

Penn State Proud

August 9, 2012

I grew up, and remain, Penn State proud.

I was born in Philadelphia and grew up in Erie. The first 25 years of my life was spent in the state of Pennsylvania. Neither my mother or father attended Penn State, but it's the only collegiate football I remember watching before I went to college, especially the Pitt game.

I grew up all of 5 miles from the local Penn State branch campus, which I attended for my first two years of college before graduating from the University Park campus with a bachelor of arts in speech communications.

I fell in love for the first time, and truly for the last time, with women who graduated from Penn State. My wife and all three of her brothers hold Penn State degrees.

My two oldest friends are Penn State graduates. I was with one of them when I was drunk for the first time, and gave the best toast I've ever delivered as the best man at the other's wedding.

I did the only standing backflip ever in my life while watching Nittany Lions win the national championship in 1986. I was by myself at the time, but I swear it happened :-). My sole effort at politics was to run for the USG Senate going into my senior year (I won).

The closest I ever came to meeting Joe Paterno was to waive at him while I crossed the East Halls parking lot in 1984 (he did smile and wave back), and that's appropriate, because my relationship with the school was never defined by Coach Paterno or his team. That being said, no single name was mentioned more in my time there, and life as I knew it would not have been the same without him or his program.

Fellow Graduates & Fans: This is not a time to dispute the findings or the penalties. We ... our school ... did not inflict the harm that the victims suffered at Jerry Sandusky's hand, but the inaction of Coach Paterno, Mike McQueary, Tim Curley, Gary Schultz, and Graham Spanier (trusted Penn State officials/employees all) made Sandusky's ongoing assaults on these children possible. These penalties pale in comparison to that suffering.

The future ... the very face of our school ... changed today. While we support ... indeed honor ... the heroic efforts of Coach O'Brien, his coaching staff, and the team who represent us, let's make DAMN sure that we keep all of this in perspective.

That's all I have.

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