

GUEST EDITORIAL

Is Nike too big to fail?

We have witnessed corporations and famous Americans have ups and downs throughout the years.

We've all watched as Tiger Woods, Robert Kraft and, most recently, billionaire Jeffrey Epstein have had low moments.

Sadly, we heard last weekend about coal billionaire Chris Cline's tragic and fatal helicopter crash.



GLENN MOLLETTE
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

Time and again we learn none of us are too famous, too successful or too rich to encounter a human downward life turn and tragedy.

The Nike athletic shoe and apparel corporation is the world leader in athletic and apparel sales. It made about \$34 billion in 2017. It has a global presence of athletic sales in over 160 countries. Its products are sold through 22,000 retail accounts worldwide. It is the largest supplier of athletic footwear in the world.

Almost all of Nike shoes are made outside the U.S. in Asia and Latin America. Nike does not make the shoes itself, but contracts production out to other companies. There are various reports about who Nike employs and how much these workers make. One report claims Nike has 100,000 people making its shoes in Indonesia and that these workers make about \$3.50 per day, or about \$3,500 a year. Thus, Nike is very profitable and has massive dollars for marketing.

For example, Nike entered into a \$50 million endorsement deal with tennis star Serena Williams in 2003. When golfing star Tiger Woods turned pro in 1996, Nike lavished him with a \$40 million, five-year golfing endorsement. It would later go on to pay Woods \$30 million a year in endorsements. From 2002 to 2012, Nike paid Michael Jordan \$44 million a year to represent the brand. Nike still pays him. Forbes estimated Nike paid Jordan \$100 million in 2015 as Jordan's brand still made \$3 billion for Nike in U.S. sneaker sales. NBA star LeBron James will reportedly receive as much as \$1 billion from Nike in endorsement money by the time he is 64 years old.

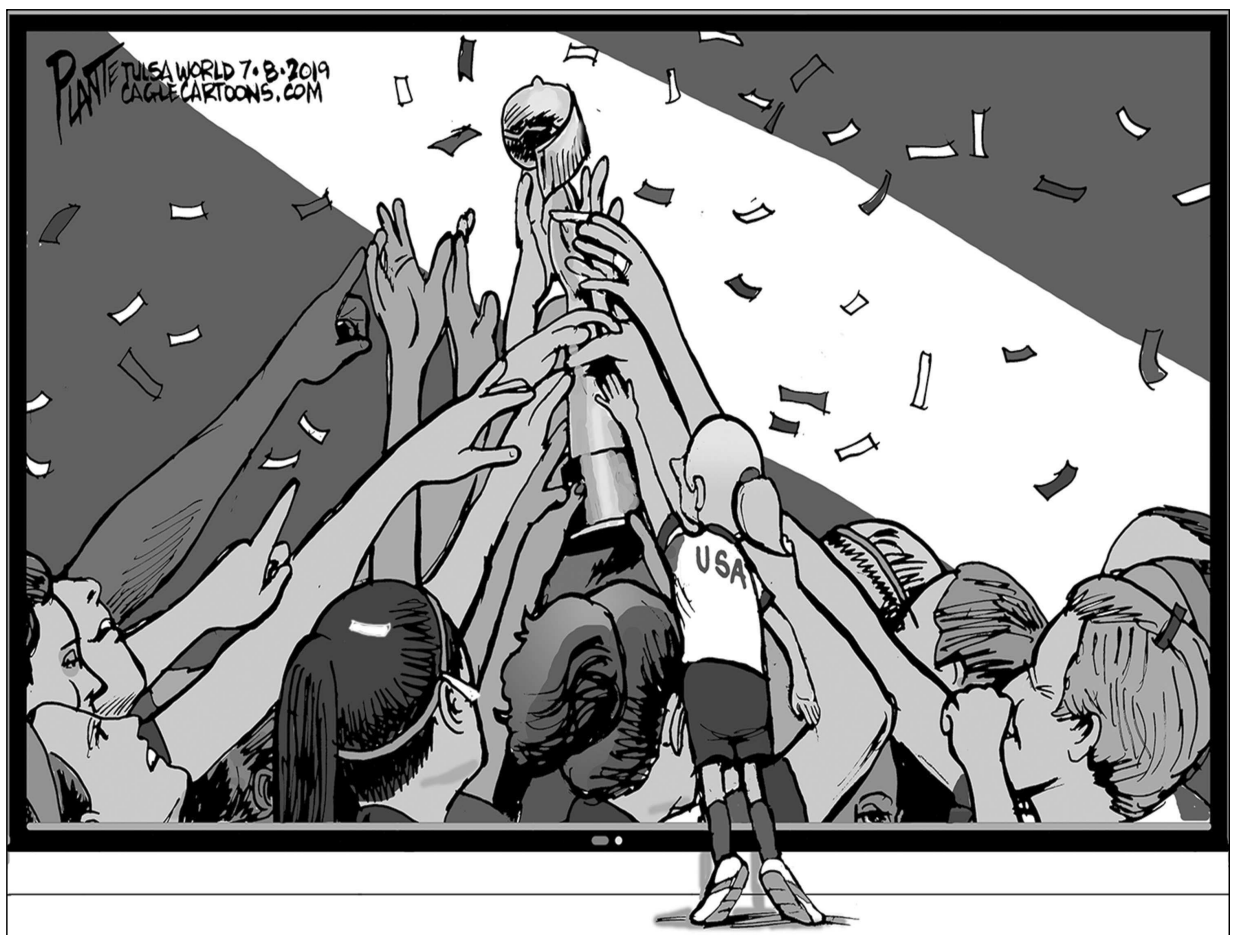
Colin Kaepernick was already on Nike's payroll before he became controversially famous for not standing for the National Anthem. Nike wasn't using him and reportedly didn't know what to do with him until he became famous over his social issue stance. Kaepernick is currently not playing professional football. No one has signed him after he became a free agent, but he is making millions a year by being the face of Nike's revived "Just Do It" campaign.

Recently, Kaepernick again ignited controversy by allegedly telling Nike to pull its Air Max 1 Quick Strike Fourth of July sneakers. Nike said he told the company he believes the colonial flag used on the shoes is offensive because it was flown when slavery was legal. While there has been much consternation toward Nike's decision, Nike's stock has risen \$3 billion within the last week. If you can find a pair of the Betsy Ross shoes, they are going for about \$2,500.

The question is this: Can Nike do no wrong? Is it too big to fail? Nike is utilizing controversy well to breathe new air into its products. With major national sports figures wearing and promoting the Nike brand and cheap Asian labor, Nike has locked into a formula that appears unstoppable.

Nike will continue on its path of global success if the American people buy its products. It's a free country. If Americans decide to stop buying Nike products, it would be financially troubling.

Either way, Nike's continued success or failure will be decided by how Americans decide to "Just Do It."



Thompson joins Observer newsroom

As the newest hire at The Observer, I think you should know a little bit about me.

My name is Sabrina Thompson. I was born and raised in Southern California, just down the street from Disneyland in fact. That was until I moved away to attend college at the California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo. There I learned just about everything I could about journalism in all of its forms. I graduated in June with this job lined up for me right after I walked across the stage. I was ready to begin my career without hesitation or a long summer break in between.

I am the youngest of two daughters and three stepsiblings. I have a relatively small family that is surprisingly close. I think family is one of the most important things in my life, both the given and the chosen kind.

My interest in reporting came from a lifetime of loving to write.



FROM THE NEWSROOM
SABRINATHOMPSON

Long-winded stories with too much detail eventually became concise written observations about the world around me. I became particularly fond of writing about the arts, entertainment and culture after years of being involved in these areas onstage and behind the scenes.

During my time in college, I self-published two romance novels on Amazon, taught myself sign language, studied abroad for three months in London, and had two minor surgeries.

My move to La Grande was quick as soon as I found housing. After visiting the area I felt like it would be a great fit for me, coming from a small town to an ever smaller one. I am excited to see what the commu-

nity has to offer and looking forward to finding ways to get involved and learn everything I can to help you become better informed about what is happening in your community.

I am new to the professional world but have grown up with parents who have taught me the value of hard work, which I plan to implement as I settle into this new life.

One of my favorite quotes is "Either write things worth reading, or do things worth writing," by Benjamin Franklin. I strive to live by this and a dozen other mottos. I always decorate my home with words of wisdom, and I am always looking for my next inspiration.

I will leave you with an original quote of my own for you to apply to your own life as you see fit. I certainly feel this way about the path I am now on.

"In a world of infinite possibilities, the only one I saw involved you."

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