

Moos

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the Duck players.

Friends are especially important to Moos. When you're in a position of power the way he is, it's easy to feel isolated from those around you. Moos says he does his best to keep in contact with friends from the old days, but his job makes it difficult to keep close with them. It's something he says he thinks about a lot. So it's not surprising that he will always take extra time to care for an old friend who asks a favor of him — even on game day.

"I certainly don't have many opportunities to speak with many old friends," Moos says. "A lot of times I just feel like I'm engulfed with my job here."

Which is why Washington State's Rose Bowl campaign last season was a special moment for Moos. At halftime of the Cougars' 21-16 loss to then-No. 1 Michigan, Moos was able to reunite with many of his old teammates from that 1972 team.

1:35 p.m.

Moos was supposed to meet with local women's basketball recruits and their families for a short time before speaking at a pregame buffet in the Pittman Room at the east end of the Casanova Center. Every Saturday, he will meet with recruits from a different sport. The previous weekend it was women's tennis; the week before that it was track.

However, Oregon's head women's basketball coach Jody Runge is close to 25 minutes late, and Moos is biding his time by watching the California-UCLA football game on the television. Moos tries to relax, he leans back in his chair, but he is antsy. Runge is late, and now the day's itinerary, which is calculated days in advance, has been thrown off.

1:50 p.m.

An assistant coach from the women's basketball team arrives at Moos' office with close to 30 recruits and their families. Moos

greeted them outside his office door smiling. He shakes fathers' hands as he leads the group down a corridor to a small conference room.

"I want everyone in this room to know that they are special," Moos says in a booming voice as the group enters the room. "You've all worked very hard to get here, and you should be proud of that. I remember back to my own experiences, and the fondest memories I have are from being involved with athletics while in college."

Every time Moos addresses a group of student athletes he reflects on his football days. He says that experience allows him to better understand the challenges student-athletes face and the important relationships between players and their coaches.

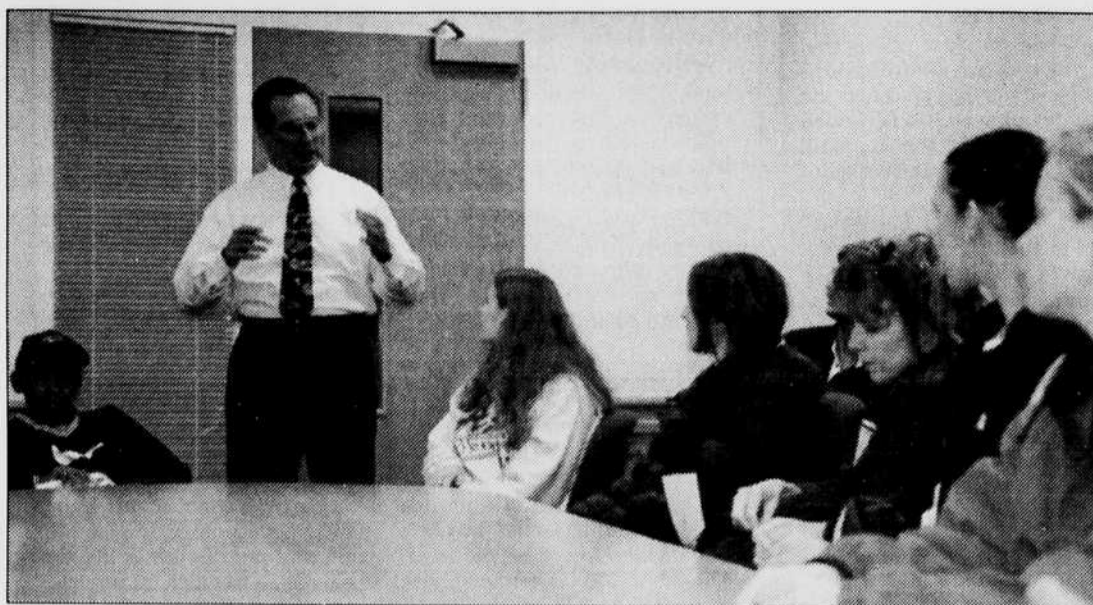
"I think it lends credibility to what I do," Moos says. "I think the athletes respect that I've already been through a lot of what they're going through."

At Washington State, Moos was known as a cerebral football player. Unlike a lot of offensive linemen during his day, Moos studied game film and took pride in understanding the complexities of the Cougar offense. He didn't just understand his role on the team, Moos understood everybody's role. He says his greatest virtue as a player was his willingness to work hard and prepare for every detail.

That attention to detail is evident in almost everything he does as athletic director. Itineraries are to be followed to the letter. If he is running late, Moos always phones ahead so people know exactly where he is and when they can expect him.

2:25 p.m.

Moos is standing in the hallway that connects the kitchen with the Pittman Room's pregame celebration. The Pittman Room is to the Casanova Center what the grand ballroom was to the Titanic — walk-ins will be promptly shown the door.



Bill Moos speaks to a group of recruits for the basketball team and their families in conference room near his office.

Wendy Fuller/Emerald

Today the room is host to 400 of the University's most illustrious donors and alumni. Ed and Elaine Moshofsky, University President Dave Frohnmayer, members of the Papé family, former NFL standout J.J. Birden, Today Show host Ann Curry. All are guests of the athletic department because they fill different and vital roles at this University.

Just minutes before Moos is introduced on stage he is approached by an elderly green-and-yellow-clad donor.

"We have a check for you today, Bill," she says. "But I'm afraid it's not very much this time."

"That's OK," Moos says, bending down to give her a bear hug.

Moos hears his name mentioned on stage and shuffles off.

Donors are the real most valuable players in college athletics. The Pittman Room is celebrating two things today: the Ducks' No. 12 national ranking, which has them an eight-and-a-half point favorite at home against USC, and all the financial contributions donors like these have made over the years.

"If you would have told anyone in this room 10 years ago that they'd be sitting here about to watch a Duck team that is nearly a 10-point favorite in midseason against USC, people would've thought you were crazy," Moos says to the smiling, cheerful crowd. "The days of the haves and the have-nots are gone. The days of schools recruiting players just so they didn't have to play against them are gone."

Nearly 10 years ago the NCAA reduced the total number of scholarships for a football program to 85. Before that time, college football enjoyed about as much parity as the Roman Empire. Notre Dame, USC, Alabama — these were the kings of college football. When they lost games, it wasn't considered an upset. It was more like a national day of mourning.

But scholarship limitations have leveled the playing field. Moos says Oregon's remarkable success in the 1990s is a direct result.

"It has brought parity to college football because the schools with the best locations can't attract all the quality players," he says.

30 minutes before kick-off

Security to Moos' palatial sky box suite is tight. A press box pass and two passes hand delivered by Moos himself are not enough to get an unescorted trip to the top of Autzen Stadium.

A man and woman enter the suite. The woman walks to her assigned seat in front of the box; the flannel-dressed man goes to the kitchen and orders a Jack and Coke.

The suite has reserved seating for Moos, his wife, Kendra, one of his three daughters, his six-month-old son Benjamin and about 20 guests. Vice President Dan Williams and his wife, Maureen, are regulars, as is Moos' secretary Debbie Nankivell.

"Nothing is ever hidden," Nankivell says about Moos. "He's genuine. That makes him very easy to get along with."

Nankivell arrived at Oregon in 1995, the same year as Moos, but both say they know what it's like to be involved with athletic departments that don't bring in the money that Oregon does.

"It really makes you appreciate what you've got," Moos says. "I've had to travel on 12-hour bus rides to Ogden, Utah, and places like that. It really makes you appreciate the luxuries of playing in a conference like the Pac-10."

Moos graduated from Washington State in 1973. The following year, Moos worked as an intern in Washington, D.C., which he says proved to be quite an amazing experience when the Watergate scandal started to unfold. In the late winter of 1974, Moos assumed a new position as deputy director of community and congressional relations at the U.S. Capitol. His new position gave him an opportunity to sit in on many of the Watergate meetings in the House and the Senate, but Moos says this job was most valuable to him because it provided him with the perfect arena to work on his public relations skills, which would serve him best later down the road.

After his internship was completed in 1975, Moos returned to the Northwest to go into business with three of his friends building restaurants. He worked with them for about the next eight years before getting the job that would change his life.

In 1982, Moos was hired as director of development at Washington State by Sam Jankovich, who was impressed by Moos' public relations savvy and good business sense. After five very successful years in player development, Moos jumped to assistant athletic director where he supervised all of the department's external operations.

In 1990, Moos took over the athletic department at Montana, where he would build the football and men's basketball programs to two of the most successful in Division I-AA in a very short time. Moos spearheaded several projects that included stadium expansion, facility renovations and improvements to the university's tennis courts, locker rooms and soccer fields.

Moos says the key to improving Montana's athletic programs 10 years ago is the same as improving Oregon's today: fund raising.

Oregon 17, USC 13, 15 seconds to go in the fourth quarter

With 15 seconds to go in the game and Oregon grinding the ball down the Trojans' throat, Moos leaps from his seat and grabs his coat. This is his favorite part of the day. Win or lose, Moos makes his way down to the playing field through the student section to thank them for coming. He shakes hands and flashes smiles. The students appear startled to see him but always rush to shake his hand.

Moos is very much at home. As the students count down the waning seconds of the game, Moos shuffles down the Autzen Stadium steps to try to catch Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti before he exits the field.

Seven ... six ... five ... four ... the students count, and Moos is wedged in behind a large group of them at the base of the stadium. He is smiling, and the rain begins to fall, and he bounces up and down in unison with the students to celebrate Oregon's victory.

When the final gun sounds, Moos explodes onto the playing field, but Bellotti has already made his way to the locker room. Moos looks toward the evaporated student section and smiles as Oregon football players one by one come up to him and shake his hand.

He is as much a part of today's victory as any of them.



Moos speaks to University donors in the Pittman Room at the Casanova Center Oct. 24.

Wendy Fuller/Emerald

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