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The Life and Athletic Achievements of Thomas Dwight Eddleman

Diana Eddleman Wilson
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THE LIFE AND ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS
OF THOMAS DWIGHT EDDLEMAN
(TITLE)

BY

DIANA EDDLEMAN WILSON

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

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THE LIFE AND ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THOMAS DWIGHT EDDLEMAN

BY

DIANA EDDLEMAN WILSON
This study documents the life of Thomas Dwight Eddleman who is possibly the greatest all-around athlete in the history of Illinois. Eddleman's diversity made him legendary as a high school athlete from Centralia, Illinois, in the early 1940s, and at the University (Champaign-Urbana) where he earned eleven varsity letters in football, basketball, and track. While the paper focuses on his sports' achievements, it includes a discussion of his "early years." It continues with a commentary on his contributions to society as the Executive Director of the Fighting Illini Scholarship Fund at the University of Illinois from 1969-1993.
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Teddy, the antithesis of the "little woman" whose Christian values have inspired the entire Eddleman family.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members: Dr. Scott Crawford, Dr. David Dutler, and Dr. Thomas Woodall whose knowledge and encouragement have been greatly appreciated.

Mrs. Kay Boyer has provided typing and computer expertise which has enhanced the appearance of my thesis. Her patience and friendship have been invaluable in the preparation of this document.

As a result of my research, I have acquired many new friends. Each had a wonderful piece of historical information that helped complete my biographical puzzle. I would like to thank everyone who showed interest in my project, especially:

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Of course, I must thank the man himself, Thomas Dwight Eddleman, who has been my hero since the day I was born!
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to document the athletic achievements of Thomas Dwight "Dike" Eddleman who is possibly the greatest all-around athlete in the history of Illinois. This study, while focusing on his endeavors in sports from the age of ten years through his professional basketball career, will also include his "early years." It continues with a commentary on his contribution to society as Executive Director of the Fighting Illini Scholarship Fund at the University of Illinois from 1969-1993.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Dwight Eddleman is an individual who possessed a tremendous natural athletic ability and drive which resulted in his excellent performances in the sports of football, basketball, and track.

In football, Eddleman began his career by playing for Centralia High School and continued his success at the University of Illinois where he played on the 1947 Rose Bowl Team. In 1992, he still holds the university's punting record with an average of 43 yards per punt.

His achievements in basketball include a stellar performance in the 1942 Centralia High School State Championship victory as well as a professional career with the Milwaukee Hawks, the Tri-City Blackhawks, and the Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons (now the Detroit Pistons).
A diverse track career of sprinting, long jumping, and high jumping culminated in a trip to the 1948 Olympics in London where he participated as a high jumper on the United States Track Team.

Eddleman's diversity in athletic achievements remains unequalled as he is the only athlete at the University of Illinois to have received eleven varsity letters for participation in the major sports of football, basketball, and track.

The legacy of Eddleman's many contributions to sports merits accurate documentation and discussion.
THE LIFE AND ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THOMAS DWIGHT EDDLEMAN

PREFACE

Even at his birth on December 27, 1922, Thomas Dwight Eddleman proved he was unusual. The only son born of German-English parents, he experienced a negative reaction to the milk he was fed. As a result, family physician, Doctor Henry Kissle, treated him with a black salve and ordered him to be kept tightly wrapped in a blanket. A variety of nourishments were tried until, finally, the newborn favorably responded to goat's milk which was provided by a neighbor (Root, 1992). His determination and tenacity at birth might be viewed as an omen of his future.
CHAPTER II

THE EARLY YEARS IN CENTRALIA

Thomas Edward Eddleman and his second wife, Alma Marie (Snider), were living in Centralia, Illinois, when their only son, Thomas Dwight Eddleman, was born in the front bedroom of their home at 226 North Maple Street. The baby boy had two half-sisters, Dorothy and LaVonne, and a third sister, Josephine. Unfortunately, the newborn infant would never have a chance to know his mother as she died of pneumonia when he was but eighteen months old. Dorothy Root, his eldest sibling, recalled: "I remember my brother when he was only two years old going to the window, holding a picture of his mother and crying. It just broke your heart to see him so sad" (Root, 1992).

The infant's birthplace was a thriving metropolis made up of railroaders, coal miners, farmers, and businessmen. The town of Centralia began to flourish around the 1860s when the Illinois Central, Southern, and Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad Lines were established. The railroads had a strong influence upon the economics of the city for by the 1930s they employed a quarter of Centralia's 17,000 population (Ross, 1992).

The railroads' wood-burning engines were eventually converted into coal-burners. Centralia was found to be a perfect source for this vital resource and as a result, coal mines were drilled attracting many workers of Irish, French
and German descent. The development of the rail lines ultimately attracted industries of great variety.

Many other people settled in this area of Southern Illinois because of the fruit crops which flourished there so abundantly. Strawberry, apple, cherry, and peach orchards thrived under the skilled hands of the Germans who tended them. The town was proud of its Peach Festival, "May Fate," and Halloween celebration. However, just as important as these annual events was the town's passion for athletics. People were drawn to any kind of athletic competition especially football, basketball, baseball, and boxing. By the 1940s, the coal mines, orchards, and oil fields had boosted the economy as Centralia had become a boom town. Townspeople, many of whom became wealthy overnight, always appeared to have plenty of money for a drink and a friendly wager on the outcome of the competition of one's choice (Ross, 1992). A classic affection for sport was developed by these hard-working citizens as they fulfilled a need for recreation and diversion.

From the beginning, Eddleman exhibited an enthusiasm for athletics. His sister, Josephine Brosnan, recalls that her younger brother had a ball in his hands as far back as she can remember. Raymond Root, a brother-in-law, had nailed a hoop to the neighbor's barn and, "If we ever wanted to find Dwight, we knew just where to look" (Brosnan, 1991).
In 1928, at the age of six, Thomas Dwight Eddleman displays his love for the out-of-doors. He would play outside from dawn to dusk as a young child.
Eddleman's own recollection of his interest in sports began about the age of five or six when he was allowed to play with neighborhood friends. "I was taller and stronger than other boys my age. The older kids were always forming teams for baseball or basketball. It really felt great when the older boys asked me to play with them," Eddleman reminisces (Eddleman, 1991).

Eddleman's father, who possessed a strapping, athletic physique, traveled as a conductor for the Illinois Central Railroad from the age of sixteen and was away from home much of the time. Eddleman does remember an uncle, Van Snider, who was a good athlete himself and who encouraged him to participate in various physical activities. Eddleman recalls that he would play outside from dawn to dusk. There were always neighborhood boys with whom to play and he never tired of shooting a basketball by himself.

While attending Central School during his elementary years, Dike was a "B" student. He remembers that his grade school teachers, all women, showed him even more attention as his athletic skills were revealed. A lifelong friend and fellow teammate from Centralia, Bill Davies, claims that one of their fourth grade teachers helped Eddleman dig a high jump pit in a corner of the school yard and coached him during free time on the playground (Davies, 1991).

Although Eddleman liked recess as much as his peers, it soon became apparent that he had a talent for jumping higher than the rest of them. In the fifth grade, he was high
jumping four feet nine inches. By the time he was in eighth grade, he was high jumping five feet eleven inches and defeating the best jumper in the high school (Ryan, 1941). Even though it appeared he was born a "natural," it was the hours of practice and his undaunted determination that set him apart from the others. Even at an early age, he seemed to realize the necessity for self-discipline and established self-imposed training rules. "I can remember when I was ten years old, even in the freezing weather, we'd go out and shoot baskets until dark. Once I remember sweeping the snow off the frozen ground so we could go on practicing" (Siler, 1948).

The tall, gangling boy, whom a classmate nicknamed "Dike," discovered that his favorite time at school was spent in the gym and on the playground. It was while attending Central School, in the heat of a rousing game of grade school basketball, that Eddleman was given his nickname. One of the young players on his team shouted, "Dike! Pass it to Dike!" When pronounced with a true Centralian "Southern drawl," Dwight does sound very much like Dike (Davies, 1991).

Eddleman recalls that it was while in the seventh grade that the Centralia High School basketball coach, Arthur L. Trout, saw him playing and told him he was good enough to be on his high school team. Eddleman remembers that he was "walking on air for days" (Eddleman, 1991). It was quite an accomplishment for a grade school player to receive such a
Mr. Purdue, the principal of Centrlia's Central Grade School, is pictured with the 1936 Heavyweight basketball team. Eddleman is front row, center, and holding the ball.
comment from one of the most highly regarded high school basketball coaches in Illinois history. Yet, Trout must have been watching for the young rookie as we read the documentation of Eddleman's early talent written by the sports editor of the Centralia Sentinel:

By the time Eddleman was in the fourth grade he qualified for a berth on Central's lightweight basketball team (for boys weighing less than 100 pounds). In the fifth grade he played with the lightweight All-Stars from other city schools. When he was in the seventh grade, the All-Stars won 17 and lost only one game. During a District tournament at Nashville, Illinois, Eddleman scored 36 points—a phenomenal number for a grade school player (Thorp, 1940).

By this time, Eddleman's father had remarried an attractive woman named Jessie Wilson. Dwight and his sisters acquired a stepbrother, Stanley, and a stepsister, Diane, through the exchange of vows between Tom Eddleman and his bride from Tennessee. Although Dwight found himself wearing hand-me-downs from his stepbrother, Eddleman remembers his stepmother as a kind woman with a sense of humor. She was a good cook priding herself on simple but delicious fare. "I can remember coming home from school to a house filled with the scent of freshly baked pies or cinnamon rolls. In the summer months, we always had an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables from my dad's garden" (Eddleman, 1991).

It was in 1938, after Eddleman's eighth grade graduation, that his father decided to retire from the Illinois Central Railroad. Upon his retirement, the decision was made to purchase 100 acres of land from a
brother and move the Eddleman clan to the family farm near Dongola in rural southern Illinois. In order that his athletic talents might be fully developed, it was agreed that Eddleman should remain in Centralia under the guardianship of his half-sister, LaVonne Lichtenfeld, and her husband, John. This decision, encouraged by Coach Trout, would prove to be a very wise one in the life of this budding athlete.

Separation from his parents at the age of fifteen was not an easy choice. However, the prospects of attending a one-room schoolhouse and eliminating any hope of athletic competition made the decision somewhat more palatable.

It was a culture shock for Eddleman to leave a loving home environment and to be placed with a couple who had no children. LaVonne's husband, John D. Lichtenfeld, encouraged Eddleman's athletic pursuits having had an athletic history himself, playing for Arthur Trout's 1922 Centralia State Championship Basketball Team. The couple was happy to help the young boy who showed so much athletic promise. At this point in his life, Eddleman learned an indelible lesson: with the roses come the thorns. For a chance to compete and grasp the "golden ring," he had to leave his family at a tender and vulnerable stage in his life.

Eddleman sacrificed growing up with his family for a chance at success. Athletics would fill the void in his life caused by the inevitable loneliness and insecurity he
experienced during those impressionable years of adolescence. It was a risk well taken as, over the next several years, Eddleman would develop into one of Illinois' finest prep stars. With the decision made to reside in Centralia, Eddleman was afforded the opportunity to attend Centralia High School and play for one of Illinois' finest high school coaches, Arthur L. Trout.
Here are two Centralia High School basketball coaches. On the left is Bill Davies, childhood friend and teammate of Eddleman. On the right is the legendary Arthur L. Trout who was a celebrated teacher and coach at Centralia High School for thirty-seven years.
CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCE OF COACH TROUT

Eddleman's most important memory from high school would not be from any single athletic event, but instead, from a friendship that influenced a lifetime of successful athletic and academic endeavors. Coach Arthur L. Trout became a father-figure, role model, mentor, and friend to this young athlete. His admiration and respect for Coach Trout is evident as he speaks reverentially about his former coach's philosophies and methods.

Trout's former players attest to the fact that he was an idealist. According to Eddleman, "He wanted us to learn the value of team unity, and the importance of playing together. That is the way he coached. The boys and the team came first because he was a builder of men" (Eddleman, 1992). He remembers how Coach Trout always emphasized equal time in the study hall and in the gym. It was Trout's belief that athletic achievement and academic excellence were synonymous. He took great pride in the number of his players who continued on to college.

Looking at Coach Trout's roots gives definition to his coaching genius and enables one to draw distinct parallels between the ethics of these two sport legends. As the son of a Christian Church minister and Latin teacher from
Bruceville, Indiana, Trout acquired a lifelong love for reading from his father who had an extensive library in their home.

As a young boy, Trout was expected to memorize lines of poetry and Biblical scriptures to sharpen his mental acuity. Eddleman was fascinated by Trout's ability to quote verse after verse from the classics. One of Trout's favorite poems was "IF" by Rudyard Kipling. Ironically, this poem, which Eddleman can quote verbatim, became his creed.

"IF"

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream--and not make dreams your master;
If you can think--and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings;
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings--nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And--which is more--you'll be a Man, my son!
(Kipling, The Home Book of Verse, 1912).

Although Eddleman and Trout had different reasons for participating in sports, both turned to athletics at an early age. Trout's childhood was not an easy one since, within a year's time, he caught both typhoid fever and diphtheria. It was after suffering from these childhood diseases that he became motivated to turn to athletics as a means of strengthening his frail body.

He raised money for college by serving for five years as a teacher in a small school on the outskirts of Bruceville. At the age of twenty-two, he entered Indiana University with the goal of becoming a certified teacher. His life in Bloomington was a mixture of studies, athletics, and work. He enjoyed his college days immensely, especially playing halfback on the Indiana University football team. Encouraged by friends, he entered the boxing ring and emerged as welterweight champion.

In 1914, before graduating from college, Trout spent much of his free time in the company of a lovely Bloomington native, Freda Sears. She was an attractive and talented young woman who played the piano "by ear." With graduation ending his tenure at the Indiana campus, Trout promised his
young fiance that he would return for her soon. Being a man of his word, Trout returned to Bloomington during the Christmas holiday of 1914 and married Sears on Christmas Eve. (Incidentally, Eddleman married his high school sweetheart, Teddy Townsley, on Christmas Day in 1945.)

Trout had already been teaching and coaching at Centralia High School before reciting his marriage vows. The newlyweds returned to Illinois taking up residence in a home only one block from the school. It was here that Trout sought refuge from the pressures of a highly stressful profession by surrounding himself with his family, his books, and his animals. He was a private man and this desire for privacy led to many unfounded rumors and myths which circulated around his school and the town. "Whispers that the Trouts had never liked Centralia still float about. Some said that they had never unpacked their good china and silver because they always planned to move the following year" (Schnake, 1992).

The Trouts had three daughters, Virginia, Dorothy, and Pat. A son, Robert, died at birth. Pat describes her father as a devoted husband and a kind and loving father who showed us great tenderness (Schnake, 1992).

Trout was a gentleman and a gentle man. His daughters recall sitting in the back seat of their car while their father delivered baskets of food to a widow and her children. He not only spoke about the "Golden Rule," he lived by it. He ordered coal sent to a needy family one
winter and bought eyeglasses and dentures for others (Schnake, 1992).

Similarly, Eddleman is remembered by many as a sensitive and caring person. Champaign-Urbana resident, Ben Crackel, recalls: "Over the years while I was at the News-Gazette, I had several opportunities to work with Dike. At times, extra tickets for Illinois' games were available and Dike always found some youngster, a budding athlete or a coach who could be helpful to the Illinois cause. Dike always took care of them" (Crackel, 1991). Perhaps Eddleman's generosity was the result of yet another lesson learned from the example set by Coach Trout.

Because he was an eloquent speaker, Trout was invited to address various types of banquets around the state. His ability to speak extemporaneously was a finely developed art. He told wonderful stories and his audiences were enthralled. It made no difference to whom or where he spoke, he would always wear his coaching uniform, a wrinkled suit, white shirt, necktie, and tennis shoes. His trademark in apparel also included a battered hat, which in later life covered a balding head (Schnake, 1992). Following Eddleman's athletic successes, he, too, would become a coveted speaker traveling to banquets and meetings statewide.

As dean of boys, football coach, basketball coach, athletic director and master teacher, Trout ruled supreme throughout the halls and classrooms at Centralia High
School. Trout's history classes were overflowing as his reputation on and off the playing field became known to the student population. He taught classes with the same finesse with which he coached. "Arthur Trout personified the positive aspects of athletics within the education experience; moreover, he did it with color, drama, and a vivid imagination. Players and students alike respected him for his integrity, knowledge, discipline, and consistency" (Schnake, 1992).

Likewise, Eddleman was respected for possessing those same qualities. Dr. William Lindenberg, a dentist from Centralia who was in school with Eddleman, recalls the summer of 1946:

He used to practice punting footballs at the high school field where we almost always had a morning neighborhood baseball game. If Dike was punting, we would go to the opposite end of the field and shag the footballs in a large canvas bag and take them back to him to kick again. When he became tired, he would come down to the southeast end of the field where our dirt-base diamond was and pitch baseballs to us. All of us younger boys idolized "Dike" and, in his white shorts, football shoes, and with sweat glistening on his bare arms and chest in the sun, he was the closest thing to a Greek God we had ever seen! He knew how to be friendly, modest, humble and yet was able to command respect for his many achievements (Lindenberg, 1992).

Trout's 37 year basketball coaching career at Centralia High School produced 809 victories, ten State Tournament teams, and three State Championships. His teams won twenty-five games during fifteen different seasons while accumulating more than sixty-five championship trophies (Schnake, 1992) Obviously, the man was doing something
Doctor William Lindenberg remembers Eddleman during the summer of 1946 as "the closest thing to a Greek God we had ever seen." Eddleman is pictured here wearing his favorite white shorts sporting a bronzed physique, one of his trademarks.
right. Although his methods were sometimes unorthodox, he always walked away a winner.

Pat Harmon, former sports editor of the Cincinatti Post and historian for the National Football Foundation's College Football Hall of Fames recalls:

The most remarkable person I met on the high school basketball circuit was Coach Arthur L. Trout who won state championships in 1918, 1922, and 1942. His football teams had bizarre plays, one of which ended with the center carrying the ball after a lateral pass from the quarterback. His basketball teams used a full-court press on defense and a shoot-and-rebound attack on offense. His players used a two-handed push shot which was executed with their feet and knees together, the body centrally balanced, and the ball held against the face just below eye level (Harmon, 1977).

Eddleman and Trout's "Kiss Shot" became a notorious combination as the prep star scored with deadly accuracy. The name was most appropriate because it appeared that the players kissed the ball as they arched it nearly to the rafters. "What's funny," comments Eddleman, "is that after a game our chins and the tips of our noses would be black with dirt. We shot often during games because Coach Trout told us to shoot any time we were open and past the center line" (Eddleman, 1992).

During his thirty-seven year reign as head basketball coach at Centralia High School, Trout never changed his method of coaching. When asked by reporters about his tenure, he confided: "God was good to me. Anytime I'd have a few bad years and would be wondering if the school board was going to fire me, the Lord would send me a Spurgeon or an Eddleman, and I'd be saved" (Harmon, 1977).
Whether divine intervention was the reason for Trout's successful career will never be known. What can be documented is the fact that he was a master of psychology and wit. His showmanship bordered on theatrics. When the "Greater Downtown Coaches Association," as he referred to disgruntled fans, thought a freshman was not seasoned enough to play varsity ball, Trout would take the boy to center court wearing a garland of carrots and other vegetables and sprinkle it with salt. Trout would then declare that the player was now "seasoned" and could play (Schnake, 1992).

At the height of Eddleman's success, opponents would target him with malicious physical and mental assaults. These attacks greatly disturbed Coach Trout. Before a big game with rival Mt. Vernon, Trout entered the dressing room carrying a miniature saddle which he tied to Eddleman's back before the team took the floor. During warm-ups, Coach Trout gathered the referees and the opposing coaches together.

"Gentlemen," he said, "each game I see different forms of rough tactics used against my boy, Dike. Let's be open about this. If you want to ride him, ride him now while he's wearing the saddle.

When the game commences and the saddle comes off, I want the riding to stop. Let's just play basketball!" (Schnake, 1992).

His point well made, the game proceeded without incident.

Not only clever on the court, Trout knew what the public wanted to hear and often gave reporters an exclusive. For example, asked why the Centralia Cardinals became the Centralia Orphans, he told one reporter the name came from a
Coach Arthur L. Trout was held in the highest esteem by students and athletes alike. Coach Trout is flanked by two Centralia high school basketball standouts, Farrell Robinson (left) and Dwight Eddleman (right).
Chicago writer who wrote about the Centralia team while playing at the Pontiac Tournament. "They looked like orphans in their bedraggled uniforms, tired and dirty from a long trip, but they sure could play basketball." On another occasion he said the name came to him back in the early 1920s when he saw Lillian Gish star in the movie, *Orphans of the Storm* (Neipoetter, 1977).

This cleverest of coaches was affectionately referred to as "Mister Trout" by his players, "the Old Man" by his fans, and "King Arthur" by the media. Held in the highest esteem by all who knew him, it was only fitting that a monument be built in his honor. In 1938, when the population of Centralia discovered they were sitting directly on top of a huge oil field, this wish became a reality.

By 1940, nearly 2,000 wells pumped away in farm fields, backyards, and vacant lots. "The Lake Centralia field, producing 300,000 barrels each day, grew into the single largest oil field in America" (Schnake, 1992). With this wave of prosperity came a new facility specifically designed to house the high school basketball team. It was appropriately christened "Trout Gymnasium." Above the entrance to the gym is a huge stained glass window bearing the form of two basketball players. The Latin words "Mens Sana In Corpore Sano In Omnia Paratur" proclaim the school's philosophy: "A sound mind in a sound body prepares one for all things in life." The facility serves as an appropriate
legacy to a coach who was worshipped by his adoring fans and players in a community where basketball is deemed a religious experience.

Trout would be pleased that alongside the many trophies that adorn the halls of Trout Gymnasium stands a shrine to one of his greatest players. In a glass case, next to an oil painting of Coach Trout, hangs the retired jersey of Centralia's famous number forty, Dwight "Dike" Eddleman.
CHAPTER IV

THE ROAD TO EXCELLENCE

Eddleman embarked on the road to excellence at an early age when, as a seventh grader, he was offered a scholarship to Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Newspapers throughout the country had run his story and a photo after the fourteen year old boy had jumped 5' 8 3/4" in his bare feet while wearing street clothes (Eisenbath, 1992).

Under Coach Trout's excellent guidance, Eddleman proceeded to develop physically, academically, and spiritually. Early in his high school career, Eddleman's versatility and promise peaked the interest of sports enthusiasts everywhere. Bert Bertine, sports editor of the Champaign-Urbana Courier wrote:

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Mr. Eddleman is that he is only a freshman. Rare it is when a freshman makes a varsity team, and then to find him setting a state record to boot makes one wonder what this young man will do when he grows up! A good-looking lad, Eddleman, known as 'Baby Snooks' by his teammates stands six feet even and weighs 160 pounds. He is only sixteen years old (Bertine, 1938).

Upon his enrollment at Centralia High School, expectations were high for the shy and unassuming young freshman. As he played his first football game of the season, hearts must have skipped beats and gasps for breath must have been heard throughout the crowd when Eddleman was
downed from behind on a late hit. Eddleman, who had just thrilled fans minutes before by scoring the first two touchdowns of the game, was immediately sidelined with a knee injury which kept him from playing any more high school football until his senior year. Eddleman remained a part of the team, providing assistance to Coach Trout, while he was convalescing.

Trout, who was ahead of his time in so many respects, showed signs of being an athletic trainer. He would have his athletes report early prior to contests to have their ankles painted with merthiolate and wrapped with tape. This inexpensive antiseptic which stained the athletes' legs for days probably served more as a badge of courage than a medicinal aid. Unfortunately, neither tape nor merthiolate, could provide protection against Eddleman's knee injury.

Trout's concern for the welfare of the individual athlete was evident following Eddleman's football mishap. Although Eddleman was able to continue his athletic career during the ensuing basketball and track seasons by wearing a knee brace, the pain he suffered in the injured limb caused he and his coach great concern. It was decided by Trout that the two would travel to Ann Arbor, Michigan, the summer following Eddleman's sophomore year so that knee surgery could be performed by one of the best orthopedic surgeons of the day. Arrangements were made to go to Ann Arbor by Centralia's team physician, Dr. William Gamble, who was an alumnus of the University of Michigan. Financial support
Due to a knee injury during his first football game as a freshman at Centralia High School, Eddleman was not allowed to play anymore football until his senior year. He is pictured here in 1942 with Bob Nichols following a game against East Peoria that Centralia won 18-6.
for the trip north, the medical procedure, and a six-week recuperation period was provided by Centralia High School and local organizations (Eddleman, 1991).

Following his operation, Eddleman was not allowed to return to football until his senior year in high school. Loren Tate, sports editor of the Champaign-Urbana News Gazette, recalls:

That senior year, after two years away from football, Eddleman sparked a 13-7 opening win with an 80-yard run, a 65-yard run, and a drop kick for the extra point . . . and saved the game with an interception on the goal line (Tate, 1992).

Joining the team as a halfback and a punter, Eddleman finished his senior football season scoring 127 points and being named captain of the 1942 All-State Football Team.

Despite his knee injury, Herman Masin referred to Eddleman as a "four-alarm athletic fire and the greatest one man gang since Superman" (Masin, 1947). This "super kid" excelled in several sports, but basketball was his favorite.

As a high school freshman, Eddleman set a state record by scoring 24 points in one game at the state tournament in Huff Gymnasium, Champaign, Illinois.

Ironically, one of his outstanding high school basketball memories is not of a victory but of a defeat. During the 1941 basketball season, the Orphans were scheduled to play a game hosted by the Taylorville Tornadoes. During pre-game instruction, Trout dropped the bombshell. He informed the team that he planned to start the game with Eddleman and four members of the second team.
Eddleman, who was described as a shy and unassuming youth, is pictured here during his junior year of high school in 1941.
As a result of the new line-up, the Orphans were down by six points at the end of the first quarter. During the second quarter, the rest of the starters were put into the game with one second string player taking Eddleman's place. When the buzzer sounded at the half, Centralia trailed Taylorville by fourteen points.

During halftime, the Orphans made the usual trek to the locker room to await Coach Trout. The coach never showed but opted to sit on the bench all by himself. With a great deal of enthusiasm, the team vowed to show the old man by going out and winning the game.

At the beginning of the third quarter, Trout ordered the regular starters and Eddleman back into the game. By the end of the third quarter, The Orphans trailed by eighteen points. "With about five minutes remaining, Coach Trout called a time-out and told the first team to 'go out and win' (Enright, 1972). After trailing by twenty-two points, Centralia ended up losing to Taylorville by twelve.

When the Orphans returned to their locker room after the game, it was empty. There were no reporters, no fans. The media doesn't interview losers.

Coach Trout eventually returned to his team. As much as he would have liked to have beaten Taylorville and Coach Dolph Stanley, he verbalized the moral of that evening's lesson. "Boys, I wanted you to learn one thing here tonight--that the first team needs Dike just as much as Dike needs the other four players" (Enright, 1972). Teamwork,
Coach Trout's 1941 Centralia basketball team became known as the greatest team who never won the state tournament. The starting line-up, known as the "Wonder Five," was composed of Harold Wesner, Dwight Eddleman, Jack Klosterman, Bob Michael, and Bill Castleman.
trust, honesty, and respect--these were the ideals Eddleman learned through his athletic endeavors under Coach Trout.

Later that same year, the Orphans would learn another painful lesson about competition. The 1941 Illinois State Basketball Tournament would always be remembered as a great disappointment to Eddleman and his teammates who were referred to as the "Wonder Five." They were renowned throughout the state and it shocked everyone when they lost to Morton (Cicero) by one point on the way to the State title. Eddleman had paced Centralia through forty undefeated games when Morton, a suburban Chicago school, held Eddleman's total to only fifteen points (Thorp, 1949). That year the Orphans were tooted as "the greatest team who never won the State Tournament."

The 1941 defeat did not dampen Eddleman's competitive spirit. Even though he was the only returning senior on the 1942 Orphan basketball team, he and his teammates vowed to earn a trip to the championships in Champaign, Illinois, for another chance at that elusive State Championship trophy.

Achieving this goal provided Eddleman with the greatest thrill in his athletic career. Bert Bertine wrote an article in 1949 recalling the 1942 final game in which he stated:

The 1942 Centralia team was only a remnant of that great 1941 team, but it still had Dike. Winding up the most prolific scoring career in state annals, Eddleman scored twelve points in that final period against Paris. He shot long, he shot short, he rebounded like a demon and almost single-handedly carried his team to the prize it should have won the year before (Bertine, 1949).
During his senior year in high school, Eddleman vowed to return to the State Tournament and capture first place for Coach Trout and Centralia High School. He and his teammates accomplished their goal. Following the 1942 State Championship game, the Orphans posed with their trophy. From left to right: Bernard Schiffendecker (8), Bob Wham (14), Fred Pierce (41), Coach Trout, Dwight Eddleman (40), Jim Seyler (5), and Farrell Robinson (3).
As the fourth quarter of the 1942 final championship game between Centralia and Paris started, Eddleman had accumulated only four points. With only five minutes left in the game, Paris was leading by thirteen points. Eddleman, pale after a bout with strep throat and suffering from blood blisters on both feet, rallied during the last minutes of the game. With only fifty-five seconds on the clock, Eddleman was fouled as he took a shot. He tossed in both free throws with the infamous "Kiss Shot." The score was tied at 33-33. Seconds later, he leaped high to seize a defensive rebound and dribbled the ball the length of the court to lay in a short shot. He missed, but he grabbed his own rebound and put it in at the buzzer (Bertine, 1949). The Orphans had captured the third State Tournament title for Centralia and Coach Trout.

During Eddleman's high school basketball career, he scored 2,702 points with 969 of those points scored during his junior year. He scored in double figures in fifty-six games and tallied over forty points on six different occasions. During his senior year, he scored a game high forty-eight points (Thorp, 1949). Such feats resulted in Eddleman being named to three All-State Basketball teams during his four-year high school career.

By this time, Eddleman was gaining national recognition as one of this country's greatest high school athletes. However, he never lost the respect and admiration of his fellow students as illustrated by this acrostic poem which
In 1942, following one of the greatest State Tournament Basketball games in the history of Illinois, Eddleman and Coach Trout check the scoreboard in what proved to be a memorable victory for the Centralia Orphans over the Paris Tigers. The final score was 35-33.

FOR NO. 40

by

Merle Rogers

Davy Jones was a sailor and that is all good, Issac Newton worked problems like all smart men should, Kipling wrote stories-- but people want more Eddleman, basketball and an outrageous score!

Everyone who has seen him will always proclaim Dike's one of the best at the basketball game, Dumping in baskets from angles secluded Leaving all in amazement, the coaches included, Ever dribbling the ball the length of the floor, Making a basket and right back for more. All will agree that I'm talking with reason-- Nothing's been said that he won't do this season!

Throughout his high school sports career, Eddleman also excelled as one of the state's finest track stars. During his years on the track team, Eddleman won the state high jump championships in 1940, 1941, and 1942 utilizing the Western Roll. He set a school record by jumping 6' 6 3/4", a Centralia High School record that stood until 1980 (Eddleman, 1991). His other events included the quarter mile and the long jump.
This photograph was taken following the 1942 Sectional Tournament game played in Centralia. The players (First row, left to right) are: Jim Edgar, Farrell Robinson, Dwight Eddleman (holding the trophy), Fred Pierson and Bernard Schiffendecker; (Second row, left to right): Jim Seyler, Bob Wham, and Coach Trout.
No matter what the sport, Eddleman possessed a drive that has been exceeded by few athletes past or present. In an article written by Jack Ryan, Trout comments on Eddleman's tenacity:

Trout thinks Eddleman is tops as a competitor. 'You know he was operated on last summer. He had a knee fixed that he banged up before we made him quit playing football and he had the surgeon work on his ankle. Now that ankle was hurt when he was running the 440-yard dash against Mt. Vernon. He and this other boy were out in front by themselves and this other boy went to pass Dike. He spiked Dike, ripped up his ankle something awful. Well, Dike won that race. He won it boiling mad and with his teeth gritted and the sweat standing out on his forehead. That's what I mean when I say he's a competitor' (Ryan, 1941).

The road to excellence provided Eddleman with the ride of a lifetime. Despite the separation from his family, the glory of success soothed his pain, leaving no visible scars.
CHAPTER V

THE EMERGENCE OF A CHAMPION

By 1942, the scope of his fame was incredible! Fan letters, some addressed to Eddlemanville, poured into Centralia. "Dike answered every one of them. No matter who they were from or what they said, he felt an obligation to respond" recalls lifelong friend, Dr. George Ross, currently the historian for Marion County in Illinois (Ross, 1992). Packages from as far away as Chicago, 280 miles to the north would often have "Yea, Eddleman" scribbled on them. Hunting caps and plaid wool jackets became the rage in fashion as young boys tried to dress like their favorite hero (Davies, 1991). When Dike went to the movies, which was his favorite thing to do on Sunday afternoons, he would sit in the front row surrounded by as many youngsters as could afford the price of admission (Meany, 1942).

While adored by hometown fans and respected by fellow athletes, the time came for Eddleman to continue his career by declaring his choice of colleges. There was much speculation concerning that decision. The summer he graduated from high school, he was still being recruited by major universities from across the country. Would he choose Indiana University, Coach Trout's alma mater? He had spent six weeks in Ann Arbor, Michigan, after his knee surgery. Would he head north in his pursuit for higher education? Notre Dame was also knocking at the door. "By the middle of
Following successful knee surgery performed during the summer of his sophomore year in high school, Eddleman was allowed to return to the game of football during his senior year.
his senior year in high school, Eddleman was a national sensation. Colleges from the South, Far West, and Midwest begged him to do or die for their dear old alma mater. Besieged by offers, Trout declined to advise him" (Siler, 1944).

During December of 1941, Eddleman and the other All-State football players were invited to a banquet which was held in Champaign, Illinois, and sponsored by the News-Gazette. Governor Dwight Green was the guest speaker that evening and publicly recognized Eddleman. He remarked that he hoped the youth would choose Illinois. "We Dwights have to stick together," Green said. Centralia's representative in the state legislature, R. J. Branson, arranged a conference between Dike and Governor Green in Springfield. "What was said there is not a matter of record, but it is understood that the governor never did a better job of selling the State of Illinois and principally the University at Champaign-Urbana, for it was shortly after that meeting that Dike enrolled there" (Thorp, 1949). The high school prep star enthusiastically turned in his red and white Orphan uniforms for orange and blue ones. He looked forward to playing in Huff Gymnasium, an accessible location where his family and friends could travel to watch him play.

During his freshman year at the University of Illinois, Eddleman found the competition challenging. His arrival coincided with an influx of talented prep grid and basketball stars. The talk of the campus and the country
The All-State football players were invited to Springfield to meet with Governor Dwight Green. It was following this trip that Eddleman agreed to attend the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. Among those pictured outside Lincoln's home in the state capitol were Governor Green (wearing a dark suit and standing behind the left fence post) and Eddleman (standing behind the right fence post with both hands in his pockets.)
was a sensational group of sharpshooters called the Whiz Kids who included Art Mathisen, Ken Menke, Andy Phillip, Jack Smiley, and Gene Vance. Eddleman soon realized there was much to be learned about college athletics and gladly accepted the challenge (Eddleman, 1991). Eddleman enjoyed college life and joined many other athletes in pledging Sigma Chi social fraternity.

However, in January of 1943, Eddleman's college career was abruptly put on hold. Like many others, Eddleman was called to military duty during World War II. He entered the Army Air Corps and was sent to Fort Sheridan for induction.

Upon his arrival at the Chicago base, he was given permission to participate in the Chicago Daily News Relays and the Chicago Tech Relays, both indoor track meets. It was at the Chicago Tech Relays that Eddleman beat the best high jumper in the country, Dave Albritton (Eddleman, 1992). Ten days later, Eddleman was sent to Miami Beach, Florida, were he was assigned as a Physical Training Instructor, i.e., P.T., at Miami Beach Air Force Base. At twenty years of age, he and the other physical trainers assigned to the base, were leading approximately 50,000 young cadets in calisthenics on the beach with the help of loud speakers. Eddleman recalls, "Some would jokingly refer to this tropical location as the site of the Battle of Biscayne Bay" (Eddleman, 1992). The most serious assignment Eddleman experienced during the war was a volleyball game on the beach in which he broke his right foot.
Eddleman's athletic career at the University of Illinois was put on hold when he was inducted into the Army Air Corps in 1943. After being sent to Fort Sheridan, he was stationed in Miami Beach where he was assigned as a Physical Trainer for new cadets.
In 1943, Eddleman posed by a palm tree in Miami, Florida, where he was sporting a cast on his right foot which was broken during a beach volleyball game.
Following approximately eighteen months in Florida, Eddleman returned to Scott Field near Belleville, Illinois, where he remained for about four months. He was then transferred to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, where he played basketball for the Kittyhawks, a team regarded as one of the greatest service quintets in the nation. While playing for the Kittyhawks, he was named to the College All-Star team which was comprised of the best college players in the country.

The money generated by the Kittyhawks was donated to General Jimmy Doolittle's wife's favorite charity via the Air Corps Relief Fund. The team played games around the country from California to Texas to New York. One particularly memorable game was when the Kittyhawks beat the Harlem Globetrotters in 1945 (Eddleman, 1992).

The war had taken its toll worldwide and the lives of these young athletes, who were inducted from college, were changed forever. Eddleman appeared to be one of the lucky ones who made a successful transition from military life back to college life. "You had guys who had been shot at. Alex (Agase) must have been twenty-six or twenty-seven years old. It was hard to keep guys coming out, getting to practice on time. It was a new transition for them to come back after they'd been in the service" (Young, 1990).

Upon returning to the University of Illinois as a second semester freshman in the spring of 1946, Eddleman was immediately issued his "Fighting Illini" athletic uniforms.
During the ensuing basketball season, he remembers being flown to Berkeley, California, to play in two Illini basketball games. From there he was flown to Pasadena to play in the 1947 Rose Bowl game in which Illinois beat the University of California Los Angeles. Following the 45-14 Rose Bowl victory, Eddleman returned by train to Champaign, Illinois, where he joined the basketball team to play in a game against New Mexico.

Having to switch from football to basketball was challenging. Eddleman recalls that playing both sports simultaneously was difficult because he used the legs differently. Yet, he never complained; he just trained harder. "In fact," says Doug Mills, one of his college basketball coaches, "Dike probably works too hard. If he has a fault, I'd say it's that he's too serious. He wants to excel and always works to that end" (Siler, 1948).

When asked if he liked the variety provided by participation in so many different sports, Eddleman replied:

You know that was the challenge—seeing if you could do them all. I enjoyed it, but I do think this: Sometimes the constant training got tough. The time I went to the Olympics, for example, I started training for football in August; went through football, basketball, and track seasons; competed in the Olympics; and, since I was a junior, started the whole process again five days after returning home. I think sometimes you can go too long. I think you need some time off. I was on some training program every doggone day of the year, and I don't know if that was all good (Schempp, 1988).

Yet, his persistence and training paid big dividends. During his sophomore year, Eddleman joined the Whiz Kids
This photograph of Eddleman was taken prior to the 1947 Rose Bowl game in which the University of Illinois beat the University of California Los Angeles 45-14.
during their final year of college basketball and proceeded to set a Big Nine Indoor Track record by jumping 6' 7 1/8". Throughout his college athletic career, Eddleman earned an unprecedented eleven varsity letters in football, basketball, and track. In both 1948 and 1949, he was named Athlete of the Year at the University of Illinois. In 1949, he was awarded the Conference Medal for outstanding proficiency in athletics and scholarship. While captain of the 1948-49 Big Nine Championship basketball team, he broke the Illini individual scoring record with 329 points for the season's conference games (Ilio, 1950). He also set a new school punting record of 43 yards per punt, a record held since 1948 (University of Illinois Football Guide, 1991).

All four years at Illinois, Eddleman competed in track as a high jumper. He won high jump titles each of those years in the Chicago Relays, the Illinois Tech Relays, and the Penn State Relays. He won three high jump titles in each appearance at the Big Ten Indoor Championships, the Central Collegiate Championships, and the Drake Relays. He won Big Ten outdoor high jump titles as well, one each in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Championships, the Kansas Relays, the Compton Relays, the Purdue Relays, and the Kansas City Games (Wilson and Brondfield, 1967).

It was during the summer of his junior year at the University of Illinois that he qualified to perform as a high jumper in the 1948 Olympics. The world, still reeling from the effects of World War II, was hungry for heroes.
During the summer of his junior year at the University of Illinois, Eddleman qualified as a high jumper in the 1948 XIV Olympiad in London, England. Eddleman jumps over George Ross, a college companion, in Memorial Stadium.
Eddleman would discover for himself that there were heroes
(and heroines) from all walks of life to be found in London,
England, site of the 1948 Olympics.
CHAPTER VI

HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE XIV OLYMPIAD

As the result of his many hours of practice and training, Eddleman earned an honor that many athletes pursue but never attain. On July 10, 1948, Eddleman became eligible to participate in the 1948 Olympic Games by qualifying at a pre-trial track and field meet held in Dyche Stadium at Northwestern University.

The University of Illinois was well-represented as a host of National Collegiate Athletic Association champions qualified from the school. Eddleman travelled to London in good company with teammates Harrison Dillard, Herb McKinley, Bob Richards, Clyde "Smackover" Scott, and Bill Porter.

After qualifying in their respective events at Northwestern, the Illinois athletes made a quick trip back to Champaign-Urbana on the train, leaving the next day to join the other American Olympic hopefuls in New York. Neither Eddleman nor teammate Bob Richards had anticipated winning their events at Northwestern. Seeley Johnston, owner of Johnston's Sporting Goods in Champaign, Illinois, recalls returning to his store with the two young athletes:

I gave them each a leather valise, a pair of pants, and a shirt. Neither of them had anything and they had to leave the next morning for London. I watched them both as they qualified at Dyche Stadium. I couldn't have felt prouder. They were two of the finest young athletes I have ever known. But more importantly, they were fine young men (Johnston, 1991).
With leather bags in hand, Eddleman and Richards boarded the Illinois Central railroad car which would carry them to their Eastern destination.

One can only imagine all the excitement the athletes felt as they gathered in New York City. Many other athletes had qualified only two or three days before. High school and college students, grandfathers, housewives, filling station attendants, doctors, lawyers, and preachers—they all came together with a common goal.

P. T. Barnum could not have created a more colorful scene than that aboard the U.S.S. America. Regular passengers received a real show as the champions trained everywhere on board the ship. "The oarsmen rowed across to England on special equipment nailed to the deck and the swimmers swam over in rope harnesses in the baby swimming pool. The weight lifters snatched, cleaned, and pressed weights of 300 pounds on the sun deck. The runners streaked by on the promenade deck; the boxers danced on the sports deck; the riflemen shot targets from the ship aft" (Whitley, 1948).

A medical team, which consisted of two doctors and two nurses, held sick call twice a day. Sore throats, infected eyes, muscle strains, and fillings out of teeth were common complaints. "No one wanted to take the chance of being handicapped to the smallest degree physically. The difference of winning or losing might lie in a blister on the foot or a cramped muscle" (Whitley, 1948).
It was while on board the ship that Eddleman and the other Olympians were given their uniforms and equipment. The United States team would look dashing at the opening ceremonies in their Jon Wanamaker navy blue blazers, sporting a red, white, and blue crest on the front pocket, light gray slacks or skirts, and white Panama hats. Eddleman recalls that "the girls found four-leaf clovers sewn under the Olympic emblems on their blazers" (Eddleman, 1992).

One of the highlights of traveling to London aboard the ship was a variety show in which many athletes performed two nights prior to the boat's docking. It was a special night because curfew had been extended from 10:30 p.m. until midnight. Eddleman did not perform in the variety show because he claims he was never blessed with the talent to sing or dance. He believes that confinement aboard the ship gave this group of Olympic contenders a special chance to socialize and develop new friendships (Eddleman, 1992).

Upon arriving in London, the red carpet was rolled out and a gracious welcome was extended to all competitors. England and the world had to put aside the problems of austerity, ration books, and thoughts about World War II which had ended just three years earlier. England did a magnificent job of hosting the Games. There was an estimated two million in attendance over the entire period of the event. Of those, approximately one-and-a-half million paid admissions of either eight dollars for a shady,
dry reserved seat or seventy cents for standing room only (The Official Committee Report of the XIV Olympic Games, 1948).

Eddleman remembers the opening ceremony and the parade of teams as an unforgettable sight. The U.S. team entered the stadium as the fifty-sixth team out of fifty-nine. As the athletes walked through the tunnel into Empire Stadium at Wembley, 80,000 people clapped and cheered exuberantly. "The release of white pigeons, the presence of the Royal Family, the rousing music, and all the color was overwhelming. It filled all of us with an unbelievable sense of pride. I will always remember the exhilarating feeling as we walked past the King and Queen of England. Representing the United States provided each and every athlete with the thrill of a lifetime!" (Eddleman, 1992).

The weather was atrociously hot and humid with temperatures ranging from eighty to ninety degrees Fahrenheit. Rain became a factor for many of the track and field contenders. Bob Richards recalls, "Dike and I were both plagued with the same problem. It rained on the day of our events. I really believe the weather had a bearing on our performances" (Richards, 1992).

While in London, the U.S. Olympic track and field team was housed at the Royal Air Force Base at Uxbridge. The athletes could work out on a track near their living quarters at the base. The athletes were bussed from Uxbridge to Wembley. Due to the rationing of food, box
lunches were made up for the Americans at Uxbridge and taken to the Stadium each day (Masters, 1948). Eddleman recalls how there were accusations that the U.S. team had an advantage over the other competitors because they were better fed.

Eddleman found himself competing on the very first day of competition. His Majesty King George VI proclaimed the Games officially opened on July 29, 1948. Eddleman's moment of truth arrived on July 30, 1948, when he would have his chance to win an Olympic medal in the high jump. David Wallechinsky chronicles the results by reporting:

John Winter, a 23-year old bank clerk from Perth, injured his back when he cleared 6 feet 4 3/4 inches. He decided to try one more height anyway, and made 6 feet 6 inches on his first attempt. Then he watched in surprise as the remaining four jumpers, including two Americans who had had to clear 6 feet 7 1/4 inches just to make the team, failed three times each. For the first time in the Olympics, ties were decided according to fewer misses (Wallechinsky, 1984).

The winning height was 6 feet 6 inches. The second, third, and fourth place jumpers all cleared 6 feet 4 3/4 inches. Eddleman was awarded fourth place in the record book due to his number of misses.

There has existed some controversy concerning Eddleman's results at the Olympics. This can be explained by reading the official account of the running high jump as it appears in the Report of the United States Olympic Committee: 1948 Games, 1948).

This event was won by John Winter of Australia, who was the only man of the field able to clear 6 feet 6 inches. The three American entries were
below their usual form. Verne McGrew, who won first place in the United States tryouts with a jump of 6 feet 8 1/2 inches, qualified for the final but did not place. George Stanich, who tied McGrew in the tryouts and Dwight Eddleman, who jumped 6 feet 7 1/4 inches in the tryouts, were matched in height with B. Paulsen of Norway and G. E. Damitio of France at 6 feet 4 3/4 inches. Because of fewer jumps, Paulsen was awarded second place, Stanich was placed third, and Eddleman, fourth. The International Amateur Athletic Federation jury later announced that these men would share second place but still later this decision was reversed (Report of the United States Olympic Committee: 1948 Games, 1948).

When asked if he was upset about the reversed decision of the Olympic Committee, Eddleman responded: "Of course I was disappointed. They told us we had all tied for second place. Then they changed their minds. Every game has rules and you have to play by them. Whether you agree with the outcome or not isn't relevant" (Eddleman, 1992).

Eddleman contends that he could and should have won first place in the Olympic high jump event in London. Teammate Bob Richards agrees with him:

Dike and I should have won our events. There's no question about it. What's really a shame is the fact that we didn't take the advice of Dr. Harold Osborne, a 1924 Olympian, who was the team physician at the University of Illinois.

Dike got very little coaching advice while at Illinois. He was doing such a great job and winning all the time so they were hesitant to change his style. But it was Dr. Harold Osborne who tried to convince us both to enter the decathlon. Dike was such a 'natural'; he could do it all. If Dike had been willing to try the pole vault, I really think he could have won the decathlon (Richards, 1992).

After an exhibition track and field meet in Glasgow, Scotland, where Eddleman won first place in the high jump
On the return trip from the 1948 Olympics, Bill Porter, Clyde "Smackover" Scott, and Dwight Eddleman are pictured aboard the U.S.S. Queen Elizabeth.
with a height of 6 feet 8 1/2 inches, Eddleman returned to the States with Bob Richards and other members of the United States track team aboard the U.S.S. Queen Elizabeth. Undoubtedly, Eddleman contemplated the words of Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the Modern Day Olympics, on his journey home. "The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part. The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well" (de Coubertin, 1896).

Eddleman had represented his country with honor and returned home from London a hero. Merle Rogers, friend and schoolmate of Eddleman, recalls his triumphant return to his hometown from the Olympic Games via the Illinois Central's "City of Miami." Despite the hot summer weather, Centralians turned out in droves to welcome their hero home with banners, buntings, bands, and guest speakers. The press and radio stations were positioned ready to cover the gala event. Merle Rogers, then a news reporter for the local radio station WCNT, wanted an exclusive interview—something special and personal with Eddleman's inner feelings. This would be impossible among the thousands gathered for the reception and parade to follow.

Then Rogers got an idea to use the station's newest piece of portable equipment which was a Sears and Roebuck table-model home recorder. Rogers quickly called the Illinois Central Railroad office to inquire if the train was equipped with 110-volt alternating current outlets. The
answer was "yes" since electric shavers could be used in the mens' lounge.

Rogers immediately improvised a wild scheme. He would have an associate drive him sixty miles north to Effingham where he would board the train and record the interview in the lounge. Another staff member would meet him in Centralia; and while the remote broadcast crew covered the welcoming ceremonies, Rogers would return to the studio to play back the personal interview on the air.

Rogers soon found himself headed to Effingham to meet Eddleman's train to execute his ingenious plan. During the private interview, Eddleman revealed--in his modest and humble manner--his deep appreciation for the loyalty and support of his friends and townspeople. Rogers recalls how the faint clickety-clack of train wheels punctuated the sincerity of his remarks.

As the train screeched to a halt and the band struck up the rousing strains of Centralia's school song, the table-model recorder was spirited away for its three-mile trip to the radio studio where an engineer plugged it through the broadcast console, ready to air.

The reel was put into reverse for rewinding when suddenly the delicate magnetic tape snapped and the machine spewed tangled filament all over the control room floor. Eddleman's gracious tribute to his fans lay there in a hopeless snarl of knots, never to be heard (Rogers, 1992).
Although the recorded interview was lost, Eddleman thanked his many loyal supporters as planned from the platform outside the Illinois Central Railroad station. Ray Eliot, Eddleman's college football coach, quipped: "I see your mayor has honored your boy Dwight with a key to the city. All of us up in Champaign thought Eddleman was the mayor down here" (Eliot, 1948).

After a brief five-day respite, Eddleman found himself back on the Illinois Central. This time he was headed back to Champaign-Urbana where he would enroll in his final year at the University of Illinois. Less than a week after returning from London, he was practicing football in Memorial Stadium.
CHAPTER VII

HIS PROFESSIONAL PROMINENCE

After graduating from the University of Illinois in June of 1949 with a bachelor's degree in Physical Education, Eddleman chose to enter the world of professional basketball.

His career with the National Basketball Association began after he received offers from the Chicago Stags and the Tri-City Blackhawks. He decided to play for the Blackhawks because he preferred to live in Moline, Illinois, with his wife and newborn daughter.

After playing for the Tri-City Blackhawks and the Milwaukee Hawks, he was sold to the Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons, now the Detroit Pistons, which resulted in a move to Indiana. While playing for the Pistons, he cultivated a friendship with Fred Schaus, who would later become coach of the Los Angeles Lakers. Schaus remembers Eddleman during their professional basketball days with fond retrospection.

There was never a more fun-loving and sincere guy. We shared some great memories together. The thing I remember most about the 'Diker' is that he was 'the greatest all-around everything.' Whether it was punting the football a mile high or just hitting the hell out of a golf ball, he was a superb athlete and a great competitor. He was everybody's friend and his charismatic personality drew others to him (Schaus, 1991).

Another Piston teammate, Charlie Share, who lived just down Lilly Street from the Eddlemans, recalls that 1950-1953
The Zollner Pistons became one of the first professional basketball teams to travel by plane. Eddleman bids a fond farewell to his young bride, Teddy Townsley.
era of professional basketball and Eddleman's unique style of play:

I can honestly say (Dike) was one of the most social, congenial, and fun-loving ballplayers I can recall from that time. On the basketball court, I recall an accurate, but now obsolete, two-handed 'kiss shot' (some called it a 'rainmaker') with a very high arch from almost any distance. His free-wheeling spirit might have reflected itself on the court as there were those close to him who would suggest goodnaturedly—that he'd shoot from the locker room if the door was open! I do believe that was the first time I'd heard the expression, but have heard it many times since! (Share, 1991).

Eddleman played in two N.B.A. All-Star games after having been chosen as an N.B.A. All-Star in both 1951 and 1952. The statistics for his final three years in professional basketball as they appear in the 1990-91 Sporting News Official National Basketball Association Guide can be seen in Figure 1.

During his off-seasons in Indiana, Eddleman had been working as recreational director for Central Soya, Incorporated, a Midwest soybean processing company. It was in 1954, after learning he would be traded to the Baltimore Bullets, that he decided to retire from professional basketball. "By this time, I had three young children and a wife to think about. The traveling put a strain on building a strong family relationship. I felt I had to make a choice and I chose to be with my family" (Eddleman, 1992).

Continuing to work full-time for Central Soya, Eddleman was transferred in 1956 to a new plant in Gibson City, Illinois. Although this was a small, rural community with a
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Figure 1. Statistics from three years of Eddleman's professional basketball career as printed in the *Sporting News Official National Basketball Association Guide*, 1990-91.
population of only 3500, it was a great town in which to raise his young family of three daughters--Diana, Nancy, and Kristy--and one son, Tom. Another perk of the job for Eddleman had to be moving back to his home state where he could attend athletic events at his alma mater located only thirty miles south.

Eddleman found his work gratifying and his lifestyle comfortable. As Personnel Director, he and Plant Manager, Dick Walter, became close friends and kept the plant free from union affiliation for thirteen years. The fourteenth year would not prove as successful. After a bitter campaign that resulted in Pinkerton guards being posted outside the Eddleman residence, the union won in a close election.

It was that same year, 1969, that Eddleman was offered a job with the University of Illinois Foundation, a fund-raising entity of that institution, which he accepted. Eddleman's job with the University developed into a labor of love as he encountered group after group of Fighting Illini Alumni. He worked with many outstanding personalities including Ray Eliot, John "Red" Pace, Gene Vance, George Legg, John Corbally, Stan Ikenberry, and Morton Weir. He was given the title of Executive Director of Grants-In-Aid. In 1990, the Grants-In-Aid program was renamed the Fighting Illini Scholarship Fund under the reorganization of the Athletic Association.

It seems only fitting that Eddleman's life had come full circle. John Watkins, manager of the 1947 University
of Illinois basketball team and owner of Delbert's Clothing Store in Arthur, Illinois, comments: "He came to Champaign a country boy wearing rolled up blue jeans and flannel shirts and he left a 'Dapper Dan'" (Watkins, 1991). Eddleman had eagerly returned to his alma mater, the university that provided him with numerous athletic and academic opportunities. He came home to serve a program that provides financial aid for young student athletes. In 1991, the Fighting Illini Scholarship Fund was helping nearly 600 athletes and had reached a financial goal of nearly three million dollars.

Will Thomson, a University of Illinois graduate living in Galva, Illinois, became friends with Eddleman when he was president of the "I" Mens' Association, a group comprised of former varsity athletes. Thomson describes Eddleman's personality in his own words:

I have seen him make phone call after phone call just to locate two tickets for someone who isn't even in his program. Dike would say to me, 'Will, you never know, someday this guy may have the means to be a large part of our program and quite possibly be our largest contributor.' Dike is an excellent judge of character and he is an eternal optimist! I've seen him drive 400 miles after work to make a speech, for no money of course, just to help improve the image of the University and the athletic program. And he would invariably be back home that night to be with Teddy and the family. It's not always easy to go to a restaurant, a banquet, or an athletic event with Dike. You just never know how long it's going to take you to get from the door to your seat. He knows everybody and everybody knows him and he speaks to them all (Thomson, 1991).

A winning combination of charisma and talent has helped Eddleman accrue a long list of honors. He is a charter
member of the Illinois Basketball Hall of Fame, the Illinois Sports Hall of Fame, the Tri-State Hall of Fame, the Drake Relays Hall of Fame, the National High School Sports Hall of Fame, and the University of Illinois All-Century Football Team. Governor Jim Edgar recently appointed him a member of the State Athletic Board, which oversees wrestling and boxing events. Each selection has been a thrill for Eddleman; however, his induction into the Illinois Sports Hall of Fame in 1961 has perhaps been his most prestigious honor as he joined fellow athletic greats Amos Alonzo Stagg, Bob Zuppke, Red Grange, Walter Eckersall, George Halas, Reverend Bob Richards, Clark Griffith, Lou Boudreau, Al Spalding, Chick Evans, Charles (Old Roman) Comiskey, George A. Huff, George Mikan, and Otto Graham (Eddleman, 1992).

Eddleman has not selfishly taken without giving something in return. He has proven to be a role model worthy of emulation by both young and old alike. The late Bill Butler, a longtime friend of Eddleman, as well as a Fighting Illini Scholarship Fund supporter, summed up Eddleman's career when he wrote:

His athletic heroics and name recognition may open many doors, but Dike has many donors giving to Illinois just because of him. People want to do something for the 'Diker.' Because of his enthusiasm and energy they want to help him. There will never be another representative as loyal and dedicated to the University of Illinois as Dike Eddleman. Hail to the 'Chief' (Butler, 1991).
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In March of 1942, there was played one of the greatest high school basketball games of all time. Although there have certainly been higher scoring games, perhaps there has never been a more exciting one. Out of Centralia, Illinois, one of the southern "hotbeds" of basketball in that state, came a premiere young athlete who sparked the imagination of every youngster from Chicago to Cairo.

A fine, young athlete, Thomas Dwight "Dike" Eddleman emerged from humble beginnings to become a "superstar." Centralia became known as Eddlemanville and his loyal fans called themselves "Eddlemaniacs." He was indeed a phenomenon. In every sense, he was the personification of the heroic figure.

Boys wore rolled-up overalls because Eddleman wore his pants that way. Eddleman hunting caps and plaid jackets would sell out just as soon as they arrived at the local stores. There were throngs of young boys who would mob him at the movie theater, his favorite place to go on Sunday afternoons, for a chance to sit by the athletic standout.

Throughout his high school career, fans would line up prior to contests waiting for his bus to arrive just so they could get a glimpse of the youthful legend. Autograph
Eddleman's leaping ability and execution of the "kiss shot" made him an extraordinary basketball talent.
"hounds" approached him at every imaginable time and place. After scoring a record 969 points in basketball during his junior year in high school, Metro-Goldwyn Mayer approached his coach about making a film of the seventeen-year-old sensation. "Coach Trout was sensible enough not to be taken in by the glamour of Hollywood," recalls Bill Davies, Eddleman's childhood friend and former teammate. "Besides, I'm sure it wouldn't have been legal even back then. Not only did Dwight have great athletic ability, he was really a 'stud'" (Davies, 1991).

Blessed with the gifts of athletic talent and versatility extraordinaire, he was first noticed in the seventh grade when he high jumped 5' 8 3/4" in his bare feet. Throughout his career, he continued to impress his audiences with performances in basketball, football, and track.

In search for higher education, Eddleman chose to attend the University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana) becoming the first generation of his family to earn a college degree. As a "Fighting Illini," he won recognition lettering eleven times in the sports of basketball, football, and track. He played on Illinois' 1947 Rose Bowl team and was captain of the 1948-49 Big Nine Championship Basketball team. During the summer of his junior year at the University of Illinois, he won a berth on the United States Track and Field team and participated in the 1948 XIV
A mature Eddleman stands in Memorial Stadium in the spring of 1949.
Olympiad in London, England, as one of the leading high jumpers in the world (New York Times, 1948).

Following college, he chose to play professional basketball for the Milwaukee Hawks and the Tri-City Blackhawks; and later, the Fort Wayne (Detroit) Pistons. After three successful seasons with the National Basketball Association, he took a job as Personnel Director of Central Soya, Incorporated. In 1969, he became the executive director of the athletic scholarship fund for the University Of Illinois, a position he held until January 1, 1993.

Eddleman attributes his success to the influences of his family, friends, and coach. His half-sister became his legal guardian during high school which allowed him to participate in sports at Centralia High School instead of moving to a small, rural town where he would have attended a one-room country school. His high school coach, Arthur L. Trout, taught him more than the fundamental sports skills; he taught him about discipline, ethics, and character. Eddleman was always rich in friendships, remaining unpretentious throughout his many athletic adventures.

Perhaps one of Eddleman's greatest accomplishments in a gymnasium did not even involve athletics. It was during his sophomore year in high school that a pretty, petite brunette who was walking through the gym on her way to class caught Eddleman's eye. The five-foot-one Teddy Georgia Townsley would become the high school sweetheart and the number one fan of the six-foot-two Eddleman. On December 25, 1945, she
would assume those roles on a permanent basis as the couple exchanged wedding vows in a Christmas ceremony while Eddleman was home on leave from the Army Air Corps.

Of all the factors contributing to his success, it appears the most enduring influence was his wife and best friend, Teddy. As a young girl, she attended Irving Grade School but remembers watching the young Eddleman as he high jumped on the playground. As a Centralia High School cheerleader, she shared in the excitement of each victory and the agony of each defeat.

The lyrics to Eddleman's favorite song, "Someone to Watch Over Me," appear prophetic as they perfectly describe his marriage. Over the years, it has been a profoundly loving experience epitomized by common bonds that have solidified their relationship. The couple has shared a belief in God, a love for children, a zest for living, and a passion for sports.

Their marriage resulted in the birth of four children, three daughters and one son. Diana, Nancy, Kristy, and Tom have all attended the University of Illinois. All of the Eddleman children agree that their mother has provided a source of strength and support for the family. Her dedication to her husband and children has been exemplary as she has touched their lives and their hearts by maintaining the highest of standards and expectations.

From the early years to the present, Eddleman remains a model of athletic excellence and spiritual integrity for
Eddleman married his high school sweetheart, Teddy Townsley, on December 25, 1945. They began dating in high school where she was a cheerleader for the Centralia Orphans.
both young and old alike. The trust he has earned from his peers and colleagues will be remembered as his outstanding legacy. As Executive Director of the Fighting Illini Scholarship Fund, Eddleman withstood the test of time, including National Collegiate Athletic Association investigations and retiring athletic directors.

The total monetary gifts to the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics at Illinois grew from approximately $145,000 in 1969 to approximately $3,500,000 in 1991. Eddleman attributes the financial success of his department to a number of reasons.

I believe people trusted me with their donations. My program, no matter what the name, was always run with consistent policies and procedures. In the 1980's, we saw our gifts increase from nearly $1,000,000 in 1980 to an all-time high of $5,000,000 in 1987, boosted by the development of the Tribal Council and other clubs for those wanting season tickets. During that time, the profits rose proportionately with the successes of our athletic programs. During the Neale Stoner era, my job was made easier because our teams were 'big' winner and the administration was more aggressive.

With sanctions brought against both the football and basketball programs following the release of Neale Stoner and Coach Mike White, the challenge to attract contributors was tremendous. It was much the same as when I first took my job with the University. It was 'tough' selling a football program that had a zero and ten win-loss record (Eddleman, 1992).

Throughout his fund-raising efforts for the University of Illinois, Eddleman's reputation remained unsullied as he survived the reign of three university presidents: David Dodds Henry, John H. Corbally, and Stanley O. Ikenberry as well as six athletic directors: Gene Vance, Cecil Coleman,
Ray Eliot (interim), Neale Stoner, John Mackovic, and Ron Guenther. Although his athletic achievements opened many doors for Eddleman, it has been his sincerity and charisma that have enhanced his life.

Eddleman soared to athletic stardom in a simpler, more magical era. It was in the early forties, during those post-Depression and pre-war days, that his athletic career blossomed. With a basketball shooting style that was "more deadly than Clark Gable," he excelled at a time when people were enchanted by their sports heroes (Eisenbath, 1992). It will long be remembered that in Centralia, Illinois, an Orphan wearing jersey number forty became an idol to a town of worshipping fans. He was an inspiration to an entire generation of youngsters who rubbed their chins and noses raw shooting "kiss shots" to the stars trying to become the next Dwight Eddleman. He carried this inspiration to a higher plateau in Champaign, Illinois, where he pursued an avocation that evoked his loyalty and devotion. It will be the task of those who follow him at the University of Illinois to live up to his standards of dedication and integrity.
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dwight Eddleman, holding hands on campus, are remembered as an affectionate and fun-loving couple.
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