

Reflections on Joe Paterno, Part III

Former Penn State Football Student-Athletes Reflect on Legendary Educator

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa., January 27, 2012 --- Numerous Penn State Football Student-Athletes have reflected this week on Joe Paterno, Penn State's legendary educator, coach and humanitarian, who served the University from 1950-2011. Below is just a small sample of some of the comments about the Hall of Fame mentor who passed away on Jan. 22, 2012.

Former Penn State Football Student-Athletes:

"Kathy and I and our family extend our most sincere condolences to Sue and the entire Paterno family. Our Penn State family and college football have lost a great man. It was my privilege to have played for Joe and later coached with him for many years. He had a significant impact on my life as he had on countless others. Joe truly made a difference. His leadership was inspirational to his profession, to his team, and to Penn State University. He will be missed by many, but never forgotten. We love you, Joe."

- Dick Anderson '63

"Coach Paterno has meant so much to me and the 2011 senior class. He has been the greatest role model any young man could ever have. My parents knew that I would be in good hands when I left Durham, N.C. in the summer of 2007. My favorite quote from him was, 'If you take care of the little things, the big things will take care of themselves.' I've lived by this for the last five years and I have managed to graduate with a kinesiology degree and build lasting relationships with great people on and off the football field. He wanted to see others grow and achieve. Coach Paterno will NEVER be forgotten. His legacy and how he's impacted the world will last forever. WE ARE..."

- Quinn Barham '11

"Words seem to pale in a moment such as this. The terms "icon" and "legend" have often been used to describe Joe Paterno. Certainly, he was both within the world of college athletics. But to those of us who played for him, to those of us who coached with him and to those of us who had the privilege to call him a friend, Joe Paterno was much more.

"To me, he was my mentor for 37 years, and the lessons that I learned from him as a player, coach and friend will live on with me forever. It was Coach Paterno who saw what I could be and helped me to realize that potential. He was a tremendous teacher not because he knew all of the answers but because he challenged us to find the answers for ourselves. He made us better men than we believed we could be -- both on and off the field. And when we lost our way or became unsure of ourselves, it was Coach Paterno who was there to encourage us, guide us and remind us that we must always strive to succeed with honor.

"Coach Paterno never believed his role as "coach" ended after practice, or when the fourth quarter wound down or when a student-athlete graduated. He was a coach for life. I am deeply grateful to have had Coach Paterno in my life. He was the epitome of class and his spirit will live on in all of us who had the great honor of knowing him and running out of the tunnel with him on so many autumn Saturdays.

"My thoughts and prayers are with Coach Paterno's devoted wife, Sue, his son Jay, with whom I coached so many years, and with the entire Paterno family during this sad and difficult time."

- Tom Bradley '79

"It's hard to summarize playing for Coach Paterno in just a couple sentences, but it was a great privilege. He was an incredible man, an incredible mentor. I was talking to my mother these last few days since he passed, and I was just discussing with her the impact he had on my life. I'll never forget coming up here

for my recruiting visit. I knew my mom felt very comfortable with turning me over to him because of the person he was and the program he ran. Years later, after finishing my pro career, I was speaking with Joe here at the coaches' offices and I said, 'Your program was the best thing that could have ever happened to me.' Because of the fact that I was a pretty misguided kid coming out of high school, single parent home, and my mom had trouble controlling me. But, his program was that best thing that could have happened to me."

"Any time that I begin a speaking engagement where I'm asked to talk for football I usually start off with a few Joe Paterno stories. One is the 'immaculate reception' story. You may know that Joe takes credit for the immaculate reception. I don't know if I have time to tell that whole story right now. You can ask Franco (Harris). But, anyways, so many others. He was just so colorful, so much personality, and love for the game, and love for us. He did it right, as we all know, the discipline, the structure, the emphasis on punctuality, all the little things which we'll all take with us."

- Kyle Brady '94

"While you were here, you kind of missed out on some of those lessons that you didn't really take as seriously, while you were here. Him telling you "be early, shape up." The coat and tie and all that stuff, take out your earrings. Stuff that you kind of thought was "whatever," but once you leave there and get out into the real world and realize what it is. Showing up for job interviews on time, being prompt and just being prepared, all of the things that he taught us outside of football. It's just priceless. That I was able to be a part of something that he was involved with is something that I'll be able to hold onto forever."

- Deon Butler '08

"I feel really fortunate and blessed to have played under Joe. There's so many great lessons he taught; such a great role model. He was such a wonderful leader and father figure for all of us. We're sad that he's gone now, but he leaves a long legacy, and was a big part of my life.

"There's appreciation that he was trying to make us better men, and better people. He was trying to show us the right way to do things, trying to instill discipline in us. Football was just a tool he used to help us become better people, and we all appreciate that.

"I always go back to '94 when we were a real good team and a real good offense. We were never allowed to think we were any good. Joe would always just stay on us, and stay on us, and call us fat heads, and all this kind of stuff. He'd keep us humble. That was a big thing with him; just stay humble. He knew how to motivate people.

"It was truly an honor and a privilege to have played for him. My condolences go out to his wife, Sue, and the rest of the Paterno family. He was a great man who led a great life."

- Kerry Collins '94

"At this sad time, I would like to say that my thoughts and prayers go out to Sue and the entire Paterno family. The world has lost a truly great man, husband, father and lastly, coach. He taught all of us former players how to develop into better people and demonstrated how one was to live their life, on and off the football field.

"Soon following the abrupt actions last Fall, I had the privilege to sit with him at his kitchen with my good friend and fellow teammate Dan Delligatti. It was humbling and heartbreaking to find that he only wanted to ask about me and my children. He asked about my mother and father referring to both of them by their first name. Pretty unbelievable when you consider how many players he coached.

"He proceeded to say to me, "Shane, you know why I was tough on you and your teammates when you were younger? It wasn't to prepare you for the NFL, it was to prepare you and your teammates for life. To prepare you to better husbands, fathers, businessmen. And good humble, men."

“Other than my own father, I credit Joe for making me the man I am today. Fortunately I was able to tell him that in person and he proceeded to give me a hug. In parting, he said in his unforgettable, raspy Brooklyn accent, ‘How about we found a skinny kid from Frewsburg, N.Y. and made him an All-American and All-Pro linebacker!’

“I truly loved that man for everything he was about and stood for.”

- Shane Conlan, ‘86

“He meant everything to me. I want to let everybody know that Joe was like a father to me. I was really tight with him, obviously because I was one of his quarterbacks. Everything that he’s gone through these past couple of months has really taken a toll on me, as well. Joe taught us a lot, a whole lot, especially success with honor. One of the things that stood out with me whenever he would talk is that whatever it is that you’re going to do, whether it be playing football, class, job interview, whatever it is, always remember that you’re representing not only yourself, but the staff, the players, your friends, your family, this program, this university as a whole. He’s preached that for so many years. Always having integrity, pride, confidence in everything that you partake in. I miss him like crazy, and it’s been one big pleasure to play for Coach Joe.

“I’ll never forget the day I was having kind of a bad practice. We were in a drill called ‘Drill 6,’ it’s basically seven on seven, wide-outs against the DBs. I tried to get cute with one of my throws, and I threw a late post across the middle. It got tipped and knocked down. You know that voice that Joe had, and he said, ‘Hey, hey Daryll Clark. Come here!’ I walked up to him and I knew he was about to cuss me out. ‘You can’t be that late across the middle!’ He turned to Jay and said, ‘Jay, if he can’t get it right send him back to Youngstown!’ I laughed inside but I knew what he was trying to tell me. There’s millions of memories, but that’s one that I’ll never forget.”

Daryll Clark ‘09

“Joe Paterno has been the second most influential man in my life behind my father for several reasons. Being one of three brothers to play for him, my family and I are proud to say that Joe was not only a coach, but a great friend. When people ask what kind of man Joe was, my favorite story to tell them is this. My mother passed away in early February of 1999, and her funeral Mass was held on a Saturday afternoon. Toward the end of the viewing, Joe, Sue and the Penn State football staff walked into the church to pay their respects. It was the last Saturday before Letter of Intent day, an incredibly paramount time in the recruiting process, so as you can guess we were not only grateful but very humbled by this action. He took the time out of his busy weekend to fly to Philly and pay respects to the mother of three of his ‘boys’. A lot of people were surprised by his attendance, but we were not because we knew that’s the kind of MAN Joe Paterno is, was and always will be in our hearts. God Rest Your Soul, Joe.”

- Keith Conlin, ‘95

“Outside of my Dad, who passed away when I was a young man and not yet a father myself, Coach Paterno was the most influential and constant figure in my life. For nearly 45 years, I had the honor and privilege of Coach Paterno’s guidance and friendship on a daily basis.

“As a player, I respected him. As a coach, I was in awe of him. And as an administrator, I came to truly know him for his kindness, his generosity, and for how much he truly cared about the staff, his players, and about Penn State.

“In raising my four sons, I have done my best to instill in them the same values that Coach Paterno strived to instill in me and in every player who wore Blue and White. His influence will continue to impact our university and its students on a daily basis for years to come.

“Finally, and most importantly, my boys and I will be eternally grateful to Joe and Sue for the friendship, kindness, and unwavering support they showed us after my wife and their mother passed away. Words can’t express the debt of gratitude we feel.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with Sue, Jay, David, Mary Kay, Diana, Scott, and the entire Paterno family.”

- Fran Ganter '71

“Walter Payton once said, "Always remember that every opportunity you have to meet someone is an opportunity to leave a piece of yourself."

Joe Paterno, not only fulfilled a promise he made to his father by making an impact, he left an indelible piece of himself with everyone in his life. The values Coach Paterno instilled in each of us that were fortunate enough to play for or work alongside him will never be diminished.

They are manifested in our leadership, character, class and dedication to improving the lives of others in the classroom, workforce and community. They are distinctly evident in the way we raise our children and the type of husbands and fathers we have grown to be. I am forever grateful for the impact that Joseph Vincent Paterno has made on my life. I am not ashamed to say to Coach and his family that the way all of your former players will carry your legacy forward is by humbly improving the lives of those around us every day.

“Thank you Joe! “

- Al Golden '91

“Words could never express how sad Elaine and I were upon learning of Coach's passing. Our thoughts and prayers go to Sue and the Paterno family. I've known Joe and Sue for more than 55 years; he has been my coach, boss and most importantly my friend. I consider myself a very fortunate person to have been included in Coach Paterno's life.”

- Galen Hall '63

“If we are lucky, we can identify a person who we can admit without question made a significant, unique difference in our life. I am that lucky in having found that person, and that person is Joe Paterno. I was honored when Joe Paterno agreed to induct me into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1988. Coach Paterno wanted me to be a good football player, but was determined that I was first and foremost a good student. An invaluable gift, few in big time, big money college athletics take the time to bestow these days. It is much more than a cliché, Coach Paterno taught me a lot about football, but even more about life. While I, like thousands of others, mourn his death, I will also celebrate his life, a life rich in devotion to his family, his players, and his beloved home at Penn State. He deserves no less.”

- Jack Ham '71

“This is a tremendous loss for Penn State and the world. Joe Paterno was a great man who was one of the greatest influences on my life and the lives of Penn Staters. For all of us who played for Joe, he taught us so much. He was a teacher and an educator first. He taught us about self-discipline and paying attention to the small details. He built young men from the inside out. He's famous for saying, ‘If you keep hustling and plugging away something good will happen,’ and we all discovered how true that was.

“Because of the way he led and taught Penn Staters, the world is such a better place, not just because of his direct influence, but because of the influence he had on so many who have graduated from Penn State to positively impact the world.”

- Dave Joyner '71

"Coach Paterno was one of the legends of coaching and his passing is very sad for all of his former players and the Penn State family. His accomplishments both on and off the field will never be matched. What he was most proud of though was not what we accomplished, but how we accomplished it - 'Success with Honor' was his phrase for it. He instilled a spirit in each of us that we were part of something bigger than ourselves and upholding the Penn State tradition. The things I learned at Penn

State are still with me today and they have made me a better person and a better coach. My thoughts go out to his family in this extremely difficult time. Rest assured coach Paterno will never be forgotten because his traditions and legacy will be carried on by all of his former players and the fans of Penn State."

– **Mike Munchak, '81**

"Early in my collegiate playing career at Penn State, it became clear to me that from my athletic perspective it was going to be a challenge to get playing time with great players like Jack Ham ahead of me. If I was to stay involved in the game of football, it was going to be as a teacher and a coach. Fortunately, there could not have been a better experience than learning how to teach and coach the game than being around Joe Paterno and the Penn State program. Not only did I get a great education in the classrooms at Penn State, but I also learned lessons as part of the football program there that I continue to use today as part of my coaching career."

- **Paul Pasqualoni '72 on ESPN**

"It's really difficult to find words that encompass what Coach Paterno will forever mean to me. He reinforced that a man's character, morals, values and fundamentals were the main ingredient for success. Succeeding in the classroom, succeeding at your job and succeeding at home, should all be placed before success on the football field. The fact that the all-time winningest collegiate coach placed a much higher precedence on guiding his players to a successful life is indicative of his authentic values and iconic character. He brought great perspective to my life, and I will always and forever take those lessons, live by them, and pass them forward."

– **Bryan Scott, '03**

"That time (2003-04 seasons) showed his true character. I learned the most during those two down years. Joe taught me that that's when you need to grab your brothers, dig in and climb that hill. The team just came together. That's when Joe was at his best as a motivator. The way he did things, carried himself and impacted people. It can't be overridden. As a man, this man's legacy needs to be one as a champion of a man, not just a football coach. Just striving to do things the right way, he showed the right example, worked hard and got success and that's what I got out of Penn State and Joe Paterno."

– **Tim Shaw, '06, on ESPN**

"As we mourn the loss of Coach Paterno, thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Paterno family during this difficult time. Coach Paterno will always be remembered and honored by those who knew him best as a visionary and principled leader whose thoughts, actions, and ideals influenced the lives of so many here at Penn State and across the globe. His legacy will live-on forever as the lessons, ideals and principles he embraced and taught will be passed on to current and future generations - - by the thousands of individuals whose lives have been positively IMPACTED by him. His love for Penn State, education and belief in the potential of people, especially student-athletes and those he worked with, is and will always be inspiring. He will be missed dearly."

– **Mark Sherburne '91**

"Words truly can not explain the impact Joe had on my life. I remember looking into Joe's eyes as I laid on the field at Ohio State and hearing him say, 'You're going to be ok!' From that September day in 2000 until today Joe has been more than a coach to me. I wish I could tell everyone all the little things Coach did for my family and me. From visiting me in the hospital while I was going through my recovery to lending Coach Sarra to my family, Coach went above and beyond what any Coach was every obligated to do for a player. With the passing of Joe, I truly feel like Penn State lost its heart. Joe is and always will be Penn State. I will do whatever I can to make sure Coach is remembered for all the wonderful things he did for Penn Staters and his legacy will live on through everyone he's touched."

There will never be another Coach Paterno, but I feel thankful and blessed to have had him in my life. To the Paterno family, thank you for sharing a great man with all of us. To Joe, thank you for being a mentor, coach, and inspiration. Without you, I would not be who I am today! You are...Penn State!!”
– **Adam Taliaferro, ‘05**

Penn State Football Radio Play-by-Play Announcers:

“It's something of an unusual circumstance when an older man's life is influenced by a younger man. Such is the case when considering my association with Joe Paterno. Just being around him made me a better person. His legacy lives through the lives of the thousands of players and associates he touched. He made a difference ... I loved him ... I will miss him.”

- **Fran Fisher, 1966-82; 1994-99**

“Joe Paterno believed deeply in family, education, giving back and football. He loved football and he used football to teach life lessons and to drive his players to degrees. Countless Penn State football players are important in communities and corporations because of the foundation they received at Penn State and the life lessons he taught. He loved his family deeply and he treated every person involved in the football program as a member of his extended family. He cared deeply about everyone involved. He was humble about his accomplishments but he gave back and he made almost everyone around him better. He was a great leader and a man of great integrity. To me ... he was as great a friend as anyone could ask for. I have been blessed to know him.”

– **Steve Jones, 2000-present**