Adventure: From Action Theory to Action." The turn away from traditional

theoretical analytic philosophy of human action toward a more applied, practical philosophy proved crucial to Brand's corresponding transition to university administrative roles and eventually, his NCAA presidency.

In a behind-the-scenes look entitled, "President Brand's Gambit: Inviting Scholars Inside the Tent," Scott Kretchmar enlightens us as to the backstory of Brand's idea to start an Academic Scholarly Colloquium—a conference planned in conjunction with the annual NCAA convention beginning in 2007—as well as Kretchmar's experience as founding editor of this journal, the *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, in 2008. The Colloquium served as a means of bringing together interested supporters and critics that lent transparency to the inner workings of the institution. It was funded by the NCAA in January of 2013; luckily the journal survives.

Walter Harrison offers another look behind the scenes, providing insight on several administrative roles he held while he was president of the University of Hartford working with Brand and the NCAA. The essay, "Myles Brand and the Responsibility of Leadership," conveys a sense of Brand's style of governing: gathering data and opinions and operating as helmsman to steer the best ideas forward with popular consensus. Harrison discusses both academic reform and sustainability so this essay, along with several others, also adds to the discussion of the topic of sustainability by Rodney Fort. The three topics are interrelated in ways that are difficult to separate.

Heather Reid transports us back to ancient Greece and several of Brand's favorite philosophers—Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato—while simultaneously updating the tradition in her essay, "Amateurism, Professionalism and the Value of College Sports." Reid argues that ancient voices who extol the educational value of sport form the basis of Brand's ideals of amateurism, academics, and the protection of student-athletes from exploitation. Reid arrives at the "paradoxical" conclusion that "ideals of excellence and professionalism are at the heart of 'amateurism' in the context of college sport." The intrinsic value of competition is not a means but an end in itself that functions along with the educational benefits student-athletes derive from their collegiate experiences.

Lou Matz expands upon his own previous writing (and future work) on Brand's 2006 *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* article, "The Role and Value of Intercollegiate Athletics in Universities" in his exploration of "Myles Brand: Intercollegiate Athletics Within the Limits of the Academic Mission Alone." He pushes Brand's analogy of athletics and the performing arts to an unprecedented suggestion: the creation of a Competitive Sport major that more fully and productively integrates intercollegiate athletics into the already intertwined, i.e., "integrated," academic and educational missions of our institutions of higher learning.

Welch Suggs and Jennifer Hoffman examine "Myles Brand's Collegiate Model and the Post-Amateurism World of College Sports" by charting the history of the model in both sport and higher education, carefully assessing Brand's definition of the model and finally, assessing its relevance as a policy prescription in our current century whereby lawsuits against the NCAA, new state laws, and now the NCAA itself are allowing student-athletes agency to profit from Name, Image and Likeness.

This radical alteration to the notion of “amateurism” within the collegiate model leads the authors to consider a new era of “post-amateurism” along with the powerful role played by the media, money, and student-friendly/empowering legislation, but they argue nonetheless that the educational value of sports need not be lost in their wake.

David K. Wiggins calls Brand “the quintessential philosopher” and “the conscience of college sport” who labored in the face of “racialist thinking and racism that pervades all levels of sport and society more generally” in his essay, “Myles Brand: A Leader Deeply Committed to Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Social Justice.” Analyzing the intricacies of Academic Progress Rates (APR) and Graduation Success Rates (GSR)—metrics implemented by Brand to measure educational progress and graduation rates of student-athletes and their teams—Wiggins notes criticisms brought on behalf of African American student-athletes and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), while also citing Brand’s elimination of offensive Native American mascots, his promotion of the hiring of under-represented minorities as coaches and administrators, and his relentless support of equity and opportunity for women and student-athletes under Title IX.

C. Keith Harrison, Bernard Franklin, and Whitney Griffin address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in “Myles Brand’s Philosophy of the Value of Intercollegiate Athletics: A Collaborative Effort and the Perspective of Two Black Males on Educational Achievement at the NCAA.” The authors apply a personal narrative theory to Brand’s effort to improve academic standards (through the APR) while introducing and advancing the Scholar-Baller initiative—conceived in collaboration with the NCAA during Brand’s tenure—that is particularly effective in helping African American male college athletes. The recent Supreme Court ruling highlights the ongoing challenge of educating under-represented minorities as unpaid “amateurism” legally slips away.

Rodney Fort tackles the persistent topic of sustainability, the third of Brand’s three major college sports initiatives in addition to academic integrity and diversity, in “Myles Brand’s College Sports Sustainability: ‘Amateurism,’ Finances, and Institutional Balance.” The author identifies the central elements of discussion as the established NCAA definition of “amateurism,” athletic department finances, and the “balance between athletic and academic spending as a part of the university mission.” An in-depth analysis of NCAA data on revenue sources and expenditures includes a look at the College Football Playoff (CFP) that has evolved from the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) as well as Final Four Basketball Championships in order to assess such well-entrenched, lucrative events in a post-Brand era.

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