The Alumni Forum

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Abstract

(Editor’s note: This is the second of a series of invitational comment by prominent former students of Iowa State. The conductor of Over the Cofjee, popular DES MOINES REGISTER column, speaks here on a lively topic.)...
To the Editor of SKETCH:

My guess is that there are at least half a million Iowans whose lives would be enriched by the resumption of an annual football game between Iowa State and the State University. Or they think it would, which amounts to the same thing. By its omission they feel deprived, as many thousands of people would feel deprived if the Yale-Harvard game were to be abolished.

It's a pretty bauble, like a favorite old necktie or an heirloom brooch. Merely to discuss it at length magnifies its importance beyond all due proportion. I can name several dozen other issues more vital and urgent to Iowans. But most emphatically this does not mean that an Iowa-Iowa State game is unimportant.

Behind the elusive unwillingness of a few powerful and pivotal state and university officials to resume this game are concealed the same kinds of twisted and outmoded tribal taboos that we stumble over at United Nations or toward world federation and peace. There are quaint antiquarian remnants of obduracy, suspicion, arrogance, vainglory, timidity, secrecy, and other baroque bric-a-brac of the not-so-gay nineties.

Iowa State's men and women would share the University's joy if the Iowa team could finish at or near the top of the Big Nine year after year. But it becomes more and more evident that victory in half or slightly more than half of those games is all the state can reasonably hope to achieve.

As in many other states, a far more natural, spontaneous, healthy, indigenous and fruitful rivalry exists between the State University and the State College. If high schools within a city can safely play a yearly game, it is difficult to understand objections to an annual game between publicly supported colleges within a state. And even if the State University wins 9 out of 10 games, it will still be a colorful event on the calendar of the Iowans who pay the bills.

I propose that a Joint Committee of graduates and undergraduates of the two universities* bring the question into the open by seeking public hearings before the State Board of Education. The next step would logically be a request for open hearings before the suitable committee of the Iowa Legislature. Meanwhile, a Committee of students should (1) supervise the circulation, in many Iowa towns, of petitions for an annual ISC-SUI game and (2) confer regularly and frequently with the college Administrations and with the Athletic Departments. The objective should be a game on the first mutual open date, and regularly thereafter. Competition in baseball, track, basketball and other sports should also be resumed, perhaps even before the football game.

If no open date is immediately available, I suggest a special or post-season SU-IISC game in 1948, with the proceeds devoted to sending food overseas. It might be called the Calory Bowl.

Restoration of this game would be a proper tribute to the mature and adult attitudes which now prevail largely among the students on both campuses.—*Dum vivimus, vivamus!*

Most Sincerely,

HARLAN MILLER

* Both schools are universities save for an outmoded trick of nomenclature.