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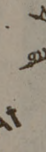
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Sports legacy

'Father of A&M intramural sports' recalls life in Aggieland

By SCOTT SUTHERLAND
Staff Writer

Each semester thousands of Aggies chase grounders, catch passes and flick flickerballs across the field that bears his name. And for Walter "Penny" Penberthy there couldn't be a more fitting tribute.

"They call me the father of intramural sports at A&M," Penberthy says, "but there was nothing to it. The student body was eager. It seemed like any sport we came up with, everybody wanted to play it."

But a man doesn't earn a piece of Aggie real estate overnight.

Penberthy began his career at Texas A&M in 1920 after graduating from Ohio State University. He was hired as an assistant in the physical education department and since the director of Intramural Sports had just quit, Penberthy says he got that job also. His boss and mentor was Aggie coaching great Dana X. Bible.

"I told him I would come to work here for \$2,500 a year," he says. "Bible told me he'd give me \$2,600 a year and nothing less."

And with that, Penberthy left his native Elyria, Ohio for A&M.

Penberthy says he had the greatest respect for Bible. It was Bible, Penberthy says, who gave him the well-known nickname of "Penny."

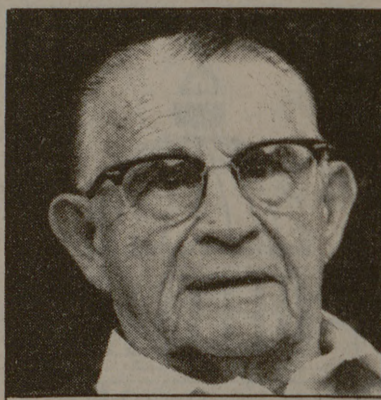
"The man had all the dignity and reserve of any man I ever knew," he says. "He could have been the University president just as well as football coach. But he loved the game, he loved the kids."

When Penberthy arrived in town, a depot sign said there were 2,000 students enrolled at A&M and 8,000 Bryan residents.

A little farther down those very same tracks, in Navasota, during the summer of 1933, he married Lollie Beth Garvin. He and his wife have lived in their present home for 45 years.

"Really, this house is one of the greatest things we ever did," Penberthy says. "We built it in 1940 after A&M asked the faculty to move off the campus. Our old house on campus used to be right on the spot where the walkway between the MSC and Rudder Tower is today."

Penberthy did see action on the college football field. Not as a coach, but as an official. Penberthy says he



Walter Penberthy

was an official at the 1944 Cotton Bowl, which featured Texas Christian University and Oklahoma A&M College, now Oklahoma State University.

"In those days the coaches used to come in before the game and tell you if they were going to try any trick plays," he says. "They didn't want you to foul up the play by throwing a flag if you didn't see what happened."

Penberthy was appointed dean of men in 1947, a position that allowed him to serve as a member of the Athletic Council between 1952 and 1954.

It was in 1954 that A&M went shopping for a new coach and young Paul Bryant was the man the college had its eye on.

But Penberthy, then the chairman of the Athletic Council, says that he and the rest of the council didn't like Bryant. They wanted to hire L.W. Sykes, a former Aggie football player, as the new head coach.

"Bryant represented big-time football, which had a bad reputation, and we weren't ready for that," Penberthy says.

But the A&M Board of Regents was sold on Bryant, he says. Upon hearing that the Athletic Council would vote to hire Sykes, the board hired Bryant.

"I learned to respect Bear Bryant before he left," he says. "He was the greatest motivator I have ever seen. He had a unique way of getting from kids 100 percent effort, 100 percent of the time. He loved to win, and he got the job done, whatever it took."

Because of Bryant's reputation

for physical fitness and preparation in his football players, Penberthy was preparing his kids for a great challenge before Bryant even got to A&M.

Penberthy says he was sent by a member of the Board of Regents to study the training facilities at Strategic Air Command in San Antonio.

"The idea was for me to gain a little knowledge as to how we might get our kids in shape before we sent them off to war," he says.

Penberthy developed a plan comprised of four hours a week of extensive conditioning.

"We'd go for 30 minutes doing hard calisthenics without stopping," he says. "I'd have a leader at the front and while everyone was watching him, he would change to a different exercise. When I blew the whistle, everyone would start doing what he was doing. That way we wouldn't have to stop."

After the calisthenics, Penberthy says, the students were allowed to play basketball, football or jog for the remainder of the period. He says the conditioning may have worked a little too well.

"We took almost our whole junior class down to San Antonio to be inducted into the Army," he says. "And this Army sergeant sees our guys standing around waiting, and he gets this idea that he'll show them what the Army is like. Well, he hikes them out about two miles from where they were and tells them he's going to make them run back."

"A little while later our kids came running back in, and we didn't notice the sergeant with them. They had run off and left him, just flatly outran him."

Penberthy resigned his position as dean of men in 1954 and then served as adviser to the Student Senate. As adviser, Penberthy worked closely with students again.

"But it made me realize how much I missed being with the students," he says. "They're what always mattered most to me, the kids."

In 1959, Penberthy returned to teaching. He gave up all other commitments at the University and began teaching volleyball and handball.

"Volleyball, I always loved," he says. "I'd like to think I was responsible for getting volleyball started at A&M."

Also in 1959, Penberthy was awarded a distinguished Battalion award. The inscription on the award cites his ability to do his job exceptionally well.

Penberthy says that in 1978 the second greatest event in his life occurred. The Walter Penberthy Intramural Complex across from Kyle Field was dedicated on Oct. 24, 1978, only 12 years after he retired.

But more than the intramural fields bear Penberthy's name.

The Walter Penberthy Softball Classic is held every spring and there is a Camp Penberthy at Fish Camp.

Since his retirement Penberthy and his wife have traveled in Europe, Scandinavia and the Orient. And they get invited to a lot of reunions.

"I always amaze everyone because I can remember their name," he says. "My old students try to test me by putting their hands over their name tags and see if I can guess their names. I even amaze myself sometimes because I haven't seen some of them in 30 years."

Today Penberthy, 84, stays active in community service and fund-raising events in College Station. But he says one of his favorite pastimes is spending time with old students and friends.

The second week of every month Penberthy meets with the "Old Goats." He says the group is comprised of old Aggies who get together at the Ramada Inn and talk about old times.

But Penberthy says he never been stuck in the past. He says he believes the University has never been greater and that it's obvious what brought A&M to world class status.

"G-I-R-L-S, that's what changed this University," he says. "I think it's wonderful. But the guys didn't like it too much. But I'll bet you couldn't find one now who would go back to the old way."

Penberthy was honored in "The History of the Great Class of 1934," a biography of that class' senior year, as one of the eight great characters of 1934. The short story that follows recognizes Penberthy as a leader and faculty friend.

But the first four words of the tribute said it all for the Class of '34. "Who can forget Penny?"

Judge orders disclosure of Gramm's records

Associated Press

DALLAS — Texas Sen. Phil Gramm's campaign must provide financial records that the Federal Election Commission wants for a complete audit, a federal judge said Thursday.

U.S. District Judge Robert W. Porter ruled that the Friends of Phil Gramm, the Republican senator's campaign group, must submit most of the documents sought in a FEC subpoena.

Court documents show that FEC staff members have criticized Gramm's campaign for, among other things, apparently accepting donations above the \$1,000 limit set

by campaign finance laws for individual contributors and for failing to itemize some campaign debts.

In June Friends of Phil Gramm had filed a lawsuit seeking to block the FEC request for an audit.

Porter made his decision after attorneys for Gramm's campaign and the FEC spent more than an hour Thursday pouring over the subpoena's specifics.

The judge had recessed the hearing Thursday morning after telling attorneys from both sides to straighten out their differences between themselves instead of in federal court.

Prior to the recess, FEC auditor Joseph Stoltz testified that the re-

ports were needed to get an accurate picture of the freshman senator's campaign finances.

Porter had already ruled that the FEC has a right to audit Gramm's records. He said the subpoena will be enforced subject to the terms of the agreement reached during the recess.

"We got what the subpoena sought," FEC attorney Ivan Rivera said. He said he made some concessions because the subpoena requested records that never existed. He said an order outlining the agreement will be written and signed by the judge.

Gramm's campaign attorney James F. Schoener said the sub-

poena requesting records for the audit is harassment. But after the hearing, he said he was pleased with the agreement.

Gramm's campaign will not have to submit minutes of meetings relating to the campaign committee's reporting responsibilities under the Federal Election Campaign Act.

It also won't have to provide documents and materials relating to loan records because they don't exist.

The committee will have to submit financial records dating back to Feb. 12, 1983, including all amendments filed or anticipated to be filed to the financial reports. Documents relating to contribution records also will have to be turned over to the FEC.

“ But, soft! what buffalo wing through yonder window breaks? ”

William Shakespeare, 1596

Let them eat buffalo wings.

Marie Antoinette, 1770

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Karl Marx, 1844

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J.T. McCord, 1985

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