

Journal of Sport Management, 1992, 6, 206-214
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0898-2613/92/020206-06\$01.50/0

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Using the Rays From History's Shining Lantern As We Face an Uncertain Future

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Having an annual lecture given in my name is (a) an honor for which I am most grateful, (b) something I never expected, and (c) a form of recognition that I will continue to strive to earn as long as I am able. I also didn't expect to be asked to give the first such lecture. However, in preparing this presentation, I did feel the need to employ a certain historiographic approach, one that might help me to make semi-objective judgments. Of course, I am not expecting anyone else to accept my philosophic orientation, but nevertheless we may discover a reasonable amount of consensus about the recommendations I have chosen to make. Where there is lack of agreement, we are in North America and, fortunately, in a position to work our differences out democratically as we strive to influence our chosen field of endeavor positively in the years ahead.

The following quotation by Allan Nevins, then, is what I used for guidance as an approach to, or a conception of, history:

Although when we use the word history we instinctively think of the past, this is an error, for history is actually a bridge connecting the past with the present, and pointing the road to the future. . . .

History enables bewildered bodies of human beings to grasp their relationship with their past, and helps them chart on general lines their immediate forward course. And it does more than this. By giving people a sense of continuity in all their efforts, red-flagging error, and chronicling immortal worth, it confers on them a consciousness of unity, a realization of the value of individual achievement, and a comprehension of the importance of planned effort as contrasted with aimless drifting.

This conception of history as a lantern carried by the side of man, moving forward with every step taken, is of course far ampler than the concept

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of a mere interesting tale to be told, a vivid scene to be described, or a group of picturesque characters to be delineated. (Nevins, 1962, p. 14)

Using this approach—letting the lantern's rays shine behind me, at my feet, and ahead with every step taken—provides me with an opportunity (a) to offer what I call septuagenarian reminiscences, (b) to suggest what we should avoid as we seek to progress in the year ahead, and (c) to suggest what we should do as we struggle for our place in society, both specifically in sport management and generally in the profession for which we can't seem to find an acceptable name.

Septuagenarian Reminiscences

It was some 48 years ago that I, armed with a college degree and a background in competitive sport, first decided to cast my lot with the physical education profession. I soon discovered the unhappy fact that our field was not very high on the academic totem pole. (I had an undergraduate major in German, with minors in French and history, had studied toward a master's degree in German, and had planned originally to teach foreign languages and coach several sports in a New England private preparatory school. I must say how happy I am that goal never came to fruition!)

However, after my fundamentalistic conversion to HPER, my initial baptism was characterized by typical youthful idealism and considerable naiveté. I, like a missionary preaching to the proverbial "savage" in some distant jungle, fervently promoted the cause of fitness and amateur sport. Along the way, I somehow also obtained the necessary credentials to marginally qualify me as to the underlying theory of my newly chosen field. I found it necessary to continue to broaden my physical activity skills during the first 20 years on the job.

I must confess that my faith was occasionally challenged during those first 2 decades, but I believe that the record shows that I have continued to promote my adopted field down to the present day, with more than average professional zeal. But now, as one who will soon be 70 years of age and still teaching undergraduate sport and physical education philosophy and ethics part-time in my final year at The University of Western Ontario, I have reluctantly come to the point where I am forced to make a confession. I have lost a certain aspect of the faith—for our name, that is, *but not for the field*.

I now believe that there is an urgent need, whether we all truly appreciate it or are ready to accept it, for the field to find a new name, symbol, and image that explains fully the fact that we have both professional and disciplinary aspects to our mandate. To compound this matter, I can't get too enthusiastic about an esoteric disciplinary title like *human kinetics* or *kinesiology* at the college or university level, nor do I think that the term *physical and health education* is any longer satisfactory for the secondary level.

The Connecticut Experience I. The Bridgeport YMCA

What brought me to this point, where my faith is challenged in this one regard and where I am attempting to postulate what the future may hold for us? To

answer this question, I must first look backwards—a career revisited, so to speak—and then ahead to the future. My first post was as associate physical director and aquatic director at a large YMCA in Bridgeport, Connecticut. There I discovered that, even though the Y's program was much more physical than spiritual or mental (the old YMCA logo, with "the body" on the bottom of the triangle!), people working in the physical department had somewhat lesser prestige than people serving in other areas. Nevertheless, I soon found that working with children and young people in sport and physical activity was a most worthwhile, satisfying professional experience.

The Connecticut Experience: II. Yale University

Then, after administering, teaching, and coaching quite successfully for 2 years (1941–1943), I found an opportunity to teach regular physical education classes and to learn something about corrective or remedial physical education at Yale University. Somehow, to a degree because World War II was in progress, I also got to help coach football, wrestling, and swimming for the remainder of the 1940s. (I should add that, in the Ivy League, one comes to understand immediately the nonacademic image ascribed to both sport and physical education. However, involvement with competitive sport admittedly had its share of glamour for a young physical educator/coach in that milieu.)

Unfortunately for the field, but in the long run fortunately for me, Bob Kiphuth, the great swimming coach/physical educator, wasn't permitted to develop even an embryonic professional training program in physical education at Yale. So, 6 years later in 1949, with the equivalent of two and one half additional master's degrees completed and a doctoral thesis pretty well in hand, I received an offer at The University of Western Ontario in London, somewhere in the wilds of southwestern Ontario between Detroit and Buffalo. My ignorance of Canada was exceeded only by my desire to see a promise to become a department head fulfilled. In retrospect, little did I know about the perils and frustrations of a young middle manager!

The Canadian Experience: I. First Position at Western Ontario

When I first arrived at The University of Western Ontario in 1949, I immediately developed more of an academic feeling about our field. I was a very young department head at age 29, and we were permitted to offer what was called an honors degree in physical, health, and recreation education. Our program at that time was definitely professional preparation, preceded by a significantly more substantive liberal arts and science background (especially including what was then called Grade 13 in Ontario) than similar programs in the States were receiving. Despite any limitations inherited by the earlier stigma of PT (physical training), however, I felt that we and our subject matter were reasonably well received in Western's academic circle. However, I also maintained my identity with athletic coaching because I truly enjoyed the experience. Interestingly, colleagues from the university and the public at large always thought they knew

what we did in physical training and in the “extracurricular” athletic realm of higher education.

In 1956, 7 years older, somewhat wiser, and still far from being affluent (slightly above poverty level, actually), I resigned from Western and went to The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. My rationale—other than getting across the Ambassador Bridge before they caught up to me—was that I wanted to get involved with graduate work in our field. A master’s program was still 10 years away at Western, and this was also before the time of solid academic tenure there. Even though a landed immigrant, I began to recognize that my zealous drive to improve the status of physical and health education, as well as to speak out against some of the vicissitudes of intercollegiate athletics, was beginning to get me in hot water on the home front. I was discovering that Rome wasn’t built in a day and that the development I had hoped for at Western was going to take 2 days at least. So, eventually deciding that discretion was the better part of valor, I gratefully accepted the offer from the late measurement authority, Paul Hunsicker, and headed for the Ambassador Bridge and The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. (The ups and downs of the situation at Western in the 1950s is recounted in another text [Zeigler, 1982].)

The Ann Arbor, Michigan, Experience: “Go Blue!”

Ann Arbor houses a great university, and so for a while it was an exciting, exhilarating experience. At that time, the football team was far from doing as well as now, but we consoled ourselves by listening to the band, which was consistently outstanding. Also, although I wasn’t as smart as the image I sought to create, the opportunity to advise theses and dissertations at the master’s and doctoral levels was excellent. This represented a new stage in my development, and I recommend it heartily if a person believes in the idea of making himself or herself available to graduate students. However, I soon discovered that the typical undergraduate student in physical education in Canada did seem to be superior to his or her Stateside counterpart.

It didn’t take me long to understand and assess the seamier aspects of intercollegiate athletics in the States. I don’t mean to be overly critical of the University in Ann Arbor—the Big Ten went along with the scholarship system in the NCAA, and Michigan was as “honest and clean” as any functioning within that system—however, it was inescapable that corners had to be cut here and there in order to keep athletes eligible in that academic milieu.

The biggest drawback to the Michigan setup at that time was the fact that the Department of Physical Education was functioning *under* the control of intercollegiate athletics and *under* the aegis of the School of Education (where I became chairman of teacher education in physical education from 1961 to 1963). Professional education has typically been low man on the totem pole, so physical education in that environment was on the same plane as vocational arts and music education. It was almost impossible to get this thought out of my mind and just about equally difficult to effect positive change. (This situation has now been improved greatly under the leadership of D.W. Edington.)

The Illinois Experience: The Fighting Illini

So when Dean King McCristal presented me with the opportunity to move to the University of Illinois in 1963 with an increase in rank and a departmental headship in the offing, I felt like a person on the way to Mecca! Illinois had a fine reputation in the field, with a separate College of Physical Education that cooperated with but was definitely apart from the College of Education. Physical education was also separate from intercollegiate athletics—although as department head from 1964 to 1968, I did have 17 coaches on my departmental payroll with work loads ranging from 10%–75%. There were also separate departments related to physical education for women, health and safety education, and recreation and park administration, as well as outstanding nonacademic programs of physical recreation and intramural athletics (administered by our current NASSM president, David O. Matthews) and a fine program for persons with disabilities. Deans Seward Staley and King McCristal had elevated the College of Physical Education to a position of relative respectability.

Everything was moving along quite nicely, at least as I saw it as a new department head in a separate college in a great university. Then one day the roof fell in: The infamous Illinois Slush-Fund Scandal of the 1960s broke open, the first of a series of rules infractions there by the athletic association (Zeigler, 1985). I was stunned; our basketball and football coaches had been cheating on the established rules of the Big Ten and the NCAA. The university president, the board of trustees, and most of the local citizenry closed ranks and began to say that everyone was doing it, so why were they picking on the Fighting Illini? (This was the same message that we heard initially in Canada with Ben Johnson and the steroid scandal!)

As it turned out, other universities in various other conferences of the United States may have indeed been worse with their flagrant violations, but they hadn't yet been caught, and just because others may have been doing it didn't make the practice any better in Champaign-Urbana. When these infractions were disclosed, I discovered that our wishes or thoughts in the realm of physical education didn't amount to a hill of beans. I also discovered that the athletic association was paying one of my own academic counselors under the table to get athletes dropped from courses, legally or otherwise, when difficulties arose. Soon thereafter I discovered that I was literally on the way to an ulcer (a duodenal spasm was diagnosed), so I tendered my resignation as department head (life was too short for any more of that nonsense). My idea was to return to what Seward Staley had designated as the best job in a university—that of a full professor.

The Canadian Experiences: II. "On You Mustangs"

And so, friends and colleagues, I might still be at Illinois as a frustrated full professor of physical education because of continuing conference-rules violations, although the two units—physical education (or kinesiology, as it is now called) and highly competitive sport—were eventually separated completely. I say "frustrated" because I can't conceive of sport legitimately separated from physical

education in an ideal situation. Fortunately, an opportunity arose to return to Western Ontario in 1971, with the possible deanship of a new Faculty of Physical Education in the offing. As of May, 1972, at Western Ontario, there was to be an entirely different administrative and academic structure, including a new president and an old friend as vice president (academic). All facets of our program were to be under one roof—undergraduate physical education, graduate physical education, physical recreation and intramurals, and interuniversity athletics—in a presumably healthy academic situation for the quasi-disciplinary, quasi-professional programs.

So back to Canada I came—back to the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation and the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association; back to old, staid London (more of a cultural melting pot than it had been in the 1950s, however); back to solid, conservative Western University (its original name); and back to a new faculty (or college, as it is called in the U.S.). The new faculty had (a) a sound undergraduate, disciplinary-oriented program that had largely not forgotten its combined professional-disciplinary orientation; (b) a sound master's program with the potential to move to a doctoral program in the future; (c) a sound interuniversity program, including some 42 *amateur*, intercollegiate sports, divided equally for both men and women; and (d) a sound intramural and physical recreation program designed to meet the sport and exercise needs of any and all who wished to be involved. I have been here ever since, subsequently gaining Canadian citizenship as well. I now regard myself as a dual citizen of the United States and Canada.

What Should We Avoid in the Immediate Future?

Having come this far, I may have been able to pick up a few smarts along the way—just a few. Permit me now to give brief consideration to what to avoid along this path (adapted from Zeigler, 1977, pp. 58-59). First, there is evidence to suggest that we must maintain a certain flexibility in our philosophical approach. This will be difficult for individuals who have worked out definite, explicit philosophic stances for themselves. For those who are struggling along with “an implicit sense of life” (as defined by Rand, 1960), having philosophic flexibility may be even more difficult—they don’t fully understand where they are “coming from!” All of us know people for whom Toffler’s concepts of “future shock” and “third wave world” have become a reality, and life has indeed become stressful for them.

Second, I believe that we must avoid what might be called naive optimism or despairing pessimism. What we should assume, I believe, is a philosophic stance that may be called positive meliorism—a position that assumes that we should strive consciously to bring about a steady improvement in the quality of our lives. This second point is closely related to my recommendation for maintaining flexibility in our philosophical approach, of course. We can’t forget, however, how easy it is to fall into the seemingly attractive traps of blind pessimism or blind optimism.

Third, I believe the professional in sport and physical education should continue to strive for just the right amount of freedom in his or her life generally and in his or her professional affairs as well. This is especially difficult for those of us laboring in the area of management theory and practice. We typically function as so-called middle managers, and this means that we are "getting it" from both directions. Freedom for the individual is a fundamental characteristic of a democratic state, but it must never be forgotten that such freedom as may prevail today had to be won inch by inch. There are always those in our midst who know what is "best" for us and who seem anxious to take hard-won freedoms away. Of course, the concept of individual freedom cannot be stretched to include anarchy; however, the freedom to teach responsibly what we will in sport and physical education, or conversely the freedom to learn what we will, must be guarded almost fanatically.

A fourth pitfall to avoid is the development of undue influence from certain negative aspects inherent in the various social forces that affect everything within our culture (including, of course, sport and physical education). Consider the phenomenon of nationalism and how an overemphasis in this direction can soon destroy a desirable world posture or even bring about unconscionable isolationism. Another example of a negative social force that is not understood generally is the seeming clash between capitalistic economic theory and the environmental crisis that has developed. Bigger is not necessarily better in the final analysis.

Fifth, we must be careful that our field of sport and physical education management doesn't contribute to what has consistently been identified as a fundamental anti-intellectualism in the United States. On the other hand, intelligence or intellectualism for its own sake is far from being the answer to our problems. As long ago as 1961, Brubacher asked for the "golden mean" between the cultivation of the intellect and the cultivation of a high degree of intelligence because it is needed as "an instrument of survival" in the Deweyan sense (pp. 7-9).

Sixth, and finally, despite the cry to return to essentials—and I am not for a moment suggesting that Johnny or Mary shouldn't know how to read and calculate mathematically—we should avoid imposing a narrow academic approach on students in a misguided effort to promote the pursuit of excellence. I am continually amazed and discouraged by decisions concerning admission to undergraduate sport and physical education programs made solely on the basis of numerical grades, a narrowly defined academic proficiency. Don't throw out academic testing, of course, but by all means broaden the evaluation by assessing other dimensions of excellence. Here, in addition to ability in motor performance, I include such aspects as "sensitivity and commitment to social responsibility, ability to adapt to new situations, characteristics of temperament and work habit under varying conditions of demand," as recommended as long ago as 1970 by the Commission on Tests of the College Entrance Examination Board ("Report," 1970).

What We Should Do— The Professional Task Ahead

What, then, is the professional task ahead? We should be prospective enough to recognize that our world may be very different tomorrow. The push is on to call sport and physical education either kinesiology or exercise and sport science, and the question is, I presume, do we want to employ Greek or English? These are seemingly the two leading appellations (of approximately 117 names now in use) being recommended for both the disciplinary core of our field and the department, division, school, or college in which it is housed (Razor, 1989).

How are we in the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) going to answer two burning questions now confronting us? By this, first, I am referring to the fact that a number of people are recommending that we in sport management abandon the relatively traditional disciplinary core that has developed over the past 35 years in the field. They argue that the extra time could be well spent on further liberal arts and science training and some basic business administration courses. The NASSM needs to appoint a commission to look into this and report to our executive and general assembly in the near future. We can't afford to hang back on this question; it is crucial to our future. Second, we should have another group working on the development of a computerized assessment of the evolving theory and principles underlying sport and physical activity management. We need to identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to perform the duties of sport management effectively, efficiently, and ethically (Zeigler & Bowie, 1983).

Finally, then, as to what we *should* do, we should first truly understand why we have chosen this profession, why we have specialized in sport and physical education management, as we rededicate ourselves anew to the study and dissemination of knowledge, competencies, and skills in human motor performance in sport, exercise, and related expressive movement.

Second, as either management practitioners or as professors involved in the professional preparation of sport and physical education managers, we should search for young people with all the attributes needed for success in our field. We should help them develop lifelong commitments so that our profession can achieve its democratically agreed-upon goals. Our area of specialization has been the growth curriculum of the 1980s, and there is every reason to believe that this trend will continue into the 1990s.

Third, we must place quality as the first priority of our professional endeavors. Our personal involvement and specialization should include a high level of competence and skill undergirded by solid knowledge about the profession. It can certainly be argued that our professional task is as important as any in society. Thus, the present is no time for indecision, half-hearted commitment, imprecise knowledge, and general unwillingness to stand up and be counted in debates with our colleagues, not to mention the general public.

Fourth, the obligation is ours. If we hope to reach our potential, we must sharpen our focus and improve the quality of our professional effort. Only in this

way will we be able to guide the modification process that the profession is currently undergoing toward the achievement of our highest professional goals. This is the time—right now—to employ sport, exercise, dance, and play to make our reality more healthful, more pleasant, more vital, and more life-enriching. By living fully in one's body, behavioral-science men and women will be adapting and shaping that phase of reality to their own ends.

Finally, such improvement will not come easily; it can only come through the efforts of professional people making quality decisions, through the motivation of people to change their sedentary life-styles, and through our professional assistance in guiding people as they strive to fulfill such motivation in their movement patterns. When Blacks speak about the concept of soul, they mean placing a special quality into some aspect of life (e.g., soul music). Our mission is to place this special quality in all of our professional endeavors.

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Acknowledgment

This paper was the 1989 Earle F. Zeigler Lecture, presented to the conference of the North American Society for Sport Management, June 3, 1989, Calgary, Alberta.