

et al.: Front Matter

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# SYRACUSE

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

## JIM BROWN AT 60

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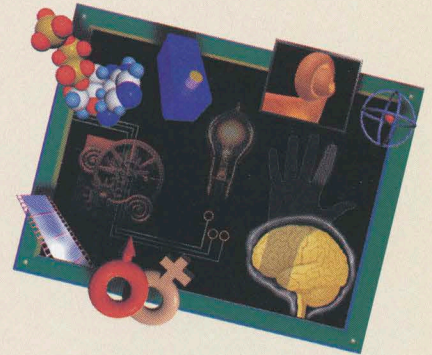
# SYRACU

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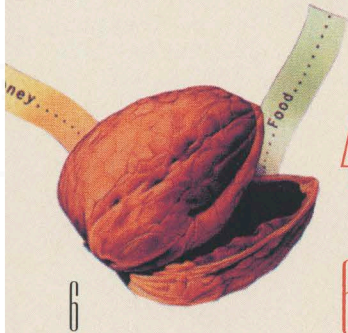
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## OPENING REMARKS

# Defining Moments

*The simplest things can change a life forever*

We were an odd-looking group to say the least—six disheveled, sweating, 30- to 40-year-olds sitting around a chipped Formica table at a city diner, catching our breath after three straight hours of Wednesday night volleyball. So far we were virtual strangers, thrown together by chance to form a team that had played too long and too hard for its own good. But we had triumphed, finishing the evening 6-2, and in the bloom of team spirit had agreed to break bread together at a local eatery before calling it a night. Now here we were, a ring of stones, feeling awkward at our strangeness and wondering in collective silence why we hadn't simply gone our separate ways home, popped a few ibuprofen, and limped to bed.

I for one detest such silences, and so took the lead in making conversation by introducing the topic of jobs—usually a safe bet in these situations. But four members of the group—a computer technician, an electrical engineer, and two salesmen—had little to offer beyond a few half-hearted “yups” and “nopes” to questions about their professions. Fortunately, teammate number five, a science teacher named Ron, had no such inhibitions, and launched headlong into a string of stories about his students, school, and fellow teachers. He was a delight to listen to, in part because it was obvious this man loved what he did for a living. So at the conclusion of his tale about the skunk in the gymnasium, I asked Ron why he decided to become a teacher.

“A bug made me do it,” was his response.

Ron went on to explain that during a childhood visit to his uncle's farm, he decided to play “jungle hunter” in a field of new green hay—a game consisting of his matting down a circle of grass deep within the field and lying around waiting for any lions or panthers to happen by.

The sun on his skin, the cool grass at his back, the whirl of summer insects filling the air soon lulled Ron toward sleep. Then, a sudden flicker of shadow across his closed eyelids pulled the boy back to wakefulness. Ron opened his eyes and squinted toward the sky to see

what appeared to be some kind of bird hovering above him. It dropped lower, flipped left, flopped right—and landed on his face. The astonished 8-year-old found himself staring toward the heavens through the church-window wings of a Monarch butterfly.

“I should have screamed—lying there with a huge bug on my face—but I was totally enthralled,” Ron recalled. “I couldn't get over the beauty of its wings, its weightlessness, its total fearlessness of me. I didn't realize it at the time, but that experience completely changed me.”

With the next breeze the butterfly took to the skies and little Ron jumped to his feet to watch it sail away. “From that moment on I became fascinated with nature,” grown-up Ron said. “Now I try every day to share that boyhood thrill with my students.”

And, on occasion, with five sweaty guys in a city diner.



JEFFREY CHARBONEAU  
EDITOR





IN BASKET

## ADMIRABLE ADMISSIONS

**G**uardians of the Gate," your article in the Winter 1995/96 issue about the SU admissions office, struck me as a most accurate description. I am an alumna and now the parent of an SU undergraduate. During our college search, the efforts of SU admissions stood out above all other colleges and universities we visited. After arriving at SU, our son received individual attention from an experienced faculty advisor. And the welcome and assistance we received on Opening Weekend made the transition to college life easy for the whole family.

The entire staff of the Office of Admissions is to be congratulated for its excellent efforts in selecting the best students for the University and for the programs instituted to make sure that those students succeed at SU.

JOANNE FOGEL ALPER '72  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

## HOOP DREAMS

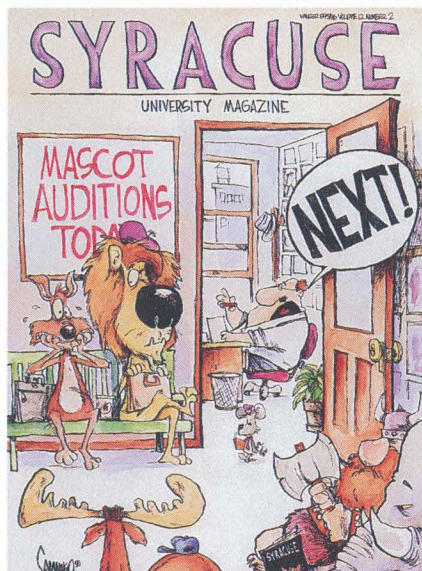
**I**very much enjoyed your Winter 1995/96 article "Hoop Dreams" and the information it contained on Jim Boeheim and Orangemen basketball. Watching a Syracuse basketball game is a gut-wrenching experience. This emotional intensity, however, is insignificant in comparison to the ulcer-producing pressure of coaching and the constant media scrutiny directed at a head coach of national prominence. With perhaps the caveat to recruit a couple of seven footers, Coach Boeheim heads an exceptional program and is deserving of the benefit of all doubt as judged by the serious fan.

DAVID S. RUMSEY '75  
RANDOLPH, NEW JERSEY

**U**nfortunately for Jim Boeheim, loyalty is not the criterion for a good college basketball coach. Ask anyone who is a knowledgeable, neutral college basketball fan if Jim Boeheim is a good bench coach and the answer you will probably get is: "He's a heck of a golfer!"

MIKE WEISS '86  
SOUTH BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

**I**wanted to send you a quick note to thank you for publishing the women's basketball schedule on the



back cover of the Winter edition of *Syracuse University Magazine*. As a collegiate basketball coach, I know how interested our alumni are in this information and how important it is for the institution to show support for all inter-collegiate programs regardless of whether they are revenue producing.

SUE LAUDER G'78  
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

## WHO SAID THAT?

**I**n "Quad Angles" (Winter 1995/96) you quote Gloria Steinem during an on-campus appearance as saying: "We have convinced ourselves and the country that women can do what men do. But we haven't convinced ourselves or the country that men can do what women do." With my usual modesty, I believe that I said it first. This quote was in a speech I made when I received an honorary degree from the State University of New York in 1994. It was picked up by the news wires and appeared in many places across the country. As an SU graduate, I thought you might like to know.

KAREN DECROW '72  
JAMESVILLE, NEW YORK

## SNOW COMMENT

**H**ooray! Your editorial "Snow Days" is right on! I hope you've figured out a way to put it in the hands of every radio/TV station manager, news director, anchorperson, and meteorologist.

I'm not sure, however, that television stations make light of snow days to "exploit for market gain the notion that children must, and should, detest school." These people aren't that devious or that bright. I think they just believe it's funny, so they continue to perpetuate a stereotypical situation. I hope they get your message.

WILLIAM G. CLOTWORTHY '48  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

**N**ot only is there nothing wrong with occasional snow days, but wishing for them is OK, too. It does not devalue education; routine maybe, but not education. I work with those bright, enthusiastic students you speak of, who wish for snow days. It does not diminish their enthusiasm for learning. In fact, I bet the most enthusiastic college students were among the most enthusiastic wishers for snow days when they were kids. It is the little surprises that help us keep that enthusiasm at a higher level.

NADINE ESSEL '78  
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

## SOBER THOUGHTS

**I**read your Winter 1995/96 article "Sober Alternatives" with great interest. Letting potential as well as current SU students know that there are alternatives to drinking alcohol or getting high is admirable. The government-funded FIPSE program is great, and gives your students a chance to excel while avoiding the slowdown in achievement caused by drugs and alcohol. The students promoting these programs are definitely saving lives.

I was never able to graduate from college due to a drinking problem. Alcohol and drugs contributed to the deterioration of my personal life, as well as hurting those around me. I only wish programs and students such as those at SU were around when I was a student.

CESAR A. CAJAR  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

*Syracuse University Magazine welcomes letters from readers. Address letters to: Syracuse University Magazine, 820 Comstock Avenue, Room 308, Syracuse, New York 13244-5040. Letters are subject to editing for style and space limitations.*