

Sports

'Big Brother' is watching

Texas A&M Associate Athletic Director Wally Groff was named interim Athletic Director Friday replacing ousted Marvin Tate until a search committee fills the vacancy.

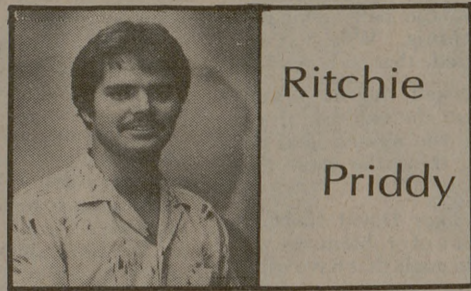
Tate was "asked" to resign two weeks ago for no apparent reason — at least none was given — by several members of the Texas A&M Board of Regents and other prominent alumni.

One rumor had it that the Athletic Department lacked direction under Tate. Others suggest the members of the Board behind the move just didn't like him. Still others hint to the possibility of some major changes coming in the department and Tate's dismissal was only one of many. You can draw your own conclusion there.

Rumors and speculation abound in the department but no one is willing to talk, at least not on the record, and understandably so. Everybody has his opinion and occasionally some opinions surface, but the constant fear of the wrong person overhearing what is said is enough to keep anyone quiet, or so it seems. Sort of like a Big Brother syndrome — you know, like the one in George Orwell's book "1984." You remember Big Brother, he's the one that watched your every move and heard your every thought and controlled your future. Is it too far-fetched to be possible? I'm beginning to wonder.

The Texas A&M Athletic Department has long been recognized as one with a lot of pressure and mysterious disappearances. One needs only to go back to 1978 with the circumstances surrounding Emory Bellard's sudden departure to see that that is true.

The people applying the pressure to the coaches and athletic director are mysterious people indeed. They, and I speak of only a few, have the power and money to do what they want to do, despite any objections or opposition. At times it seems as if the University



Ritchie Priddy

(especially the athletic department) is their personal toy, and they can do whatever it takes to mold the "perfect" athletic department. Boy, have I got some news for them.

As I mentioned previously (Batt column of Sept. 25) people who have no connection with the athletic department but who try to dictate policy to those who do have no business being even remotely involved in decisions they know nothing about. That's just not the way a successful program is run.

It's not only detrimental to the football team, and believe me that is what makes the department run, but to the entire department and every sport involved as well.

How, you ask? Several reasons. First of all, with a change in command (athletic director) every coach's job is up in the air. That is especially true with football coaches. However, a coach's job is always up in the air, not just when a new man takes over.

If, for some reason, the new man doesn't like the way a coach is handling things, he can be disposed of. Every man has different ideas of success.

Another reason outside decisions have an adverse effect on the entire department is because those decisions are not always the best ones or always timely. A prime example of timeliness is Tate's case. Unless, of course, those involved were just warming up and wanted to let people know "Big Brother" is still watching.

Tate, if you remember, submitted his resignation Thursday (Sept. 24), just two days before the first home football game. Somebody was trying to tell somebody something. Try and figure that one out.

One thing is for sure, the people behind Tate's removal wasted no time in talking to prospective replacements.

Hindman Wall, Tulane Athletic Director, has been mentioned as Tate's possible replacement. Other names pop up from time to time but it's Wall who is mentioned more frequently.

You can almost bet that whoever takes the job won't be from Texas A&M — it's hard for Aggies fire Aggies.

A source close to the Athletic Department said Wall was approached as early as two weeks prior to Tate's resignation and asked if he was interested in the job.

Wall acknowledged that he had been approached by many schools, but declined to name any. He said that he is happy at Tulane and had no plans of leaving.

"I am happy at Tulane and I have no intention of leaving as long as they want me here," Wall said.

However, rumors continue and a few suggest he just may be heading our direction.

Meanwhile, Groff, who has been with the Texas A&M Athletic Department since 1966, will assume his position as interim athletic director Nov. 1 when Tate's resignation takes effect.

Ashby's blow lifts Astros over Dodgers in Game 1

United Press International
HOUSTON — There was an almost instant feeling in the Astrodome Tuesday night that both teams might as well not bother with the National League West's divisional play-offs any more.

After all how are they going to top the first game?

However it was quickly remembered that that was what everybody said last year when post-season baseball made its debut in Houston. And sure enough each game in the Houston-Philadelphia NL Championship series brought ever increasing drama.

So for now just let it be said that the 3-1 Houston victory over Los Angeles set the standard — at least until noon today when the two teams meet in Game 2 of the best-of-five confrontation.

No matter what happens from now on through Game 2 will be remembered as a dandy — one that featured what was probably the pitching matchup of the year and one that finished with that most classic of endings — a two-out homer in the bottom of the ninth.

"It was the biggest moment of my career," exclaimed Alan Ashby. "It was like a dream come true."

Ashby was the one who brought an end to the evening,

slamming the first pitch from reliever Dave Stewart down the right field line and into the seats for a two-run homer.

But the night also belonged to Nolan Ryan and Fernando Valenzuela, the blazing right-hander and the cagey young left-hander who were supposed to engage in a pitcher's duel and who disappeared absolutely no one.

For eight innings they battled — Ryan looking just as sharp as he had 11 days earlier when he had recorded the fifth no-hitter of his career against the Dodgers and Valenzuela working his way out of occasional difficulties despite a throng of 44,836 yelling for his scalp.

Ryan gave up only two hits, Los Angeles has only four hits in its last 27 innings in the Astrodome, walked but one and struck out seven. Valenzuela,

who set a NL record for shutouts by a rookie with eight, scattered six hits walked two and struck out six. Each gave up a run.

The Astros worked Valenzuela for a cheap tally in the sixth when Tony Scott's two-out bloop single to right-center scored Terry Puhl. In the Dodgers' seventh Steve Garvey lashed one to center field that struck the wall just above the orange line for a home run.

"When they scored that run it was a letdown for our team" said Ashby, who felt the pitch Garvey hit was the only mistake Ryan made all night.

"It is awful tough to score runs against Fernando. I really mean that. It is tough to get a good swing and hit the ball hard against him."

"We just had to try to get a lead off man on and try to move him around and get a run somehow

and rely on Nolan to keep doing the job."

But in the top of the ninth Valenzuela was lifted for a pinch hitter and when the Dodgers could not manufacture a run in that inning the Astros found themselves facing Stewart.

He struck out Cesar Cedeno and Art Howe flew to center but pinch hitter Craig Reynolds batting for Kiko Garcia singled sharply to right.

That brought on Ashby who promptly hit his fifth homer of the year.

"I'm not a big home run hitter" said Ashby stating the obvious. "But as soon as I looked up and saw the ball in flight I knew it was a home run. I was jumping for joy even before the fans realized it. It was a Walter Mitty dream."

TANK McNAMARA



by Jeff Millar & Bill Hilt



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