

George Wine: The passing of a champion SID

Written by Bob Brooks

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The passing of former University of Iowa sports information director George Wine on Thursday from a heart attack at age 81 produced a flood of memories for yours truly.

The main thing I've been thinking about after receiving the shocking news was what George saw and dealt with in the realm of sports public relations, of which he was a champion.

Iowa has had only four SIDs in the history of the athletic department. And of that group, certainly George presided in an era of the most change from the 1960's into the 1990's. George had a close relationship with the sportswriters, and I am sure, based on my conversations with him, that he always enjoyed his relationships with those writers.

They were in the main his kind of people. But soon during his tenure, along came the electronic media and national television, ESPN and 24-hour coverage of sports, and to George that was a whole different ballgame.

He faced the challenges of today's communications with the same sort of homespun intelligence that he used so effectively with the sportswriters. Also, he had to balance exclusivity in the radio broadcast area with keeping his relationships and sports news flowing to units that did not access to the exclusive broadcasts. He had to keep the information and the Iowa brand in their minds, too.

Basically, his career at Iowa went from the basics of sports journalism to the "now" era of

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electronic media. He also enjoyed writing books about Iowa coaches and games, including a biography of Hayden Fry.

George also enjoyed following the sportswriting career of his son, Steve, who has been covering Wimbledon this week. I'm sure George enjoyed seeing Steve's Associated Press byline from important events that Steve has covered for the AP bureau in Miami.

A great repository of sports knowledge and Iowa history has left us. But the things he taught the likes of Phil Haddy and Steve Roe, his two successors at Iowa, and yes the writers, telecasters and broadcasters of this state have helped to give Iowa a major league brand name in college sports.

Personally, I have lost a great friend and let's hope someday we will meet again in the pressbox in the sky.

(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)