

August 26, 1943

Mrs. James G. Brannum,
1002 E. 7th St.,
Winfield, Kansas.

Dear Mrs. Brannum:

I have your good letter of the 25th instant, and am writing to tell you that I am gratified that the mother of two fine sons such as yours is interested in sending her boys to your own state school. I believe if all parents would have the same desire to keep their sons in Kansas, athletics in the state would be of a much higher standard.

I have heard a great deal of your two sons. Doubtless you may wonder why I have not called on them. I do not call on any boys because I believe that young boys who are interested tremendously in athletics may get the wrong viewpoint. Coaches often picture roseate futures to young athletes out of all proportion to their importance. I believe thoroughly in athletics and the great value that they may teach a boy. On the other hand, I find so many coaches that misrepresent to the boy an over-emphasis as to the value of athletics. Athletics are good for especially two things. They keep the boy training. The boy learns to say no a thousand times to temptation before he can say yes once to victory and a championship. Secondly, they introduce a boy favorably to business and society.

But athletics only last about three or four years in college, and after that a boy may play independent basketball but that is only for a short duration. I tell the boys the most important thing is learning to do something well that will carry him past the fifty or sixty year period with his earning power constantly increasing. Therefore, the academic training that a boy gets in college or university is much more important than the athletic training, but they both should complement each other. They should go hand in glove.

I do not write any boys, nor do I make rosy promises. Because of the fact that so many coaches do visit these boys and misrepresent the situation, I desist from doing this because I can only tell the boy one story and that is that life is a struggle and nothing is easy that is worth struggling for. You know, Mrs. Brannum, life has not been easy for you, and I can say that it has not been easy for me. Anyone who has lived past fifty years of age will testify that life has been a struggle. The Good Book says "the days of our years are three score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow for they are soon cut off and we fly away."

I only mention this to let you appreciate that in raising a family I know the common problems. We have had six children - three