

**Senior Last Lecture**  
**Miami University**  
**2004**  
**Bobby Goldwater (Miami '74)**

Quite often, different circles in my life intersect. People and places that have no apparent connection somehow come together for me at the oddest times and occasions. I can't explain why, but it's always been that way. During my senior year in high school, on March 17, 1970, what would later become my two most important worlds came together and I didn't know it at the time. The men's basketball team of Miami University, one of the schools I was most interested in attending, was playing in the 1970 post-season National Invitation Tournament at Madison Square Garden, where I would later find my first job after graduating from college and wind up staying for 24 years. Who knew? Anyway, my father went to find a friend at halftime of the game while I stayed in our seats. But my dad came back in a very short time to get me to come with him to meet someone. Now you have to understand that my dad has always been a social butterfly at events and functions ... if there's a chance that he knows someone, even if it's one person among thousands, he'll be off to see if he can find that person. And then he'd bring my brother and me over to meet the person who he somehow miraculously always found, for one of the countless, dreaded, stilted adult-to-teenager conversations one had to endure. But on this March evening in 1970 at halftime of a basketball game in New York City, my dad happened upon one Philip R. Shriver and forgot about the friend he originally went looking for because Dad wanted me to meet the man who just happened to be the president of the university in which I had interest. In the middle of the commotion of a college basketball tournament halftime, Dr. Shriver generously spent 10 enthusiastic minutes with two complete strangers talking about Miami, actually selling Miami, and, if you've ever met Dr. Shriver, you know he's Miami's best salesman. I had gone to the Garden that day hoping to enjoy some college basketball and went home knowing where I wanted to go to college. As I said, Dr. Shriver's quite a salesman.

The reason I wanted to share this story with you is not only because I suppose it's a pretty good opening for a speech here at Miami but there's a postscript which makes this even more appropriate for a speech on the requested topic of Leadership with Values. Fast forward to four years later. Now it's September, 1973 and I'm the editor-in-chief of *The Miami Student* and I'm sitting in Dr. Shriver's office in Roudebush for a start-of-the-school-year interview. When we were finished, Dr. Shriver and I started talking, one thing leading to another, and I mentioned to him that I still appreciated our very first conversation, assuming, of course, that he would not have any reason to remember a chance meeting with a high school senior and his father – how many times did that happen every year for Dr. Shriver? – at a halftime of a basketball game four years earlier. But, to my amazement, he did, every detail, as if it happened the week before. Now in the early Seventies, students and college administrators were not exactly on the best of terms, at Miami or anywhere else. It is not my purpose this evening to retell old war stories, literal or figurative, of that era. But no matter what you felt about the Vietnam War or about many of the other important issues of the day, you had to respect Dr. Shriver. You had to appreciate that Dr. Shriver had a philosophy, had a vision, had a

consistency, had time to listen and exchange ideas, had a remarkable gift for making an individual in his presence feel important, and had a great passion for his work. It is humbling to be here to speak on the subject of Leadership with Values with someone in attendance who is one of the finest examples of providing Leadership with Values that I have found anywhere. Dr. Shriver, even more than I appreciated your giving me that first, personal introduction to Miami, as I look back, you are one of the people who I have most admired and you continue to be an inspiration. You are one of those special people who made a first and lasting impression. It's an honor and privilege to be here with you tonight.

President and Mrs. Garland, Matt, Mike, Jenny, honored professors, and everyone else in attendance who is connected and dedicated to the Miami community, I deeply appreciate the invitation to come back to our beautiful campus to present the Senior Last Lecture to the Class of 2004. I'm also delighted, as a former member and vice president, that Miami's outstanding Men's Glee Club will be here and perform later. Ayana Blair and Brian Breittholz, who work here at Miami's Office of University Advancement, are the people who arranged for me to come back to Miami and I'm grateful for all of their assistance, enthusiasm and support.

First and lasting impressions are so important. I'm sure you've all heard the adage, "you only have one chance to make a good first impression," and I suppose there is plenty of truth in that. But I think there is a greater truth and a greater value to strive to make an impression that is lasting. Every one of us has had and will have people and events that change our lives – they make us who we are; they shape our character and our values; they help us make choices and make commitments; they help us decide what and who to care about; they make first and lasting impressions.

I'm proud to have been in the sports, entertainment and facility management business for 30 years – since college – and for those of you who just nudged the person next to you to say "he doesn't look that old," thank you. And for the most of you who didn't, I can only say that turning 52, which I will next week, is not the end of the world a lot of us thought it would be when I was a senior like you, ready to close the Miami chapter of life and ready to embark upon the next journey. Each stage of my journey – before, during and after my years here at Miami -- has been filled with personal and professional happiness and satisfaction because I have always been eager to explore new things, because I found a profession I'm passionate about, that I'm energized about, and because some outstanding, special people somehow, luckily, found me. As I said earlier, people and events that made first and lasting impressions, that were examples of Leadership with Values, have impacted, guided, directed, even redirected, my life. It is my hope that your life, and the lives of those who are and will be part of your life, have such good fortune.

There is a 30-year difference between my Class of 1974 and the Class of 2004 but I've discovered many similarities. From what I read and saw, you guys had a pretty good football team this season. We had a great one, too – our team senior year also won the MAC championship and a bowl game, just as this season's team. This is still "The Cradle of Coaches" and the home of lots of fraternities and sororities; that hasn't

changed. Earlier today, I had lunch with my godson, Torin Cone, who's a sophomore at Miami and is here this evening, and I had my first toasted roll in years, although they were larger and less expensive in 1974. We went to concerts and games at Millett Hall, just like you. Uptown was always and remains busy but it's different now – in the Seventies, there was only 3.2 beer available, fast food and restaurant choices were limited, there was a water tower in the square in the middle of town and, for those of us who completed the production of the *Miami Student* Uptown late at night, nothing was better than going to the now-departed Beasley's Bakery. Like many people – including, I imagine, a few of you -- I met someone special, my future spouse, at Miami. I promise you will eventually find other things to get high blood pressure over instead of blue-covered exam books and many of you will actually choose to live in, maybe even build, homes with the familiar red brick you swear you never want to see again once you leave the campus. You, too, will have friendships from here that will last a lifetime and there will be memories ... but we'll get back to that later.

Just about everyone is a fan of someone or something connected to sports and entertainment. A team or player, an actor or musician, a TV show or movie, someone or something. Sports and entertainment dominate our media, our conversation, our society. The performers and events command, and get, our attention, perhaps overly so. Our appetite for stars and celebrity seems to be insatiable. It has become fashionable to highlight boorish behavior and questionable conduct of a growing number of athletes, entertainers, executives and others who are part of the sports and entertainment world. Too many individuals in sports and entertainment expect to receive the adulation, the privileges, the wealth, as entitlements but all too many refuse to accept or don't acknowledge the responsibilities that come with all of it. Many claim that they're not or don't want to be role models yet they crave to have their words and deeds make an impact on and be admired by the public, mostly so that they can receive additional attention and affluence. What may be good for selling tickets and merchandise, generating television ratings and boosting the bottom line does not necessarily celebrate the best of what sports and entertainment is and can be. The society of celebrity and our fascination of it, as with most everything else, are cyclical and we will eventually move on to other things.

For every example of a lack of leadership and a lack of values in sports and entertainment that receives far too much sensational coverage, there are worthy individuals and shining moments of great leadership and values that may or may not attract publicity but make profound, positive impressions. Every day, we see or hear about impressive leadership and performance: the athlete guiding a team to an improbable victory or playing despite an injury, the concert star providing his or her talent at a benefit show. And, while these are practically everyday occurrences, we do take notice. But, far more often, we do not hear about or consider the impact of those in my business who go beyond winning and starring. They are the individuals who are examples of Leadership with Values and they have made first and lasting impressions on me and countless others.

I have been inspired to do more and do better by people in the sports, entertainment and facility management arena who I have had the pleasure to personally observe and get to

know, whose actions and deeds provide exemplary values that translate to any walk of life. I have witnessed simple acts of kindness, unimaginable courage, unselfish social consciousness, bold creativity, sterling character that have made me proud to be in our business.

One of the best examples of Leadership with Values in a sports environment that I personally witnessed was demonstrated by the great middle distance runner from Ireland, Eamonn Coghlan. Eamon and I became friendly over the period when he was one of the dominant figures in track and field and arguably the greatest champion in the history of the oldest and most prestigious indoor track and field meet in the world, the annual Millrose Games at the Garden. On this night, Eamonn, who was coming off an injury, was seeking to win a record seventh Wanamaker Mile, the greatest indoor race in the sport. But with all of the attention and pressure he had that night, Eamonn came up to me about an hour before the 10 p.m. race to ask a favor: he wanted to have a young friend of his be at the finish line of the Wanamaker Mile. Now, for those who have never been to an indoor track and field meet, it can best be described as organized chaos. The runners and pole vaulters and high jumpers and the judges, timers, announcers, sponsors, photographers, event staff and whomever else is maneuvering in a constant whirlwind of activity in the confined, compact space of a banked track is more crowded than the Long Island Expressway in rush hour in a blizzard. Somehow there is never a crash or collision, although you fully expect at least one to happen. Basically, if you're not supposed to be on, near or around the track, don't be. So Eamonn knew his request violated every rule and there was a complication – his young friend was in a wheelchair, suffering from a debilitating disease. Anyone else making this request would have been turned down. But when the greatest star in the history of the Millrose Games asked – and you could see how important this was to him – you had to figure out a way to make it happen. Eamonn thanked me and in one of those moments you only see in an old “win-one-for-The Gipper” or “I'll-hit-a-home-run-for-ya-kid” movie scene, Eamonn leaned over to his young friend and promised that he would make him happy that night. You figure out a way to make it happen. So just before the start of the race – making it too late for an official or anyone else to complain – I escorted the young man in the wheelchair to a small open space adjacent to the finish line. And the gun sounded starting the race. Eamonn was a notorious slow starter and, as usual, immediately fell behind an elite, world-class field. But he was far behind, even for him. Far, far behind. With each lap, his young friend looked more worried and, finally, sadly resigned to the fact that Eamonn had not been able to return to his pre-injury form in time for the biggest race of the year. He was too far behind, even for his renowned end-of-a-race kick. Four laps to go. He was not losing any more ground and even gained just a little on the leaders. Three laps to go. He moved up a little more. Two laps to go. He started to close in but was still at least 10 lengths behind ... a long way. And as he approached the gun lap, Eamonn Coghlan – in the middle of a race, against the best runners in the world, trailing badly, one lap to go – looked at his young friend and me standing next to him at the finish line and ... winked. He winked. A don't-worry-I've-got-it-all-under-control wink. And the gun sounded for the last lap, Eamonn turned on his famous kick, the Garden crowd was as loud as it had ever been, Eamonn passed the leaders on the last turn and sprinted to his record-breaking seventh Wanamaker Mile victory. More than the

record, more than the trophy, more than the other accolades he earned that night, the joyous, amazed smile from an excited kid in a wheelchair was the best prize Eamonn received. Some time later, I saw Eamonn at a function, relived the race and the wink with him and asked if I had seen what I thought I saw. Eamonn, in his modest, humble way, said yes, he did wink because he wanted us to know that he was going to keep his word and make his friend happy, even if it was in the middle of a race. Eamonn also told me that the young man passed away shortly after that night at the Millrose Games. Eamonn would be genuinely embarrassed by having this story told because he wouldn't want his simple, private gesture to appear cocky or disrespectful to his fellow competitors. Because it highlights positive values on so many levels, I've determined that the statute of limitations has expired on Eamonn's request this evening since I am sure Eamonn would embrace my sharing the story and its lasting impression on this occasion with all of you.

Who are the leaders, or people who make a lasting impression, and what are the values that are important to each of us? In the sports and entertainment world, where do you begin? In addition to Eamonn Coghlan, I have a personal, although by no means all-inclusive, list of several others that includes people and events you have heard of and others you haven't, but they all offer something meaningful in values:

- New York Rangers Captain Mark Messier, who in 1994 with the Rangers facing elimination in a playoff series against the New Jersey Devils guaranteed – publicly guaranteed – a victory and went out to lead the Rangers not only to a win in the next game by scoring three goals in a comeback victory but ultimately to the NHL Stanley Cup championship which the Rangers hadn't won in 54 years;
- New York Knicks Captain Patrick Ewing, who never won an NBA title but led by example displaying his fierce pride and competitive spirit every game;
- Our staff at RFK Stadium in Washington who collected and donated food for Thanksgiving baskets for needy families at local churches;
- Tennis greats Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova who, each in her own way, stand courageously for so much to so many;
- The many performers who stood together and entertained at the historic 1979 No Nukes concert series at the Garden and others who were part of a national renewal at the 2001 United We Stand benefit concert at RFK following the September 11 tragedies;
- Paul McCartney, who had a chance encounter with a young public relations writer a year out of college at the Garden and stopped to spend some time getting acquainted with him and making him feel as important as anyone in his concert tour entourage;
- President Bill Clinton and Senator Bob Dole, who each speak with passion and conviction about love of country and service in different forms;
- Executives like Dave Checketts, the former President of Madison Square Garden, and Tim Leiweke, the President of AEG, Staples Center and the LA Kings, and others who have committed their respective organizations to community service and charitable endeavors;
- Former Washington Redskin football stars Brig Owens and George Starke and other athletes and entertainers who donate their time or their money, or both,

- running programs to successfully assist young people who come from the most challenging circumstances;
- Olympic, World and National figure skating champions Scott Hamilton and Peggy Fleming, who display unbridled joy on the ice and undeterred lives off the ice after coming back from cancer;
  - Former bosses like Bob Russo, who was the Garden's General Manager, and other colleagues who demonstrated how to manage and respect employees and co-workers;
  - The world-class athletes of the WNBA and the WUSA, such as Rebecca Lobo, Teresa Weatherspoon and Kym Hampton of the New York Liberty and Mia Hamm, a champion with the U.S. women's national soccer team and the Washington Freedom, who always make time to engage young fans and promote their sports;
  - Herb Brooks, the coach of the 1980 United States men's Olympic hockey team who knew how to get the most out of a group of young men for them to win their improbable gold medal;
  - Muhammad Ali, who was the greatest in the ring and greater outside of it;
  - Magic Johnson, whose assists made his basketball teammates better and who now assists in business to make communities better; and, finally,
  - someone I watched but never met – what finer sports and entertainment example of Leadership with Values could there be than the commitment, courage, sense of priorities and sacrifice of former football star Pat Tillman, who died serving his country in Afghanistan last week.

We could spend hours with stories about these and many other people and events but every person has his or her own list of those making first and lasting impressions, and the best part is we get to keep adding to it. They open up new worlds to us, they elevate us, and they give us new ways to dream. You can find those people and moments anywhere, certainly not just in sports and entertainment, and at any time. They may be teachers who have inspired us or family and friends who have supported us. They may come from a passage in a book, a moving monologue from a play or a brilliant sunset painting a horizon. Or maybe it will be someone who holds open a door of opportunity for you, perhaps as you're looking for your first job, so that you may do the same for someone else. Wherever you find them, these leaders and values, their first and lasting impressions inspire us, we ordinary people, to do extraordinary things in our own way, on our own stage. We discover we can do things when naysayers think we can't ... that's my personal favorite; that we can find a positive from a negative and learn from our mistakes; that a handshake can still have meaning; that we can do things not for the credit but for the quiet satisfaction of achievement or the pride in doing something well, like most people in my business who work long, mostly glamorousless, yet rewarding, hours behind the scenes.

In sports, entertainment and facility management, in my life, I've learned that time matters, that there's so much to do, that I don't want to be someone who looks back someday to lament that there was something I should have done (so I went skydiving

once just for a story for the *Miami Student* my senior year), that there's no such thing as caring too much, that showing up is important, and that getting involved is more so.

There literally has not been one day that I have not wanted to practically run through the door to go to work. At Madison Square Garden in New York City. At Staples Center in Los Angeles. At the Sports and Entertainment Commission in Washington, D.C. From the time I started working after leaving Miami University right up to coming back here this evening ... the sports, entertainment and facility management business has meant so much to me ... I appreciate everything about it ... I love what I do. And the reason for that is also my own, personal Leadership with Values example I'd like to leave with you. In my years at the Garden and Staples Center, and just as a fan at countless events, my favorite time of any day has always been that moment when the horn sounds just before the start of a game or when the lights go out just before the start of a concert or show. There's an anticipation you feel in the crowd, a get-ready tingling, an electricity, that you just don't feel any other time or in any other place than at a live event. And, in our business, it is a privilege to make it all happen, to create the setting for something special to occur: for people to spend time at a live event and to take home something more than a ticket stub or a program or a souvenir. Now, you don't know if a player is going to score 55 points in a game or if a special guest is going to make a surprise appearance on stage in a concert or if a child might meet the circus clown. Every event is different and anything can happen. But there's every possibility that anyone or everyone could take home a memory, something unique to them ... tonight. **That's a special trust and responsibility.** People choose to come to where we work and we get to have the pleasure of giving them the chance to lose themselves, to invest their emotions, to cheer and boo and root and agonize and marvel and sing along and celebrate and relive it over and over after they've gone home. All of us in the sports, entertainment and facility management business are really in something more ... we're in the memory business. We help people take home a memory from every event we help present. Think of it – a memory. Being in the memory business. That's what I do and I'm so proud to be a part of it. There's nothing better than that.

Everyone of you can be in the memory business. Maybe not in an arena or stadium or ballpark or theater but in your own work, in your own house or community, or any other place that's uniquely special to you. If you enjoy what you do and do what you enjoy, if you have found something meaningful in your life, you can share it with others. You can make your own first and lasting impressions. And they will lead to something good -- a good work, a good deed, a good time, a good effort, a good feeling, a good result. Something to treasure, something to remember. A special moment; a memory. Something to truly value. That's true leadership. And, as the Class of 2004 prepares to leave Miami, I wish it for each of you.