

# Scoring an education

## Athletes should focus on earning education before going professional

Over the past several months Texas A&M students have been concerned about Reggie Brown.

As some might recall, the former Aggie football standout and Detroit Lions line-backer sustained a career-ending neck injury this past season.

The fear of paralysis ran rampant until the oft-referred-to press conference where he abandoned wheelchair and let the world know he was going to be just fine.

Now Reggie is back in College Station and looking to help out Ags in the weight room and help himself out in the classroom. That's right, he's come back to do a little healin' and finish his degree in economics.

Although all reports indicate that he will be able to continue to earn a living via a disability insurance policy, he undoubtedly learned that there are no guarantees in life and nothing can take the place of a quality education.

Brown should serve as an example to all students that the very premise stated above is true. There are no guarantees in life and it's always better to be prepared.

As one makes his or her way across campus during the summer it is difficult to miss the hundreds of provisional freshmen, affectionately referred to as "popcorn," trying to earn their way into our beloved institution.

How many of these freshmen will leave A&M before their tenure is over in search of greener grass?

Let's face it — unless a student a hotshot line-backer that is going to get drafted, paid several million dollars and then set up with an investment counselor to recommend solid financial measures, like purchasing disability insurance, there is no upside to leaving school without a degree.

The Texas A&M Department of Athletics does not have the highest graduation rate in the country, nor is it as high as the administration would like for

it to be. This set of circumstances is generally brought about by the "pro-factor."

The NFL, NBA and MLB continue to reinforce the ideal that education is not as important as talent is to the respective leagues. They continually dip into the college and sometimes high-school talent pool through their annual drafts.

Their silver-tongued scouts do not spend much time talking about spinal injuries, knee surgery or my personal favorite — "wild-pitch-detached-retina-affliction." Often, the players' agents do not take the time to properly explain the dangers of leaving school and the lifelong repercussions that could result.

Sometimes, the agents do the right thing and suggest athletes wait a year or so before entering professional sports. Sometimes, they simply make all the right moves and it all works out OK in the end anyway.

Hence, the Reggie Brown situation.

In the case of athletes, the gamble lies in several factors: talent, representation, projected longevity, etc. Yet, in the case of regular students lacking athletic star quality, there really is no reason to leave school without a degree.

How many students who are not star quality athletes have the luxury of fouling up in life and then personally financing a return to school full time?

The fact is, most people who leave school will never return, and those who do take forever to graduate.

The bottom line is that it's much easier to get the degree while still in school. Even if the agents will not leave an athlete alone, even if an athlete has the goods to be a true player, he or she should wait a year or so until he or she can do the job the right way.

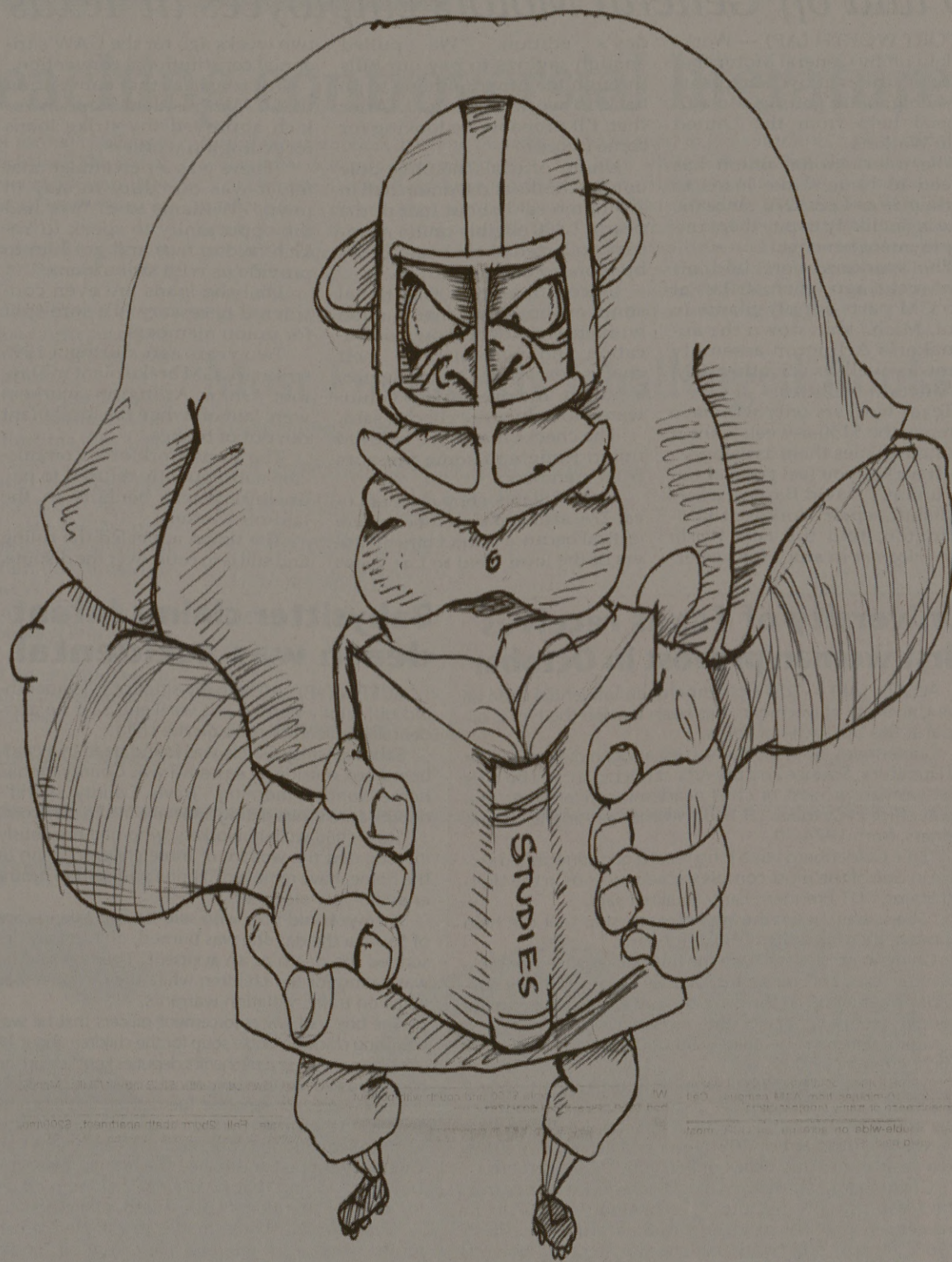
Life does not offer any guarantees and it very seldom offers second chances — make the most of it while you can.

By the way — welcome back, Reggie.



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GRAPHIC BY BRAD GRAEBER / THE BATTALION

## Violent crime victims deserve protection of U.S. Constitution

On Tuesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee made an all-important first step to protect victims of violent crime in the United States.

The Associated Press reports that after several hours of debate, the panel gave the green light for a constitutional crime victim amendment. The 10-6 approval makes way for the proposal to go to the Senate floor. A similar proposal is awaiting discussion in the House.

The amendment would make a long-needed attempt to protect citizens victimized by violent criminals. The rights, although seemingly basic and one would think understood, are often ignored or overlooked by states in their attempts to prosecute defendants.

If passed, the amendment would guarantee violent-crime victims the constitutional right to be notified and be present at all public proceedings associated with the crimes. They also would be guaranteed the right to make statements to the court regarding the crimes.

Perhaps most importantly, victims would be notified of their assailant's release or escape from custody, and judges would be required to consider victims' safety before releasing a defendant.

Victims of violent crimes also would be awarded the right to restitution from a convicted offender. They also would have the constitutional right to be notified of all the aforementioned rights.

This move is an enormous early victory for crime victims and American justice as a whole. This country was founded to ensure that its citizens would be awarded life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This amendment would make a strong statement that the nation's political leaders are making every attempt to carry this important theme into the twenty-first century.

The passage of an amendment such as this makes the bold statement that Congress is taking its job seriously; that it truly wants to serve and protect its constituency.



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The implementation would require a two-thirds approval in the House and Senate, as well as ratification by three-fourths of the states.

And, like anything in Washington, the amendment proposal is not without its opponents.

Many feel that protecting victims' rights does not require such a formal step, that creating an amendment is an unnecessary hassle. They believe that the job of enforcement and protecting of such rights should be left up to the states or some sort of federal legislation.

Sen. Fred Thompson, for instance, told the Associated Press such an amendment would create many problems.

"It is going to be very, very disruptive in ways (that) there is no way we can possibly determine," Thompson said. "We are opening up a Pandora's box."

The AP report said Thompson believed the amendment might "make it more difficult to properly prosecute defendants."

Although these concerns are legitimate, the amendment still should happen. Law-abiding American citizens deserve basic rights of protection.

As Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a proponent of the amendment, said in the AP report, "The Constitution outlines more than a dozen specific rights for defendants and none for their victims."

Certainly victims deserve at least the same protection under the law as defendants.

The Clinton administration supports granting new rights to victims of violent crimes. Congress, too, finally should do the same. Victims deserve to be protected by the government that serves them. If defendants' rights are important enough to merit constitutional amendments, so should the rights of victims of violent crimes.

Besides, these rights are not outlandish, unreasonable requests, but instead, are simple demands of people who already have had their rights intruded upon. Congress now has the chance to, in a small but important way, amend these intrusions. They should wake up and take it.

Mandy Cater is a graduate student in English.

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## MAIL CALL Comet's impact aided existence

In response to Marium Mohiuddin's July 2, "The end is near" article: The article by Marium Mohiuddin seems to present a few facts and a few theories explaining the consequences of a comet's impact with earth.

Certainly, if a body large enough hit earth, things would pretty much be ruined for life on earth as we know it. Mohiuddin did a good job of conveying that sentiment. I also must congratulate her on her choice of sources to include voices that speak of evolution. Evolution is good science.

However, Mohiuddin does get a few points wrong. The dinosaurs became extinct over 63 million years ago, not 4 million as she writes, and modern humans did not evolve until about 125,000 to 200,000 years ago.

Impacts made it possible for mammals to inherit the Earth from the dinosaurs. It is, however, true that the first proto-humans emerged from the line that now includes the great apes about 4.6 million years ago.

Current anthropological theory has it that a comet's impact may have altered the Earth's climate in such a way as to favor the evolution of upright-walking hominids in Africa over 2 million years ago.

No impact, no human evolution, so an impact favored our species.

The asteroid that hit near Flagstaff exploded perhaps 50,000 years ago in an area not then inhabited, but caused lots of damage, regardless.

There is evidence that a comet hit Scandinavia during the time of St. Patrick in the 5th Century, and this event may have favored the fall of the Roman Empire.

Mohiuddin's point is well put; however, impacts with Earth have rocked the very foundations of life.

In evolutionary thought, this is an important factor. "Catastrophism," as is it called, wipes the slate clean of most lifeforms and sets the stage for new bouts of evolution.

However one chooses to attribute the impacts, the course of life on Earth over the billions of years owes much to this process.

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