

NCAA's Prop 42 stresses academics

Proposition 42, recently approved by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, requires high school students to receive an average of 70 in basic high school courses in order to receive athletic scholarships to Division I colleges. It also requires prospective Division I athletes to score a minimum of 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test or a minimum of 15 on the American College Test.

Before Proposition 42 was approved by the NCAA, students not meeting these requirements lost one year of eligibility but were still allowed to attend college under athletic scholarships.

Proposition 42 is a message from the NCAA. It is a message that says there must be some sort of academic standards for college athletes and that these standards must be upheld — even if doing so keeps talented athletes out of college. The NCAA has created controversy by passing this proposition, but they have done what is right.

Some critics of Proposition 42 say it will deny a college education to students whose only way of getting to college is through athletic scholarships — perhaps it will.

But it also will send a message to high school students: Get your act together, make good grades and start taking academics seriously if you want to participate in collegiate athletics.

And this is precisely the message high school students need to hear. They need to be told that being a good athlete is not enough. They need to be told that school is more than just football, basketball or baseball. They need to be told that academics should be more important than athletics.

Proposition 42 is reasonable. It simply requires student athletes to meet minimum academic standards before they participate in college athletics. When one considers that many universities require non-athletes to be in the top half of their high school classes and to score in the 1000's on SAT tests to be admitted, Proposition 42 seems fair indeed.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

Proud to be black

EDITOR:

An article concerning interracial fraternities, which appeared in *The Battalion* on Jan. 30, quoted me as saying that "I did not want to be just another black person."

That was not what I meant. What I meant was that I did not want to be stereotyped as just another black person.

I am proud that I am black and I want that to be known.

Reggie Parks

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Morton Downey Jr. offers intelligent entertainment

The Morton Downey Jr. Show is the best program currently on television. The power and excitement of the show are unequalled on any of the "quieter" talk shows.

Many of you are probably saying to yourself "This guy's a lunatic." But please don't talk about Mort that way.

Background

Morton Downey, a man of Irish descent, reads 17 newspapers and magazines every day and three books every week.

What surprises me most about Mort is that he is one of the most non-racist people I have ever seen on a television talk show. As evidenced on some of his shows, he can not tolerate discrimination in any form, even reverse discrimination.

That's a good example of one thing that makes Mort a cut above the rest — he thinks about things logically. He looks at many sides of a given argument and decides which one is most logical within his frame of mind, free from many of the biases that society puts on us. This is obvious if one reads his book, "Mort! Mort! Mort!"

The show

The show itself makes use of a number of speakers on certain topics. Words are rarely minced — the guests say exactly what they want to say. One staple of the show is seeing Mort, the guests, and the audience all screaming at each other. Morton always wins.

He's not kind to some of his guests, and in fact he occasionally throws one off the set, but never without good reason.

Some people say that they don't like the Morton Downey Jr. Show because of all the yelling and screaming. Yet when tensions are high and reflexes mean everything, people say what their mind really wants them to say, not a previously prepared message that projects them in the best light. The yelling and dramatics involved also help keep viewers interested. But the majority of the program is good intellectual banter.

Sure, he has people on the show that



Timm Doolen
Columnist

hold extreme views, views that one might say are "out in left (or right) field."

But by providing discussion of extreme views (sometimes caricatures) on certain issues, we reassess our own views and see that ours are not necessarily as popular as we thought. Sometimes our own ideas border on the extreme.

By providing a diversity of opinion at an extreme level, he effectively polarizes the show. At any one point, two or more people will be ready to break into a fight. Obviously they feel strongly about their beliefs or they wouldn't have taken the risk of going up against Mort.

Some say the show is all hype, with no real substance involved. Yet if you watch some of the shows, you'll find it is more than just sthick, there are some serious questions raised and serious answers proposed on a variety of topics.

Not like most other shows

Some criticize Morton Downey for being overly biased one way or another about the issues discussed on his program. Sure he's biased, and he readily shows it.

Unlike other talk shows, he doesn't fool you into believing that his commentary on a topic is objective. He tells you exactly what he thinks about a subject.

Have you ever been watching a normal talk show, and after listening to some jerk spill out total nonsense for five minutes wish you could tell him to shut up? Morton Downey has felt this feeling and he puts it into words. He's told almost everyone on his show to "zip it!"

Once to an angry woman he said, "Shut up, you old hag!" And to a Libertarian candidate he yelled, "If I had a

slime like you in the White House, I'd puke on you." And that's when he says "zip it."

You don't hear that kind of language on one of the "wimp" shows. You never hear Donahue insult any of his guests, or call them "pablum-pukes" or "liberals." Downey, speaking about his own show, once said: "Donahue is a wimp. He tries to intellectualize everything. Well, there's no room for intellectualizing every issue." Mort has never been accused of over-intellectualizing anything.

Morton Downey can teach us all a bit. He appeals to our animal nature to deride those with whom we disagree. He teaches us that heightening one's anger brings out one's true feelings. He can teach us how to really yell at someone when we're losing an argument.

Give Mort a chance

Even if we don't agree that the Morton Downey Show is a useful forum for political and social thought, we must admit that it is entertaining. It's fun to see him make a fool of somebody on national television. That's one reason the show has become the most popular syndicated late-night program in a decade.

Go ahead and criticize Mort for being rude and obnoxious — he'll be the first to admit it. As he says in his commercials, "I'll insult everything except intelligence."

But please don't condemn Morton Downey for being given a fair chance — many people have unduly criticized him without even watching a whole show.

Try watching him. But please watch more than one show, and watch the show from the beginning, or the audience later on might seem unfounded. In honesty, the first time I watched him was repulsed by his actions and words. But after watching a week of shows, I realized that Morton Downey was a sensible man who entertains a variety of opinions — something that many of his critics are unwilling to do with respect.

Timm Doolen is a sophomore computer science major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Old wrestlers just don't know when to shut up

Lewis Grizzard
Columnist

Freddie Blassie was on a television talk show I was half watching the other day.

I hadn't thought of Freddie Blassie in years. I would have guessed he was dead by now, either by natural causes or at the hand of a wrestling fan.

I'm a couple of paragraphs into this thing and I haven't identified Freddie Blassie yet.

The first time I saw Freddie Blassie was on a live wrestling match on television. It had to be in the mid-'50s. Freddie and other "rasslers" were in black and white, I remember that.

Freddie Blassie was one of wrestling's pioneer bad guys. He had a thick head of blond hair, and he strutted around the ring and he was a cheat, a braggart and a bully.

He was a tough guy, that Freddie. He struck terror into the hearts of other wrestlers. Freddie was so tough that when he was just seven years old he beat

up his father (who weighed 220 pounds) just because he suspended his allowance for one week. Yes, even as a child Freddie was one tough cookie.

But he was even tougher in the ring. He did awful things to Tarzan White and Ray Gunkell, two of my ring heroes.

My grandmother, the only person who thought the moon shot was a fake and professional wrestling real, absolutely hated Freddie Blassie — which is an indication of just what a cad the man was.

My grandmother always could find something nice to say about everybody, even Cooter Brown, the town drunk.

"Cooter Brown's back in jail for drinking and fighting and cussing and non-support of his wife and children and for spitting on the sheriff," I reported to my grandmother one day.

"Wull," she replied, "nobody's perfect."

If my grandmother had known any curse words — and I'm convinced she didn't — she would have used them on Freddie Blassie.

"Look at him!" she'd shout, finger

pointed at the television screen as Freddie rubbed salt in Argentina Rocca's eyes.

"Why don't the referee do something about that . . . that . . ."

"Scoundrel," I suggested to my grandmother.

"Scoundrel," she would add to her tirade.

Freddie Blassie called everybody he didn't like a "pencil-neck geek."

I've heard that phrase used since but

I think it was Freddie Blassie who used it first.

He didn't like Southerners. He called us pencil-neck geeks and suggested we were ignorant and unwashed.

"God's going to get you for saying that," my grandmother admonished the television set one afternoon as Freddie was into his act, throwing chairs and insults.

Freddie's in his 70s now, and he still has a full head of hair. He looked fit enough to climb into the ring with some

of today's pretenders (who could carry Freddie's tights when it comes to putting on a hell of a show).

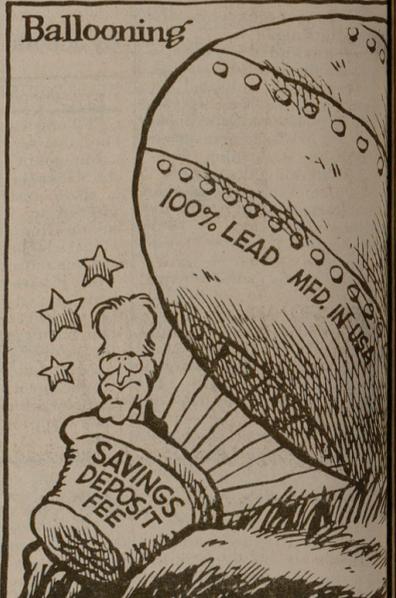
Freddie's an official with one of the professional wrestling organizations now, and before he departed the show he threw a couple of chairs at called Regis Philbin a pencil-neck geek.

My grandmother would have taken up for Regis Philbin if she had seen a show.

That's how much she despised Freddie Blassie.

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