

**Little** from 1B

paragraph of my high school accomplishments. The information looked very much like you would see in a graduation program and hardly an "award" you would mention on a college application since there were approximately 6,500 names in the book.

Clearly, some people made money on this book. That same year, another "opportunity" made its way to our doorstep when I received an offer to play a single game of football in England.

I was selected with several other graduating seniors to practice for one week in England and play a game at week's end. All I needed was to raise \$2,700 dollars. In 1970 — and even today — that is real money. I could not, nor could my parents, afford to spend that money on a single game.

I was also not going to ask the community of Warrenton for the money through various fundraising activities.

I return the invitation with the boxed checked "Not interested."

Fast forward to 2002 in Florence. Brandon, our son, received a similar letter to play football. The game he was invited to play was also in England. I wondered at the time if the same organization was still active in sponsoring this game. By this time, the price tag had grown to \$4,500.

The game was to take place during spring break. Since he was playing baseball — and we weren't rich — it was not an option for him.

Charnae, our oldest daughter, as well as our youngest daughter Alaura, each received their senior year offers to play volleyball in Australia. The price tag this time was a "mere" \$3,000. Miranda, our middle daughter, received offers to join a team to play softball in Hawaii.

She summed up her answer in her typical manner, stating if she ever goes to Hawaii she does not want to be playing softball.

If I was rich, I probably would have sent my children to play in

these games had they wanted to play. I would have encouraged them to meet other athletes and see different places they otherwise may never have a chance to see.

But I'm not rich and most certainly would never ask the Florence community to give money so my children can "go and play" because there are many, more important and needed areas for our community to support.

Over the years in Florence I have read occasional articles about students and or athletes attempting to raise money to do just this. In my opinion, the parents and their sons or daughters

are not seeing clearly: The athletes on the team formed and coached may not resemble the coaching methods and strategy of their high school coaches; they may spend all the money and see limited game time; and in the end, it is just a money maker for someone at the expense of player or parent ego.

I would caution parents of the growing number of organizations offering the excitement of overseas travel to entice young people to participate. Your son or daughter may very much want to join one of these teams. If you can afford it, then you have the right to do whatever

you choose. I would just caution you to make sure your young athlete can differentiate between what they want and what they need.

For just \$75, I was listed as a "Who's Who" in America's high schools. For just \$75, I got a single paragraph in a 600-page book containing over 6,500 other "Who's Whos."

Trying to fundraise for a single student or athlete to attend and participate outside the country for thousands of dollars will only use funds that could have been better spent on more important causes in our community to benefit others.



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