

LEGENDS FROM THE LOCKER ROOM

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HERB APPENZELLER

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DEDICATION

It is almost impossible to dedicate a book in a few sentences to someone who made the book possible. Ann Terrill Appenzeller saved my life on four occasions and then made my life worth living. She encouraged me to write *Love (Legends) in the Locker Room* when she believed the stories needed to be told. Whenever I started to give up she refused to let me get discouraged, and her inspiration and caring nature helped me achieve the goal of completing the book. She set the bar high and through her I have completed the book.

HTA

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Upon the completion of each of my books, I have been careful to recognize those who have helped me in the process. I am always thankful for Carolina Academic Press and owners Keith and Linda Sipe, who both developed the sport management series in my name and became close friends. And to my wife, Ann, who is my promoter, supporter, encourager, pusher and soul mate.

But this time I must also recognize the person who has done the most to help me in every way to get *Legends from the Locker Room* ready for publication — Daniel Southard.

Ann calls him our godsend. We were both struggling with the completion of this book, primarily due to health issues. We felt that it would be useful to have someone who could help us with researching, writing and typing the manuscript. In addition, we needed someone who could help me with my diabetes and give Ann relief when needed.

One morning Ann saw an ad in our neighborhood online newspaper for a young man who was interested in working with a person who had health care needs. He had a college degree, having majored in English at Appalachian State University. In addition, he had experience in the medical and healthcare fields. Ann ran to the office and said, “Here is someone who could be a godsend for us!” Once she shared the information, including the fact that he was the son of Mike Southard, who is our webmaster, we called him for an interview.

I think we overwhelmed Daniel at first — me talking about the need to finish the book and Ann asking about his ability to work with a diabetic, who by that time had had two leg amputations. The kicker was that Daniel had absolutely no knowledge or interest in sport! Fortunately, we hired him and began a happy, satisfying relationship.

HTA

Addendum by Ann:

In the fall of 2017 I had emergency surgery, resulting in a 30-day hospital stay. During that time I had to find 24/7 assistance for Herb, in addition to Daniel. However, Daniel was the key — sharing his knowledge and experience with the home health caretakers—and he was always on call to help, as he lived only one neighborhood away!

Unfortunately, soon after returning from the hospital, I fell and broke my shoulder, wrist and hand, and once again Daniel was a godsend in working with Herb on the book.

Sadly, Herb passed away on January 5, 2018 from a heart attack. I pledged that I would finish the book for Herb, and without Daniel I could not have done so. The book gave me a reason to go on every day, and Daniel, having spent so much time with Herb, knew where to find the finished chapters (all but one) and where to find and identify the many pictures.

As we all know, Herb loved to tell stories about his legends over and over and over — and since Daniel had not heard them before, he was a great audience for Herb. So, with Daniel's help, I was able to complete the book that Herb wrote and Daniel and I compiled. What a godsend Daniel has been; I will be eternally grateful for his being.

ATA

PROLOGUE

“Stories and legends, as nothing else can do, reveal what is important to an institution.”

—THOMAS PETERS and NANCY AUSTIN,
A Passion for Excellence

The word legend conjures up certain events and even names of famous people. Arnold Palmer is an example. However, this book is not about the types of legends most people recognize. The majority of the legends contained in this book, I witnessed during my career. I personally saw how players came together and triumphed in their own sport. Those, as the above quote says, revealed what is important to me—they are the highlights of my career in sports.

The definition of a legend, from Merriam Webster’s dictionary, is “a person or thing that is very famous for having special qualities or abilities.”¹ Many legends in this book will revolve around outstanding athletes and others that have special qualities and abilities. However, sports legends are not just people that accomplished a lot of wins or scores. They are people who achieved something outstanding or were outstanding in spite of their wins and losses. These legends, after reading about them in this book, could change your definition of a legend.

For example, one Guilford freshman women’s tennis player from Finland won 31 matches in a season and lost none, gaining international attention for the feat. Those types of players and

people are easy to count as legends. On the other side of the spectrum, a local legend at Guilford College named Coach Charles “Block” Smith, who coached during Guilford’s early days, from 1937–1942, had a record achievement of having only 6 wins and 109 losses during his whole coaching career! That number combines the three different sports that he coached at Guilford, basketball, football, and baseball! Winners and losers are both considered legends in this book.

The above quote from the book *A Passion for Excellence* displays my belief that stories and legends are significant—not only to an institution but also to a person’s life.

For years I have had a desire to share the events that affected my career in teaching and coaching. A few years ago my granddaughter, Sarah Somers, one of four granddaughters, called with a request. Sarah asked me to tell her about my early days, going back to my childhood. Then 91 years of age, I realized that my grandchildren and great grandchildren knew very little about my life. Sarah did not know about what I had accomplished.

These are reflections on my long career as a coach, teacher, and athletics director. Yet it is also the story of the many times I spent and shared with my athletes in the locker room. There is something magical about the locker room, just ask any coach or player. There is a bond that exists between players and their coaches that is special, which carries them through hardship, challenge, or triumph.

The bond that is forged through struggle, determination, wins, losses, and brave deeds is not easily forgotten. I can testify, many years later, that I can still vividly recall the moments of celebration and of sorrow in the locker room when the players and coaches came together. Many players, upon leaving a sport, will say that the thing they will miss the most is the camaraderie and the lasting friendship they felt in the locker room. My original title for this book was “Love in the Locker Room,” by which I meant a brotherly love for one’s teammates. My grandson Jus-

tin Appenzeller, one of my seven grandsons, thought it might be more politically correct to say “Legends from the Locker Room.”

Several early events made a mark on my life, including the Hindenburg explosion and the coming of WWII. I remember I was playing softball as a boy in a community game in my hometown of Newark, New Jersey when the Pride of Germany, the Hindenburg used as propaganda for the Nazis, came so close to the ground that I felt I could almost touch the giant airship. The airship exploded minutes later as it attempted to land several miles away. Then came World War II, and the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which shocked the nation. I felt the effects of racism and the reverberations of the Holocaust because I was attending a predominantly Jewish high school during this time period. After Pearl Harbor, I felt called to volunteer for the military, but was turned down by the recruiters for a medical condition.

At that disappointing time several people suggested that I apply to colleges and universities, since there was a shortage of men to play sports. I sent letters to several universities, one of which was Wake Forest. The head football coach at Wake Forest, Douglas “Peahead” Walker, asked me to send two clippings of my high school sports achievements. I did, one in track and one in football. My track clipping was a story about how I got second place in the district championship in the 100 meter dash, despite having a dislocated elbow, wearing a heavy cast and taking a standing start! The second clipping was of my first varsity football game, where I took the kickoff and ran it down to the nine yard line. I did myself proud in that game as evidenced by my local newspaper, *The Star Ledger*, which included the headline: “Appenzeller on Rampage.”

Coach Walker, upon reading those clippings, immediately contacted me and offered a full scholarship to Wake Forest to play football. I accepted and went to Wake Forest where I earned my B.A. (in Latin) and a M.A. (in Education). I accepted and left for Wake Forest College in 1943—the first person in my family

to go to college. I rode the long bus ride from New Jersey and arrived in Wake Forest, North Carolina. At that time integration was in play. I rode in the back of the bus because I wanted to sleep! As we crossed the famous Mason-Dixon Line, the bus driver stopped the bus and told me to come to the front of the bus. A lesson learned early as I left the North, never to return.

Later I completed my Ed.D. at Duke University with the rare major or minor in Latin in all three degrees. William R. Rogers, retired Guilford College President, was pleased to say that his athletics director majored in Latin!

Later while teaching education I always expected my students to have their own philosophy of education. I have enjoyed my years of teaching with a philosophy that was written long ago by the Roman philosopher Quintilian, “Education is not what you can remember but the things you cannot forget.”²

My career was a long one, spanning 41 years, as a teacher, coach, and athletics director, and co-writing the first textbook on sport management in the field. I have written 28 books, this being the 29th, and conducted risk reviews for sport facilities nationwide as well as serving as an expert witness in many legal cases.

Many of the stories that follow are more like miracles than actual true stories. Be assured, however, the stories are true and had a tremendous impact on my life, and I hope they will inspire others.

HERB APPENZELLER

Jefferson-Pilot Professor of Sport Studies, Emeritus,
Guilford College
January 2018

RESOURCES

1. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/legend>
2. *Pride in the Past*, Herb Appenzeller, p. 82.