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**Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics
Executive Summary of History, Goals and Results
October 2009**

In 1989, the trustees of Knight Foundation were concerned that highly visible athletics scandals threatened the very integrity of higher education. At that time, higher education was one of the foundation's primary interests and the trustees firmly supported the mission of our nation's colleges and universities to help create a civil, cohesive and free society. They believed that fulfillment of that broad mission was being jeopardized by growing cynicism and the loss of public trust stemming from the loss of integrity in college sports—the most visible activity of some of the most visible institutions in the country.

In October 1989 the trustees, with the leadership of then-Knight Foundation President Creed Black, created a Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and directed it to propose a reform agenda for college sports. The Commission's challenge was to develop and win acceptance of realistic reforms that would close the widening chasm between higher education's ideals and big-time college sports.

The Commission's founding co-chairmen were William Friday, president emeritus of the University of North Carolina and Theodore Hesburgh, president emeritus of the University of Notre Dame. Friday and Hesburgh co-chaired the Commission during its work from 1989 until 1993. During those years, the Commission issued three seminal reports:

- *Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics*, released in March 1991.
- *A Solid Start: A Report on Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics*, issued one year later.
- *A New Beginning for a New Century: Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States*, released in March 1993.

In 2000, the Commission, with the leadership of Knight Foundation President Hodding Carter, decided to reconvene and issued a 10-year retrospective report in 2001, *A Call to Action: Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education*. Friday and Hesburgh remained co-chairmen. A list of the Commission membership during these two iterations is attached as Appendix A.

In 2003, the Commission decided again to reconvene because it was not satisfied with the follow-up on the recommendations made in its 2001 report and believed outside pressure was needed to advocate for change. Bill Friday chaired the Commission's efforts until February 2005 when he retired from the Commission. Friday was succeeded by another founding member of the Commission, Wake Forest University President Thomas Hearn. In spring 2006, Hearn took the position of chairman emeritus and Southern Methodist University President R. Gerald Turner and Michigan State University President Emeritus Clifton R. Wharton became co-chairmen. Wharton also was a founding member of the Commission and Turner joined in 1991 after *Keeping Faith* had been issued. In May, 2007, University System of Maryland Chancellor William E. (Brit) Kirwan joined Turner as co-chairmen and Wharton remained on the Commission. A list of the current Commission membership as well as those who served during this third iteration is attached as Appendix B.



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The Commission's 1991 landmark report, *Keeping Faith*, presented a road map that captured the essence of what it takes to reform college sports: a "one-plus-three" model in which the "one," presidential control, is directed toward the "three:" academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and a certification process to verify that integrity. In the years since the release of *Keeping Faith*, the Commission has consistently focused on the guiding principles set forth in its one-plus-three model.

The Commission in the past has prepared scorecards outlining its specific recommendations and how the athletics community has responded to them. It is gratifying to note that while the Commission has no formal authority, the vast majority of its recommendations have been acted upon at the national, conference or institutional level. Yet scorecards, however informative, can be weak measures of the full impact of the Commission's efforts to fundamentally change the environment and culture surrounding college sports. A few broad comments here will serve to convey the impact of the Commission's work:

Presidential Control. The NCAA restructured in 1997, giving presidents full authority for the governance of intercollegiate athletics at the national level. Heretofore, such control had been in the hands of a council of athletics administrators and faculty representatives. Today, the NCAA's board of presidents continues to make progress solidifying and expanding its control over college sports. Presidents are also more fully engaged at the conference and institutional levels in a number of tangible and substantive ways.

Presidential leadership in shaping the NCAA's policy agenda has been a consistent theme since the Commission's 1991 report. As a result of the restructured governance system, presidents were able to push through sweeping academic reform legislation.

And, in October 2006, the NCAA released a report on the future of Division I intercollegiate athletics that was produced by a task force of 48 university presidents. The report focuses on academic integrity; fiscal responsibility; athlete well-being; and integration of athletics into the university mission. The report and its recommendations build upon the principles and goals first articulated by the Commission.

Upon the report's release, NCAA President Myles Brand called the report "the most concerted reform effort from presidents and chancellors since the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics' groundbreaking 1991 report, titled "Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete."

Academic Integrity. Progress toward insuring that athletes are students first, earning credits toward graduation, has been substantial. Many rules changes over the years have paved the way toward recent landmark NCAA legislation that links teams'—not just athletes'—participation in postseason championships with their academic performance, as recommended by the Commission in *A Call to Action* in 2001. That recommendation specified that teams should graduate at least 50 percent of their players to be eligible for postseason competition. In 2003, the Commission began issuing graduation rate report cards for football and basketball teams participating in postseason competition to increase visibility and pressure for meaningful academic reform. Indeed, the 50 percent graduation rate standard became part of the NCAA's new academic performance benchmarks, and postseason competition bans are included in the tiered penalty system to be applied when teams consistently fail to meet those benchmarks.



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Financial Integrity. Significant improvements have been made in terms of institutional control of athletics-related funds, and cooperative efforts to account for the full and true costs of intercollegiate athletics programs are making good headway. Since the Commission reconvened in 2003, it has continued to press for greater fiscal responsibility, increased transparency, full cost accounting, and resistance to the commercialization of college sports being driven by the relentless pursuit of revenue to support escalating costs.

The NCAA presidential task force report issued in fall 2006 echoes these objectives by recommending new financial reporting systems to achieve full cost accounting and greater transparency. The report notes that complete and accurate institutional and comparative financial data will help presidents in their efforts to moderate costs. Former Knight Commission member Peter Likins, University of Arizona President Emeritus, chaired the task force and its fiscal responsibility subcommittee.

Certification. The NCAA adopted a certification program in 1993 requiring an in-depth institutional self-study and peer review. The program's initial focus clearly reflected the Commission's road map for reform, as the four key areas studied included: governance, academic integrity, financial integrity, and equity, welfare and sportsmanship. Although the program has been streamlined since its adoption, it continues to focus on academic and financial issues.

In sum, at the NCAA's January 2005 convention, NCAA President Myles Brand awarded William Friday the Gerald R. Ford Award, noting that under the leadership of Bill Friday and the first Ford award recipient, Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, "...the Commission made an extraordinary contribution to the future of intercollegiate athletics with its landmark 1991 report and call for greater presidential involvement." He continued, "Bill and the Commission had it exactly right. The reforms of the last dozen years to ensure the academic success of student-athletes and align intercollegiate athletics with the mission of higher education can be traced to the enhanced role college and university presidents have played in the governance of college sports."

While the intercollegiate athletics environment today differs greatly from that which existed in 1989 when the Commission was formed, it is unquestionable that most of the positive changes in college sports since then would not have occurred were it not for the Knight Commission's clear voice and consistent pressure to reconnect college sports and higher education.



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Appendix A

MEMBERS OF THE KNIGHT COMMISSION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS 1991-1993 and 2001 Commissions

[Members who served the 1991-1993 and 2001 Commissions are noted with an asterisk (*). The positions of these members are noted as they existed at the time of their Commission membership.]

*William C. Friday, President Emeritus, University of North Carolina (Co-Chairman)

*Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame (Co-Chairman)

Lamar Alexander, President, University of Tennessee (Resigned after the 1991 report as he was appointed U.S. Secretary of Education in December 1990)

*Creed C. Black, President, Knight Foundation, Ex-officio (Former Knight Foundation President for the 2001 report.)

*Douglas S. Dibbert, Executive Director, General Alumni Association, University of North Carolina

*John A. DiBiaggio, President, Michigan State University (President of Tufts University for the 1993 and 2001 reports)

*Thomas K. Hearn Jr., President, Wake Forest University

*Bryce Jordan, President Emeritus, Pennsylvania State University

*J. Lloyd Huck, Chairman of the Board, Pennsylvania State University

*Richard W. Kazmaier, President, Kazmaier Associates

Donald R. Keough, President, The Coca-Cola Company

*Martin A. Massengale, President, University of Nebraska (President emeritus of Nebraska for the 2001 report)

*The Honorable Tom McMillen, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

*Chase N. Peterson, President, University of Utah (President emeritus of Utah for the 2001 report)

*Jane C. Pfeiffer, Former Chair, National Broadcasting Company

Kenneth Pye, President, Southern Methodist University

*Richard D. Schultz, Executive Director, National Collegiate Athletics Association (In 2001, Schultz was the former executive director of the NCAA and former executive director of the United States Olympic Committee)

Donna E. Shalala, Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Madison (Resigned after the 1992 report as she was named U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services in January 1993)



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*R. Gerald Turner, Chancellor, University of Mississippi (Joined the Commission after the 1991 report and participated in the work for the 1992 report. In 2001, he was president of Southern Methodist University.)

*LeRoy T. Walker, Treasurer, United States Olympic Committee (In 1993, Walker was president of the U.S. Olympic Committee and in 2001, he was president emeritus.)

*James J. Whalen, President, Ithaca College

*Clifton R. Wharton, President Emeritus, Michigan State University and Former Chairman and CEO, TIAA-CREF (Resigned in January 1993 after his appointment as Deputy Secretary of State; rejoined the Commission in 2004)

*Charles E. Young, Chancellor, University of California, Los Angeles (President of the University of Florida in 2001)

NEW MEMBERS OF THE 2001 COMMISSION

Michael F. Adams, President, University of Georgia

Hodding Carter III, President, Knight Foundation, ex officio

Carol A. Cartwright, President, Kent State University

Mary Sue Coleman, President, University of Iowa

Cedric W. Dempsey, President, NCAA

Adam W. Herbert, Executive Director, The Florida Center for Public Policy and Leadership

Stanley O. Ikenberry, President, American Council on Education

Richard T. Ingram, President, Association of Governing Boards



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MEMBERS OF THE KNIGHT COMMISSION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

October 2009

[* Identifies members who participated on the Commission during 1991-1993 or in 2000- 2001.]

Dr. William E. "Brit" Kirwan, Chancellor, University of Maryland System (Co-Chairman)

*Dr. R. Gerald Turner, President, Southern Methodist University (Co-Chairman)

Val Ackerman, Past President, USA Basketball

*Dr. Michael F. Adams, President, University of Georgia

William Asbury, Vice President Emeritus, Pennsylvania State University

Dr. Henry Bienen, President Emeritus, Northwestern University

Nick Buoniconti, Founder, Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis and member, Board of Trustees, University of Miami

*Hodding Carter III, University Professor of Leadership and Public Policy, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

*Dr. Carol A. Cartwright, President, Bowling Green State University

Anita DeFrantz, President, LA84 Foundation

Dr. John DeGioia, President, Georgetown University

Leonard J. Elmore, attorney and ESPN analyst

Dr. Elson S. Floyd, President, Washington State University

Janet Hill, Vice President, Alexander & Associates Inc. and Trustee, Duke University

Sarah Lowe, former women's basketball student-athlete, University of Florida

Andrea Fischer Newman, Chairwoman of the University of Michigan Board of Regents; Senior Vice President for Government Affairs, Delta Airlines

Dr. Jerry I. Porras, Professor Emeritus, Stanford University and former Faculty Athletics Representative

Sonja Steptoe, Client Development Manager, O'Melveny & Myers LLP

*Dr. Clifton R. Wharton, President Emeritus, Michigan State University and Former Chairman and CEO, TIAA-CREF

Judy Woodruff, Senior Correspondent, The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer and Trustee emerita, Duke University

*Dr. Charles E. Young, President Emeritus, University of Florida and Chancellor Emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles

Christopher Zorich, Manager of Student Welfare and Development, and former football All-American, The University of Notre Dame

Alberto Ibarguen, President and CEO, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
(ex officio)

Members who served for at least two years during the third iteration of the Commission (2003 – present) but are no longer current members:

[The positions of these individuals at the time of their membership are noted.]

*Dr. Thomas K. Hearn, President, Wake Forest University (deceased)

*Dr. Adam Herbert, President, Indiana University

Dr. Peter Likins, President, University of Arizona

Dr. Harold Shapiro, President Emeritus, Princeton University