

NCAA

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able. The loving daily presence gives a special standing and entre' to the kid's heart and mind. The father can then penetrate the athletic aura and say, "Oh no. You won't do that!" Magic Johnson has plenty of stories about how his father made sure certain behaviors were put in check despite his tremendous fame in high school. He was blessed with that loving connection and correction as part of daily living. Many blessed with great talent are not so blessed with the simple parental influences that many of us take for granted or have forgotten.

We should remember too that there are plenty of studies about the disparity—in rules and resources—between the urban public schools in large urban areas and the schools most college students come from. The vast majority of African Americans in public schools are from a dozen urban under-resourced schools with challenges very different from the suburban high per-capita cost per student schools. All those factors among others bring tremendous adjustment issues once these players go to college. And college itself is the first sniff of almost complete freedom that has snared more than just athletes.

I am not making excuses for bad behavior, just reasons why it exists. If we don't understand the problem, we are less likely to find a solution. And unless we understand what motivates and inspires the players, we have little chance of knowing what buttons to push to create changed behavior among those likely to commit NCAA infractions

through their own choice. The separate and next issue is what to do about it. One part of the solution is for qualitative family circumstances early in life. But the past links us to the present and that tragically will take far longer to fix.

So we need to start with inspiring teenagers to transform a past "rules don't apply to me" mentality to the new and very daunting set of rules found in the near-IRS Code level NCAA rule book. Some of us with little appreciation for this transformational issue act shocked as to why such players don't instantly transform themselves. But for the star teenagers most at-risk, the motivational threat of "I better not go to the bar because of NCAA Rule 1.2 or whatever..." is not working.

I think such a player is more likely influenced by the pro players he already dreams to be like—players that are already in his consciousness and subconscious recesses of his mind. And last I checked it is still the mind that controls the decision of whether to go to the strip club after curfew.

Several centuries before there was an NCAA or its rules defining players as amateurs there was a respected Chinese philosopher named Lao Tzu that said, "To lead people, walk beside them." The sports translation in my view is, "To lead players away from NCAA violations, enlist the help of those who have walked in their shoes."

Currently, coaches bring in idolized pro players for pep talks to inspire their kids just before big games. That's a good thing. But

Bank Protest



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

About a dozen people were arrested Sept. 21 for occupying the intersection outside the Chase Bank Regional Headquarters to protest the bank's inaction in helping Washingtonians get back on their feet. Chase, which received \$26 billion in bailout money, has been very slow to help home owners avoid foreclosure. Susan Fried photo

the occasional occurrence still squanders a bigger opportunity to inspire the wide-eyed teenagers to have behavioral excellence off the field as well. These pro players have already walked in their cleats. They speak a language with the college players I cannot fully comprehend. As Oklahoma's Coach Stoops put it when explaining why and

when he knew his starting quarterback Landry Jones became a team leader, "Players don't fool other players." I am convinced that among the 1,696 NFL players each year, many have the discipline, integrity, and charisma to greatly influence behaviors of current college stars that are at risk of future NCAA infractions.

Author

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Foundation at Harvard University. She has served as Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University, as the Kreeger-Wolf endowed lecturer at Northwestern University and as James M. Cox Professor at Emory University.

The John Simon Guggenheim Foundation awarded her a fellowship to advance the research for her book, "The Warmth of Other Suns."

Published by Random House in September 2010, the book is a work of narrative nonfiction about the migration of African-Americans from the rural and small-town South to the urban North and West during most of the twenti-

eth century. The book tells the story of three who made the journey and is the first major work to chronicle the migration on a nation-

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al scale. It won the National Book Critics Circle for Nonfiction and the NAACP Nonfiction Award for a Debut Writer.

In a story of hope and longing, three young people set out from the American South during different decades of the 20th Century en route to the North and West in search better lives. Ida Mae Brandon Gladney, George Swanson Starling and Robert Joseph Pershing Foster are among the six million African-Americans who fled the South during what would become known as the Great Migration. This book interweaves their stories and those of others

who made the journey with the larger forces and inner motivations that compelled them to flee, and with the challenges they con-

fronted upon arrival in the New World.

Based on interviews with 1,200 people who participated in the Migration and on newly available census analyses and research into archival material, *The Warmth of Other Suns* is the story of how the northern cities came to be, of the music and culture that might not have existed had the people not left, the consequences North and South and, most importantly, of the courageous souls who dared to leave everything they knew for the hope of something better.

Tickets for the event are \$10 and available at www.brownpapertickets.com or by calling -800-838-3006.

Education

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discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

"The civil rights laws are the most sorely underutilized tool in education reform and closing the achievement gap," says Russlynn Ali, assistant secretary for civil rights, who has run the department's OCR since May 2009. She said President Barack Obama has emphasized that he wants the department investigating education-related civil rights violations. "This is the most important civil rights issue of our time," she says.

Last year, Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced on the 45th anniversary of Bloody Sunday—the day that Alabama state troopers brutalized civil rights activists marching on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma—that the department's OCR would significantly increase enforcement actions. Duncan acknowledged that over the last 10 years, the office had not aggressively pursued Title 6 investigations to improve the quality of education for minority and poor students.

The OCR received about 7,000 com-

plaints last year, a record for the department. School districts are being investigated for a range of possible violations, including failure to provide minority students with access to college- and career-track courses, not assigning highly qualified teachers to schools with predominantly minority students and disproportionately placing such students in special education courses and suspending minority students.

The OCR has also investigated schools for failing to protect female students of color from sexual violence and not offering access to higher-level math and science courses.

Judith A. Browne Dianis, co-director of the Advancement Project in Washington, D.C., which advocates for quality education, acknowledges a significant change in direction for the department's OCR. Ali served as deputy co-director of the organization from 1999 to 2000.

"For years, we couldn't rely on the federal government to enforce civil rights law, so now we have an Office for Civil Rights that is finally taking up the torch," Browne Dianis says. "During the Bush administra-

tion, we wouldn't encourage anyone to file a complaint. The feeling was that even if you filed a complaint, they probably wouldn't investigate or would say there was no racial discrimination."

Education Department officials express concern that a wide disparity exists between the achievement level of graduating white and African-American high school students in specific subject areas, such as biology and math.

Data show that white students are six times better prepared than black students for college biology when they graduate from high school. White students are four times as prepared for college algebra as their black counterparts. Furthermore, white high school graduates are twice as likely to have completed Advanced Placement (AP) calculus courses as black or Latino graduates.

Addressing the statistics, Ali says the solution is not "just about adding more courses" but better preparing minority students in these subject areas. The civil rights investigations are forcing improvements.

In South Carolina, the OCR has targeted school districts for concentrating AP cours-

es at majority white high schools, robbing black students of the chance to take college-track courses. Because of the OCR probe, AP classes have become more widely available at majority black high schools.

Ali is also addressing the practice of assigning the least qualified teachers to poor and predominantly minority schools. By forcing school districts to end this practice, she hopes to narrow the achievement gap between whites and students of color, preparing more minority students for academically challenging courses.

The Education Department and education advocates are examining the higher percentage of minority students assigned to special education classes in many districts.

"Special education is another reflection of huge disparities," says Daniel J. Losen, senior education law and policy associate at The Civil Rights Project at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Losen says school administrators often use subjective criteria to place students in special education programs, resulting in a

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