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WRITING

Continued from Page 1

with the Minneapolis Lakers when they celebrated at the Copacabana Club in New York City after beating the Knicks for the championship.

Olderman holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri, a degree in humanities from Stanford, and a master's in journalism from Northwestern. He wrote and drew sports cartoons for the McClatchy Syndicate, which owns the Sacramento, Fresno and Modesto *Bee* newspapers.

After moving on to the Minneapolis *Star & Tribune*, he worked for the Scripps Howard Newspaper Enterprise Association for 35 years.

Although he retired four years ago, Olderman, visiting Oregon to see his daughter, still freelances, writing features and drawing cartoons and illustrations for newspapers around the country.

He has written 10 books, among them *The Pro Quarterback* in 1966, which includes a chapter on former Oregon quarterback and NFL hall-of-famer Norm Van Brocklin.

Students in Olderman's eight-week class wrote everything from profiles to sports features to game coverage. The class interviewed and wrote stories about Oregon head football coach Rich Brooks, Portland Trail Blazers president Harry Glickman and former Oregon and San Francisco 49ers linebacker Dave Wilcox.

Professional sportswriters also paid visits to Olderman's class. The students wrote a column on Ron Bellamy, himself a columnist for the Eugene *Register-Guard*.

"My overlying theme was stated in my first lecture to them, that all I really wanted them to do by the end of the eight-week session was to be able to write a competent sports story," he said. "I don't feel you can teach people how to write, but you can guide them.

These are all upperclass people.

"Theoretically they should have the foundation for what constitutes a story, and I just wanted to expose them to what I consider good sportswriting and a philosophy of good sportswriting."

Olderman's students, some of whom had never before watched baseball, attended a Eugene Emeralds game and wrote their stories. Olderman said the game coverage, with one or two exceptions, was not very good.

"They were getting into unfamiliar territory," he said. The students did much better, however, on their Ron Bellamy columns.

'I don't feel you can teach people how to write, but you can guide them.'

— Murray Olderman

"I told them to let themselves go, to personalize it," he said. "Many people approaching sportswriting come in with preconceived ideas of how the sports stories should be written, the jargon of sports and all that. I wanted to disabuse them of that notion."

"Sportswriting is like any other type of journalism."

Olderman read another passage from the Galico book to his class to underscore this point: "It's not at all necessary to have played games or to be an expert to be a successful sportswriter, providing that you can write and have imagination."

John Easton, a public relations student, said that although the class was demanding, he learned much about sportswriting and journalism in general, and was glad that Olderman was more an editor than a professor.

"He treated your work as an editor," Easton said. "Instead of correcting your paper he edited

it. It tightened up my writing a lot."

"I edit their copy, the difference being that I tell them when I edit their copy," Olderman said. "When you work on a newspaper, they edit your copy and send it through and you don't know why they made the changes. I tell them why I made the changes."

Olderman insists that the main difference between sportswriting and other types of journalism is the subject matter, and that sports reporters need to be just as investigative and professional as other journalists. Olderman said he also emphasizes objectivity — he noticed a mistake at the Brooks interview, when a student referred to the Oregon football team as "us."

Karl Nestvold, journalism school associate dean, said the school was fortunate to have a sportswriter of Olderman's caliber and experience to teach this summer, and added that he used Olderman cartoons for his own sports stories in the 1950s.

"You had people who either did sports or cartooning," he said. "I'm not aware that there were too many who did both. When he draws a picture of an athlete it's almost like a photograph."

Although the world of sports has changed somewhat, Olderman said he approaches stories the same now as he did in the 1950s or '60s. In fact, his students used the Van Brocklin chapter from his quarterback book, now 25 years old, as part of an assignment. But he said one thing about sports journalism does change on a consistent basis.

"Sportswriters today are better than they ever were," he said. "They're better educated, they're better trained. There used to be a feeling among veteran journalists that you have to put down journalism school graduates. I don't think that exists anymore. Journalism schools produce people who are qualified to go into newspaper work."



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