

Outgoing University of Florida president looks back on tenure

by Jack Wheat
Knight-Ridder Tribune
November 01, 1999

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — John Lombardi, a historian, insists that only time will tell his legacy as president of the University of Florida in the 1990s, a tumultuous but mostly triumphant decade for the state's oldest and most prestigious university.

"Significance is not my problem. That's for somebody else to figure out," Lombardi said days before his Nov. 1 exit from the president's office. He will remain at Gainesville, taking up faculty duties in classrooms and an office carved out of the former athletic dorm.

Lombardi was hired in November 1989 and took office in March 1990. The Lombardi decade saw UF break into the ranks of the top 25 public universities by almost any standard. This fall, it ranked 16th in the annual U.S. News & World Report college guide, the country's most widely read college rankings.

"These are things the people of the University of Florida accomplished," Lombardi said.

"The only thing that distinguishes me is I can sing the song of the University of Florida with a voice that accurately reflects the aspirations and achievements of the people of the University of Florida."

But some people, including members of the Board of Regents, with whom Lombardi often crossed swords, are saying Lombardi's modest closing lines need amplification.

Regent Welcom Watson of Fort Lauderdale said Lombardi not only sang, but taught UF's faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors and other supporters the lyrics.

"He made them think they could

do it, and they did," Watson said.

The major Lombardi headlines stemmed from his high-profile skirmishes and occasional blunders. Twice in the past four years confrontations between Lombardi and regents were settled in

"He made them think they could do it and they did."

-Regent Welcom Watson,
UF at Fort Lauderdale

Lombardi's favor by raw political might.

In 1995, a conflict over the university presidents' authority almost led Lombardi to accept an offer to become president of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He stayed after the late Gov. Lawton Chiles and other powerful supporters compelled regents to rewrite policies to his liking. His most notable controversy erupted from a 1997 dinner-table conversation at a Christmas party for UF's highest administrators. He offhandedly referred to Adam Herbert, a black man who soon would become State University System chancellor, as an "oreo," and the remark was reported to regents and Herbert. Lombardi, who has often been praised for supporting minorities, apologized for his gaffe, but regents seized on the new opportunity to oust Lombardi.

Again, UF's political and financial backers rose to protect Lombardi. He kept his job almost two more years.

"What saved John twice was the vision he put up for the university," Watson said. "If you tried to mess with it, people jumped on you."

Lombardi resigned in August after Herbert made clear that he would deliver a performance review to regents that would put Lombardi's job in jeopardy again. Issues included large raises to four key Lombardi lieutenants, and a complaint from two visiting law deans that he bullied them when they were reviewing UF's law school. Watson said all that is history now. "Everybody feels good about what he's done at the university."

Lombardi is a charismatic speaker and a leading scholar of Venezuelan history. He had experience at three leading American universities before coming to UF. His graduate studies were done at Columbia in New York City. He was a professor and dean at Indiana University. He was provost of Johns Hopkins in 1989.

His hobby is overhauling automobile engines — usually the one in his red pickup — and his approach to administration is tinkering, twitching and overhauling. The side effects of the Lombardi method include a number of embittered former high-level administrators who were cast aside, and professors who lost their ready access to UF funds as a result of Lombardi's efforts to increase productivity. He engaged in no-holds-barred battling with the Board of Regents' staff, and more cautious sparring with the Legislature over budget restrictions he said made universities inefficient, kept faculty salaries low and held up construction of much-needed facilities. By 1999, many of the restrictions were gone. Faculty salaries remain below the national average, but the Legislature has provided substantial special

raises for thousands of excellent faculty statewide through programs Lombardi championed. As UF enrollment grew from 34,000 to 43,000, the school developed a system for advising and tracking undergraduates that has steadily increased the number of students graduating within four years.

Much of UF's rise stemmed from an early Lombardi initiative. UF is the only Florida school in the Association of American Universities, an elite group of leading research institutions. Lombardi required departments to compare themselves to their counterparts at the top public AAU universities. UF's administrative reforms, lobbying, fund-raising and other initiatives have focused on closing the gaps.

"He was not afraid to tell the regents that while the UF was great in Florida, it could get a lot better nationally, and he put forth the data to back it up," said Florida International University Provost Mark Rosenberg. "The better the University of Florida gets, the better every other university in the system gets. They raise the level, and that helps us set a higher standard."

Michael Browne, who was student body president and now is a Procter & Gamble executive, said, "We thought we had climbed the mountain. Dr. Lombardi showed us we had climbed a big hill, but we had a long way to go."

Orlando businesswoman Joan Ruffier, a former regent who was chairwoman of the board when the 1989 presidential search began, said the final assessment of Lombardi is simple: "He recognized excellence and showed the university how to get there."

BOEING 767 WREAKAGE



KRT PHOTO BY WILLIAM DABY

Members of the National Transportation Safety Board wait at the end of Pier 2 at Quonset. The building behind them will possibly house the wreckage from the Boeing 767 twin-engine wide bodied jet. The first full day of searching for wreckage yielded optimism that U.S. Coast Guard cutters have located the sonar pinger attached to one of the Boeing 767's two flight recorders.

College bookstore group sues online rival for false advertising

by Donna De Marco
Knight-Ridder Newspapers
November 03, 1999

VarsityBooks.com, the on-line college bookstore, is being sued by the National Association of College Stores for false and misleading advertising.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, claims the Washington-based on-line retailer is misleading consumers in its advertising for large discounts on textbooks.

The National Association of College Stores (NACS), which has 3,000 members, is seeking a permanent injunction to halt the advertising.

"Our members have been targeted by a new competitor," said Cynthia D'Angelo, a spokeswoman for the association. "Some of their advertising claims are attacking our members falsely."

According to the lawsuit filed Oct. 29, VarsityBooks.com's advertisements, which claim to offer college textbooks at a 40 percent discount, are implying that NACS member stores overcharge students for textbooks. College stores will suffer irreparable damage as a result, Miss D'Angelo said.

"The lawsuit filed against VarsityBooks.com for false and misleading advertising is completely without merit and we plan to contest it vigorously," said Jonathan Kaplan, a vice president at VarsityBooks. "VarsityBooks.com offers college students a choice when buying textbooks, and that choice means better prices, more convenience and

real value. College students didn't used to have that choice."

VarsityBooks.com was founded in December of 1997, when Eric Kuhn and Tim Levy invested \$25,000 to start the company that became the first on-line college textbook retailer.

VarsityBooks.com had \$42,000 in net sales in 1998, which grew to \$5.1 million for the first eight months of 1999, according to the registration statement the company filed yesterday

"Our members have been targeted by a new competitor."

- Cynthia D'Angelo,
a spokeswoman for NACS

Syracuse football player in critical condition after bar stabbing

by Christine Tatum
TMS Campus
November 01, 1999

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (TMS) — A senior starter on Syracuse University's football team remained in critical condition Monday after being stabbed during a melee that resulted in several arrests and sent at least four people — including two other players — to area hospitals.

University and city officials are still trying to make sense of the brawl, which erupted early Sunday and involved as many as 75 people hanging out at "Sadie's Place," a bar whose troubled past has prompted many SU students to dub it "Shady's."

"This is not a good establishment, and it's not a regular, college-student hangout," said Syracuse spokesman Kevin Morrow. "We know our athletes shouldn't have been there, but right now, we're focused on our hope for David Byrd's recovery."

Byrd, 21, a senior defensive back from Schenectady, N.Y., was rushed

into surgery at University Hospital with chest wounds near his heart. Also hurt were junior defensive tackle Duke Pettijohn, 22, of Mattapan, Miss., and sophomore offensive tackle Giovanni DeLoatch, 20, of Teaneck, N.J. Pettijohn and DeLoatch were treated in area hospitals for cuts on their bodies and heads and were released. Two other men, who are not SU students but are friends of the players, also were injured during the fight. One remained hospitalized in critical condition Monday, while the other was treated and released.

Syracuse police found two knives at the scene and charged two men in connection with the fight: Cheiron Thomas and Trequill Stackhouse, both 22. Thomas is charged with first-degree gang assault and second-degree assault, and Stackhouse is charged with first-degree gang assault and first-degree assault. More arrests are expected, police said. Investigators spent much of Monday trying to determine what started the fight. Police at the scene said bouncers tried to clear the bar after

smelling marijuana. As the crowd outside grew thicker, some of the suspects and victims exchanged words. Soon, the five unarmed victims were overpowered by more than a half-dozen attackers, many of whom had weapons, police said. The players and their friends did not appear to have been targeted because of their athlete status, police said.

Syracuse head coach Paul Pasqualoni, who spent Sunday at the hospital, said he was "shocked and saddened that such an incident could occur. Our program discourages student-athletes from going to a place like this," he said in a prepared statement.

"The notion of staying out of this kind of establishment will be reinforced by both the football program and athletics department," Sadie's Place, owned by the wife of an Onondaga County sheriff's deputy, has seen its fair share of trouble in the past few years. In February, a Syracuse man was stabbed there after trying to break up a fight.

Last November, former Syracuse University football player Antwaune Ponds started a fight with a woman outside the bar and held a 6-inch knife to her throat. He was later charged with menacing and criminal possession of a weapon. Police have also reported at least two other serious assaults just outside the bar.

Despite the bar's bad reputation, Syracuse players told police they often go there because it's off campus and gives them some privacy from students and fans. That allure may have prompted the players' visit to Sadie's on Saturday night. The fight broke out only hours after Syracuse's 24-23 loss to Boston College, a decided underdog, in the Carrier Dome.

"It's a terrible tragedy that no SU athlete nor student should go through," said Adam Schweizer, a junior education major. "And it is a big loss for the team and the school if none of them play again." Campus Correspondents Erica Levi and Claire Weingarden contributed to this report.

Students protest newspaper for its stance on academic standards

by Christine Tatum
TMS Campus
November 04, 1999

NORTHRIDGE, Calif. (TMS) — A Chicano student group at California State University at Northridge is protesting the student newspaper for what it says was a harsh and insensitive editorial supporting a new state requirement that flunks out freshmen who fail to meet remedial standards in their first academic year.

The *Sundial's* editorial — displayed under the headline "How Did They Get Here in the First Place?" — read: "If students who attend CSUN cannot pass a remedial English or math class, do not admit them into the university to begin with." It ends with the rhetorical question: "Isn't it better to pull the weed out by its root, instead of merely snipping the ends?"

The editorial did not name any ethnic group, but some Chicano students said it indirectly targeted

them. Last fall, 75 percent of Latino freshmen needed remedial math, and 70 percent needed remedial English. That compared with 63 percent of all Northridge freshmen needing help in math and 59 percent in English.

At an Associated Students meeting Tuesday, two members of MEChA — an acronym for Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan — said the student newspaper's editorial should be cut off.

The newspaper's editorial board has refused to apologize for the newspaper's stance, which also sparked a protest by about 30 Latino students outside the *Sundial's* offices last week. "I'm in a confusing situation here," *Sundial* editor Brian Franks told the *L.A. Times*. "I support their right to protest and I can see where they're coming from, but at the same time we have a First Amendment right to publish an editorial."

Judge rules in favor of professor claiming violation of his free-speech rights

TMS Campus
November 04, 1999

SAN DIEGO (TMS) — A federal judge has ruled in favor of a college professor who claimed his First Amendment rights were violated when the South Orange County Community College District ordered him to get anger-management counseling and to soften the language in two newsletters he publishes.

U.S. District Court Judge Gary Allen Feess ruled in favor of Roy Bauer, a philosophy professor at Irvine Valley College, one of two campuses in the community college district.

Bauer is the chief editor of two publications that have bashed the district's administrators: "The Dissent," a newsletter about the district, and "The Vine," which focuses on the college. In them, Bauer has published fictional accounts of the grisly deaths of trustees and of his desire to drop a huge block of granite on the college president's head. In November 1998, he described a room full of district administrators and wrote: "In

with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Despite its rapid growth, the company is still not profitable, reporting a \$13.9 million operating loss for the first eight months of this year. Last month VarsityBooks.com announced plans to go public with a \$75 million offering. "We're disappointed that [the NACS] would bring this baseless action [against us] to try to stop VarsityBooks.com from competing against them," Mr. Kaplan said

a room like that, no decent person could resist the urge to go postal."

District Chancellor Cedric A. Sampson ordered Bauer to tone down his work after several district officials said they feared for their safety. Bauer responded by filing suit against the district in January.

In his ruling, released last week, Feess found that "the speech in question is a core protected speech and there is no applicable First Amendment limitation that would permit the discipline to be imposed on Bauer." He added: "No reasonable person could have concluded that the written words of Bauer constituted a serious expression of an intent to harm or assault."

Sampson told The Chronicle of Higher Education that the district is likely to appeal the decision.

"For us this is a significant problem: how to protect the free speech of our professors and protect the workplace environment from threats of violence. The judge felt the language used by Mr. Bauer was protected speech. We viewed it as threats of violence, and we still do."