

[music]

- S1 00:18 Our next speaker, I've had the pleasure of getting to know over the last two or three years that I've been here. And this is one of our true Aggie legends, so please join me in welcoming Coach Mark Johnson, Hall of Fame Baseball Coach [applause].
- S2 00:37 Howdy.
- S? 00:37 Howdy.
- S2 00:39 It's good to be in your company and I'm very honored to be here part of the Huffines' discussion and certainly an honor to be with this especially really, really good group of speakers. I had an opportunity to talk to them last night and today, and it's really been a benefit for me and I've been excited about it. My mother, when I was ten years old, we had a discussion about food and I told her that my gammy Johnson - that's what we called my grandmother Johnson, my dad's mother - she really had fancy food. My mother paused and she said, "Well, did you think the food was good?" Then I paused. Then she says, by her own admissions, she was not a good cook. Not a good cook. But what she did, she laced up the table cloth, she put the best china on, and she put the best silver out on the table. She dressed it up and made it really, what I thought was a pretty fancy piece of food.
- S2 01:43 This past weekend, we went down to Kingwood. My wife and I visited my son and his wife. They're building a new house and they're almost through with it. They wanted us to see the inside. We went inside and looked all around it. It was really, really beautiful. So, as we walked out and walked across the panel, the plank because it was wet out there, and they hadn't put the landscape down, I reminded him. I said, "Brian, be sure, be sure you pay a lot of attention, I know you're excited getting this house. Pay a lot of attention to your landscape, because it's going to be important." What I want to say, these two incidents I talked to you about, it's centered around the front porch of what the main object is. The main object is to live in the house, and to have warmth, and comfort, and be able to eat. The main object of my grandmother's food was it's a good food for us to eat, but the projection of it was going to be critical. So we've all had lessons - you have, I have. These lessons that don't grade a book by its cover, but instinctively, we all do. We all initially are going to be influenced by a special moment early on in our investigation of what we're looking at.
- S2 02:52 I would caution on that, and certainly it brings me to this topic that I've been asked to talk about today concerning athletics as the front door really of our university and what it is. But, suffice as to say that our awareness of initial comments and initial visions of activities are going to influence this. So we need to be aware of it. I can tell you - and I haven't got time to do it - but I could tell you without question a number of

recruiting stories that you would be shocked at the reason why people picked a certain school. It was almost humorous. And I would imagine 40% over my career of kids that picked a university - whether it was our university or the university - they picked it because of some front portrait or even the side door. They didn't get the content. They may have gotten some of the content of the university or what we're going to do out on the baseball field and all those things there, but typically, the front door was pretty important and even the side door was pretty important to some of their decisions.

S2 03:58

It would be interesting as we look at all of the Yankees that are walking our campus now, the Longhorns walking their campus and the Owls and the Bearcats and the Horned Frogs and the Red Raiders, and all those young people that are walking those campuses, it would be interesting to find out how many of them initially said, 'I'm going to this school,' because of the game they experienced when they were 14 or 15 years old. Yeah, I got to tell you, I've heard that story too many times. Then I see the old eyes coming back and they are bringing their 13, 14, 15-year-old son to the game and see a-- bring them to the ball game. Yeah, we want to come school here. I say, 'what's the correlation?' Then obviously, the correlation is there, but it's an instinct comment that we would make. But whether you agree with it or not, right or wrong, they-- right or wrong would be the thing I want to say to you. Right or wrong, athletics is a front porch to a university. I don't think you could quarrel with that in some statistics. Statistics I would share with you certainly would back that up.

S2 05:06

Athletics - for you people that have been in athletics - it's a very expensive and burdensome financial investment. There's no question. And I'll share this with you- but what I want to say first is that if you look at it, everyone thinks that because-- University of Texas, the lost [?] at the end of last year said their revenue was \$163.3 million in this past year. But see, that's the highest out there, and very few universities make money in their athletic department.

S2 05:42

You need to know that the vast majority of them do not. And so you say, 'Why in the world we have these experiences?' And certainly there's a mission for the individual players that are getting to play. There's no question. But more and more, you see it as a marketing. You see it as a branding spot, and they're going to, rather than put their money in advertisement on TV, they're going to put it out on the athletic field. Certainly, you see Nike, you see Adidas and you see all of these-- that's where they're putting it. They're putting it hoping or the picture in the Sports Illustrated of the shoe that's got a Nike brand on it. The athletic department is going to be critical in that, and really to make money, for you to make money at it, it's going to be an advertisement in more cases than not, and it's going to be harder to grade out.

S2 06:28

Just recently, and I had a chance to talk to an athletic director and they just started football at their university and it's here in our state. I think there's three of them that just started: Lamar University just started,

Houston Baptist just started football, University of Texas San Antonio just started football. Texas State, I think seven or eight years ago started their- and you say, 'Why in the world would they take on this financial responsibility when there's a lot of places the university needs to have to spend their money?' Now obviously, some of it has to do with conference preference because they needed to have football to be in the conference. But more than anything else, more than anything else, it's to spark the interest of the students, spark the interest of the alumni, spark the interest of an identity within the university, to give them that identity.

S2 07:15

Now, we can quarrel about that, but that seems to be-- when I talked to one of the athletic directors in these four schools, that was the comment. That was the reason for doing it. Even though the financial burdens were going to be great, they felt like that was going to be a strong thing to do.

S2 07:30

Dr. Doug Chung, a Harvard Business School Assistant Professor of Marketing wrote an article, The Dynamic Advertising Effect of Collegiate Athletics, and he talked about the Flutie Effect. I may age myself, surely, most of you know the Flutie Effect. Doug Flutie, about 20 years ago, became the Heisman Trophy winner. He was at Boston College. He brought his team to the 48-yard line from the end-zone with one play remaining. And they're playing the University of Miami in a critical ball game. They had this last play, and he threw what we call now a Hail Mary. He told all of the receivers and everybody, 'Okay go down to this spot down there in the end-zone and I'm going to toss it up here and we'll see where it lands,' but all of the defenders knew it too so they went to that spot too. And so there's a battle for the ball and of course Boston College wins that ballgame. And it's a tremendous, tremendous win. And here's what Dr. Chung says, "Boston's College greatest marketing campaign lasted six seconds." He also said in two years, the application shot 30%. Georgetown, in the middle '83s through '86 in their run for the national championship and the final four in basketball, their applications for admissions increased 45%. Northwestern, one of the big ten championship, the next year, their applications for admissions went up 21%. And do I need to talk about RG3 and Baylor University, and their experience with the Heisman Trophy winner and the amount of financial rewards? And certainly of the publicity they got in the branding of the Baylor University program was tremendous.

S2 09:17

But we have an example right here just down the block in Johnny Manziel. We look at his experiences, and what he's done for this university, and certainly, it's a little bit hard. I've heard the CEOs talk, and they're a little reluctant to give total credit to one thing, but in Johnny Manziel's first year here and Kevin Sumlin's first year here, and in a tremendous, tremendously exciting football season into the Southeast Conference. All of those things in this perfect storm coming together, and we said, 'Well, what do we have here?'

S2 09:49

Well, the contributions were released, the contributions for last year from everyone, not just through the 12th Man, or the Lettermen's Club, or something like that. This was all over the university, to Business and in

all the departments within the university. \$740 million were raised last year. And you say, 'My gosh, that's a lot of money. How does that relate to what they've made?' It's 70% more than the highest they've ever made in one year. And you say, 'Whoa. How could that happen?' There's some other reasons, and so misinterpret what I'm saying. It's not just because of athletics, it's not just because of football, but you would be hard pressed not to quarrel that it had a lot to do with football. That it had a lot to do with excess and the excitement, and everyone wants to invest in something that's going well.

S2 10:35

I think it might have had a difference. I think it made a difference. I had a chance in 1989 to speak at the commencement at A&M Consolidated High School. The football team is going to the final ballgame on December 23rd, and lost out on the championship game. But man, it was an exciting run. Six extra weekends. Do you know that in Texas, you are going to make playoff, you're going to keep playing for a long time? And then the baseball team went to the Final Four in those years. They were in the championship games. I went, and the counselor was a good friend of mine. I went and ask her, I said, "What about the other parts of the student body? How did they achieve this year? I know the athletes did. I know it's a tremendous athletic experience for the school." She said, "Mark, here." and she gave me 21 sheets of paper. It had achievements of the rest of the student body on 1989. And she said, "It's a record year." Everything: grade point average, participation in all of the other activities, whether it be band, choir, whatever it may be, had increased. And I said, "You think it was fueled by the success in the athletics?" She said, "Without question." Do I have a lot of studies to mark that? I don't have a lot of studies to share with you on that, but I would certainly think it to be true in my experiences. I have seen that, that it has a resounding effect on the rest of the people out there.

S2 12:00

Certainly, this is not saying-- I don't want to come off that athletics is the whole thing that makes the university work. Like at Texas A&M, the facilities that are being built right now, the academic prowess of the students, the superiority of the faculty that just keeps getting better and better, all of those things, they have a lot to do with the growth. They have a lot to do with the applications of admission, so I don't want to overdo it. I heard an interesting quote a long, long time ago, so I don't remember what department it was, but I know Bear Bryant said it. Bear Bryant said it was really hard to rally the alumni around the chemistry department. He thought it might be better in athletics and I think there would probably be some truth to that.

S2 12:44

The mission for our sport, for athletics all together? Pretty simple. I think it's a great extension to the academic classroom and that's really where athletics started. It really is, it's where it started. Same thing in drama, the Aggie band out there, the marching band, man, they spent a lot of time. There's some life skills being taught out there that can't be taught in the classroom and tremendous life skills in coaching and in athletics. I wouldn't have got in it if I didn't think there was some teachable

moments almost every day out on the athletic field. So I think there's a lot of - and let me just say this, and it's been said over here already - the athletes are graduating a lot better than what the normal student is. I'm not defending the athletes, I'm just saying the way we have the APR now and stuff - and that was referred to - it's doing a pretty good job of getting the kids to where they're doing it.

S2 13:36

You say, does it help that I taught a guy how to turn a double play; that he learned that skill of turning a double play when he's 40 years old and he's applying for a job or he is trying to turn a real big business venture? Does it help that he learned how to do a double play? And I said, "I doubt it. I doubt it." But what I don't doubt is the ability to learn got him there. He learned how to learn and to compete with it and take it out on the field, just as he took it when he was 40 years old to try and pull off a deal. My time's closing here. Let me just say this. As much as a university and its athletic department combined together can really send off a great, great platform for the athletes and the coaches and the football team for good things, it can also send off the negative things, can't it?

S2 14:25

Integrity, ethics, prowess from our moral fiber, our behavioral traits, all of those things can set us down too, just as they can set us up. But I come to you and I say, I think the mission filled with athletics is in place, and I certainly think it's more than a front porch to the academic world of our universities. Thank you. [applause]

S1 14:57

Thank you Coach Johnson. Great message. We've got a few questions for you. I've got a question from Cheryl M. who said, "If athletics is the front porch of the university, do you think student athletes should get paid due to the fact that they bring in so much revenue?"

S2 15:12

It's a good question, but I don't think student athletes should get paid for a number of reasons. Number one, if we start paying these student athletes, some universities are not going to be able to do it. When I was over at Sam Houston State, they could not afford to give extra over there. They had a hard time reaching the scholarship limits. Some of the schools can do it. Some of them can't. And what you always have to do in athletics is have integrity of schedule, integrity of eligibility, integrity of competition. So if one guys gets better in something else, then you're in trouble.

S2 15:43

One of the other problems you have - if we start getting the alumni involved in giving money for scholarships for extra help and then it gets into a problem. I think what we're looking at is the integrity of competition, is the most important thing, and the answer to that question. Do they deserve it with all this money that's flying out there? Sure they do. Sure they do. The kids that really need it; they could have a full Pell Grant. The government gives them the scholarship. They do have excessive money they can get past their full scholarship that they get. I'm against it. I understand why we should, but I worry about the integrity of the competition.

- S1 16:23 I've got a two-part question here from Robert M. "Should a student pursue a degree in kinesiology if the university does not have an athletic program or even a gym?"
- S2 16:33 Sure, why not? If he wants to be a coach, I think going through the kinesiology-- I was a physical education major. I minored in biology. I have my master's degree but I'm glad I went that route because I learned a lot of things about the body and all of those things that would help me in coaching. If that's available and you want to be a coach, then I think it's a good thing.
- S1 16:54 Super. The second part from Robert M. again is, "Division I versus Division III. What's the source of reward for the university in the Division III versus Division I?"
- S2 17:03 Well again, I think it comes down not so much to monetary value, it comes down of an identity or pride. We get a feel. If you haven't got any athletics or if you can't surround and gather in to a certain bonding, and athletics supposed to give that. Although it could happen in the drama, it could happen in the choir, but athletics seems to be the well-rounded one, that brings everybody in. Whether it's Division III, even though it's not a scholarship program and you don't have as much money to travel and then put beautiful uniforms on and all those things, it's still athletics and it goes down to athletics. We got to root for our team and we get together and have fellowship with other graduates, alumni and students, and it's all good.
- S1 17:47 Thank you so much for being here coach and please join me in thanking him. [applause]
- [music]