



Myles Brand: A legacy of leadership

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NCAA President Myles Brand, the first university president to serve as the Association's chief executive, died Wednesday from pancreatic cancer. He was 67.

"Myles Brand was a dear friend and a great academic leader. He was a tireless advocate for the student-athlete," said Michael Adams, president of the University of Georgia and chair of the NCAA Executive Committee. "Indeed, he worked to ensure that the student was first in the student-athlete model. He will be greatly missed."

Brand, who began his tenure in January 2003 after having served as president at Indiana and Oregon, died at his Indianapolis home. He was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in December 2008 and announced his condition to the NCAA Executive Committee, the national office staff and the leadership at NCAA member schools in January, saying the long-term prognosis for his condition was "not good."

Brand remained committed to leading the Association even through his illness, guiding the national office staff and communicating with presidential leadership up until the final days. He attended the Men's Final Four in Detroit, was at the table for the Association's spring governance meetings and worked at his office into September.

Brand built his presidency on academic reform and advocacy of intercollegiate athletics, accomplishing both. Under Brand's leadership, Division I adopted an academic reform structure anchored by the Academic Progress Rate, a team-based, term-by-term measure of academic success that encourages improved academic performance. Divisions II and III also made significant advances under Brand's watch — Division II by implementing an identity campaign and a strategic-positioning platform tied to specific divisional attributes, and Division III by fortifying its philosophy to manage unprecedented membership growth.

Brand also spearheaded a landmark Presidential Task Force that in 2006 called for institutions to moderate athletics spending and to better integrate athletics into the mission of higher education.

"Myles Brand will be remembered not only for his unyielding demand that intercollegiate athletics reflect the values of higher education but also for his advocacy of the student-athlete," said NCAA Executive Vice President Bernard Franklin. "This was a man who understood the importance of higher education, as well as the benefit of athletics participation as part of the educational experience. He did not waver from that as a tenet of NCAA operations, and as a result, the Association will continue to benefit from his influence for years to come."

University of Hartford President Walter Harrison, who chaired the NCAA Executive Committee during Brand's push for reform, said Brand "leaves a clear and strong legacy that captures all the best things about college sports."

Harrison praised Brand for his presidential leadership and "setting appropriate standards and the appropriate tone on our college campuses."

"Likewise, his tenure as president of the NCAA marked an era of significant positive change," Harrison said. "He led the Association as it became much more responsive to its members' needs. He furthered the movement to make university presidents and chancellors primarily responsible for governance of the Association and oversight of college sports. He set very high standards for maintaining what's unique about the college sports experience in an era of growing commercialism."

That "growing commercialism" was a concern of Brand's, especially recently. He focused the bulk of his final State of the Association address at the 2009 NCAA Convention on the topic, calling for a "shared responsibility" among the NCAA national office staff and member schools to monitor commercial trends and establish both legislation and "good judgment" about policy that at its core does not put student-athletes at risk in commercial activities.

"There is no question that commercial activity is necessary for mounting intercollegiate athletics programs, certainly in Division I, but also in Divisions II and III," Brand wrote in the speech that NCAA Vice President Wallace Renfro delivered at the January Convention. "But that commercial activity must be undertaken within the context of higher education. It must be done the right way. The answer is to use regulation where clear prohibitions are evident — exploitation of student-athletes, for example — and apply values-driven judgment where flexibility is required."

Brand called for the appointment of an oversight committee of membership peers that would "review the landscape of commercial activity in intercollegiate athletics, make binding determinations of instances in which there is student-athlete exploitation even if NCAA amateurism rules are not violated, and evaluate trends in commercial activity to ensure that the values of higher education and the best interests of the collegiate model of athletics are not abridged."

The Division I Board of Directors approved the establishment of that group at the Board's April 2009 meeting.

Brand also was a force for diversity and inclusion, establishing an entire department at the NCAA national office devoted to increasing representation from all backgrounds at member schools and within the NCAA governance structure. He was an outspoken champion of diversifying football's head coaching ranks in particular, supporting several NCAA programs and coaching academies devoted to increasing the pool of qualified minority candidates and providing them with networking opportunities for advancement.

Several recent hires in football participated in those professional-development programs.

"Diversity and inclusion were always top of mind with Myles Brand," said Charlotte Westerhaus, NCAA vice president for diversity and inclusion. "He understood the value of inclusion from his dealings in higher education, and that translated to intercollegiate athletics as well. He championed not only diversifying the head-coaching ranks in football but also leadership positions in athletics administration for both men and women."

Brand was named president-elect of the Association in October 2002 after a national search to replace Cedric W. Dempsey, who had announced he was retiring at the end of that year after having led the Association since 1994.

Robert Lawless, who as president of Tulsa chaired the Executive Committee at the time of Brand's hire and chaired the search committee, called Brand a pre-eminent "educational leader."

"We selected Myles Brand for his ability to stress the educational component of intercollegiate athletics," Lawless said after Brand was chosen. "We want the nation to understand that the collegiate part of intercollegiate athletics is an integrated part of the higher education experience."

Upon being hired, Brand said, "This is a superb challenge, an opportunity for me to work on a national level in a way that continues my work with universities, to influence the course of events on something that is very important to American culture and, most importantly, to higher education as a whole."

Brand's contract originally was to run through December 31, 2007, but the NCAA Executive Committee voted in 2005 to extend Brand's contract by two years and then annually for the indefinite future. The contract extension was scheduled to run through December 31, 2009.

Before assuming the NCAA's top leadership position, Brand was president at Indiana from 1994 through 2002, and at Oregon from 1989 to 1994.

Born May 17, 1942, Brand earned his bachelor of science degree in philosophy from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1964 and his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Rochester in 1967.

Brand's other administrative posts included provost and vice president for academic affairs at Ohio State (1986-89), coordinating dean at the College of Arts and Sciences at Arizona (1985-86), dean of the faculty of social and behavioral sciences at Arizona (1983-86), director of Arizona's Cognitive Science Program (1982-85), head of the department of philosophy at Arizona (1981-83) and chair of department of philosophy at Illinois-Chicago (1972-80). He began his career in the department of philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh in 1967.

Brand has also served on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Association of American Universities and as board chair (1999-2000), a member of the board of directors (1992-97) and executive committee (1994-97) of the American Council on Education. He was a member of the board of directors of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (1995-98) and served as a board member of the American Philosophical Association and of the University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development, the umbrella organization of Internet2.

His academic research investigated the nature of human action. His work focused on intention, desire, belief and other cognitive states, as well as deliberation and practical reasoning, planning and general goal-directed activity. He also wrote extensively on various topics in higher education, such as tenure and undergraduate education.

He is survived by his wife, Peg, and one son, Joshua.