

A CONCEPT PAPER

FINAL DRAFT

TO: PRESIDENT GORDON GEE, WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AND THE FORMER PRESIDENT
OF OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY FROM 1990-1997 AND 2007-2013

FROM: JON WEFALD, PRESIDENT EMERITUS, KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY FROM 1986 TO 2009
AND A PH.D IN AMERICAN HISTORY FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AND A MA
FROM WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

AND

DICK ROBERTSON, PRESIDENT, WARNER BROS. TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION, 1989
TO 2010 AND CO-FOUNDER OF SANTABU ENTERTAINMENT, LLC, 2010 TO THE
PRESENT

RE: A PROPOSAL TO CREATE A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12

PART I

"AN INTRODUCTION"

AS THE PRESIDENT OF KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY FROM 1986 TO 2009, I WAS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BIG 8 PRESIDENTS COUNCIL FROM 1990 TO 1994. IN 1990, I WAS INITIALLY CONCERNED READING ABOUT 3 DIFFERENT CONFERENCES ADDING NEW SCHOOLS: INCLUDING ARKANSAS LEAVING THE SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE FOR THE SEC; PENN STATE LEAVING ITS INDEPENDENT STATUS TO JOIN THE BIG 10; AND FLORIDA STATE DECIDING TO JOIN THE ACC CONFERENCE.

BUT MY CONCERN SOON TURNED INTO WORRY--NAMELY, THAT THE BIG 8 MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE. MY VIEW SOON BECAME THAT OUR BIG 8 CONFERENCE HAD TO GET BIGGER OR WATCH SEVERAL OF OUR SCHOOLS LEAVE FOR THE SEC OR THE BIG 10. I WAS THE FIRST BIG 8 PRESIDENT TO PROMOTE A COMPLETE MERGER WITH THE 8 REMAINING SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE. I KNOW I WAS THE FIRST BIG 8 CEO TO WORRY ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS LEAVING THE SWC FOR THE PAC 10.

I KNEW THAT A NUMBER OF TEXAS REGENTS AND ACADEMIC LEADERS HAD LONG DREAMED ABOUT JOINING A CONFERENCE WITH SOME OF THE BEST UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD, INCLUDING TRULY ELITE SCHOOLS SUCH AS STANFORD, UCLA, UC BERKELEY, USC, AND WASHINGTON. MY INSTINCTS WERE SIMPLE: IF TEXAS LEFT THE SWC FOR THE PAC 10 IN THE EARLY 1990'S, OKLAHOMA, FOR EXAMPLE, MIGHT HAVE DECIDED TO JOIN THE SEC.

FROM 1990 TO 1994, I WORKED TO CONVINCING MY FELLOW BIG 8 CEOS THAT WE HAD TO ACT OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES. FRANKLY, MY MAJOR GOAL WAS TO CONVINCING MY COLLEAGUES TO SUPPORT A MERGER WITH THE 8 REMAINING SCHOOLS OF THE SWC. THE KEY SCHOOL FOR ME, OF COURSE, WAS TEXAS. WITHOUT TEXAS DECIDING TO JOIN THE BIG 8, I KNEW THAT A MERGER WITH THE SWC PROBABLY WOULD NOT WORK.

FINALLY, AFTER 4 YEARS OF TALK, THE BIG 8 CEOS CONVINCED THE 8 SWC CEOS TO HAVE A MEETING AT THE DALLAS AIRPORT IN JANUARY OF 1994 TO TRY AND GET A MERGER WITH ALL 16 SCHOOLS TO FORM A NEW CONFERENCE. AT THIS MEETING, WE DISCUSSED THE PROS AND CONS FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES. THEN, I ASKED FOR A SHOW OF HANDS AROUND THE CONFERENCE ROOM FROM EACH CEO TO FIND OUT IF THEY BACKED A MERGER. OUT OF THE 14 CEO'S PRESENT, THE FIRST 13 PRESIDENTS IN EXACT ORDER SUPPORTED THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE 2 CONFERENCES.

IRONICALLY, THE UT PRESIDENT, BOB BERDAHL, WAS THE LAST PRESIDENT TO COMMENT. I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER WHEN BOB SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT. INDEED, HE WAS THE ONLY CEO OF THE 14 PRESENT WHO SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO GO BACK TO HIS UNIVERSITY AND CONFER WITH UT'S BOARD OF REGENTS.

I DID NOT WANT TO WAIT TO LONG. SO WE GOT A CONFERENCE CALL ARRANGED IN 10 DAYS OR SO BETWEEN THE BIG 8 AND SWC PRESIDENTS. WHEN THE CALL CAME, I ACTUALLY DID NOT KNOW WHAT SWC PRESIDENTS WERE ON THE CALL. ALL 8 OF OUR PRESIDENTS WERE ON THE PHONE. AFTER 10 MINUTES, I ASKED THIS QUESTION: "WHAT DO YOU GUYS IN THE SWC WANT US TO DO?" THE TEXAS PRESIDENT, BOB BERDAHL, WAS THE FIRST TO ANSWER THE QUESTION. HE SAID WE HAVE DECIDED YOU SHOULD INVITE 4 OF OUR SWC SCHOOLS: TEXAS A&M, TEXAS, TEXAS TECH, AND BAYLOR. THE GOVERNOR OF TEXAS IN 1994 WAS ANN RICHARDS, A BAYLOR GRADUATE.

ALL OF US IN THE BIG 8 AGREED IMMEDIATELY. IN THE SPRING OF 1994, THE 12 PRESIDENTS MET IN DALLAS TO DISCUSS THE RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE NEW CONFERENCE. WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAIL, I READILY AGREED WITH ALL OF THE NEW RULES DEMANDED BY TEXAS AND ITS PRESIDENT, BOB BERDAHL. TRUTHFULLY, UT GOT ITS WAY ON EVERY SINGLE ISSUE. I DID NOT MIND AT ALL BECAUSE I KNEW IN 1994 LIKE I KNOW NOW THAT THERE IS NO BIG 12 TODAY WITHOUT ONE OF THE GREATEST PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN AMERICA: IT IS CALLED THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS.

THE BIG 12 HAD ITS FIRST FOOTBALL GAMES IN SEPTEMBER OF 1996. FROM 1996 TO 2009, EVERYTHING WAS LARGELY COPACETIC FOR THE FIRST 13 YEARS.

IF K-STATE'S FANS, FOR EXAMPLE, DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE VITAL ROLE OF TEXAS IN THE BIG 12 IN 1994 OR 2004, THEY CERTAINLY DID BY THE SUMMER OF 2010. INDEED, BY THAT SUMMER, KU, KSU, ISU, OSU, MISSOURI, TTU, AND BAYLOR RECOGNIZED HOW VITAL IT WAS FOR TEXAS TO BE THE LEAD SCHOOL IN THE BIG 12. IN 2010, BOTH THE BIG 10 AND THE PAC 12 WERE RECRUITING SCHOOLS FROM THE BIG 12.

IN THE SUMMER OF 2010, THE BIG 10 FOCUSED ON ADDING NEBRASKA. WHEN COLORADO, WHICH HAD FOR YEARS YEARNED TO JOIN THE PAC 10, SIGNALLED ITS WILLINGNESS TO JOIN THE PAC 12 THAT SUMMER, NEBRASKA JUMPED SHIP AND JOINED THE BIG 10.

I CAN ASSURE EVERYONE THAT THE LEADERS OF ISU, KU, KSU, MISSOURI, OSU, AND BAYLOR WERE PRAYING THAT UT WOULD STICK WITH THE BIG 12. ON JUNE 11 2010, THE LEAD COLUMNIST OF THE KANSAS CITY STAR, SAM MELLINGER, WROTE A COLUMN FOR THE AGES: "IF TODAY IS WHEN THE BIG 12 ENDS, THIS IS SOMETHING BIGGER, SOMEWHAT SCARIER, SOMETHING MORE PERMANENT. IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE KANSAS CITY'S COLLEGE SPORTS SCENE WILL NEVER FULLY RECOVER . . . JUNE 11, 2010 COULD BE REMEMBERED AS OUR DARKEST SPORTS HOUR."

JUST AS THINGS LOOKED SO DIRE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BIG 12 IN JUNE OF 2010, COMMISSIONER DAN BEEBE THREW A "HAIL MARY PASS." DAN HAS NEVER RECEIVED ENOUGH CREDIT FOR THAT LAST SECOND PASS. HE SENSED THAT ESPN AND ABC WOULD REACT FAVORABLY TO HIS OFFER: NAMELY, THAT THE CONFERENCE COULD SURVIVE IF THEY GUARANTEED THE BIG 12 THE SAME REVENUES FOR 10 SCHOOLS IN THE FUTURE THAT THEY WERE RECEIVING IN 2010 FOR THE 12 UNIVERSITY MEMBERS.

ESPN AND ABC AGREED. BEEBE INFORMED TEXAS THAT THE BIG 12 WOULD PERMIT IT TO HAVE ITS OWN LONGHORN NETWORK. HIS STRATEGIES WORKED. UT ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE STAYING WITH THE BIG 12. THEN, OU, OSU, TTU, AND TEXAS A&M PROCLAIMED THAT THEY, TOO, WOULD REMAIN WITH THE BIG 12. IMPORTANTLY, NOW K-STATE, KU, ISU, BAYLOR, AND MISSOURI WOULD NOT HAVE TO JOIN THE MOUNTAIN WEST OR THE BIG EAST. WITHOUT THE BIG 12, THEIR TELEVISION REVENUES WOULD HAVE DROPPED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

BUT THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER SHOE TO DROP IN THE LATE SUMMER AND FALL OF 2011. TEXAS A&M AND MISSOURI ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY THAT THEY WERE LEAVING THE BIG 12 TO THE SEC FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. BUT, NOW UNDER THE EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP OF THE INTERIM COMMISSIONER OF THE BIG 12, CHUCK NEINAS, THE REMAINING SCHOOLS IN THE BIG 12 STAYED UNITED. ACTING QUICKLY, THE BIG 12 ADDED TCU AND WEST VIRGINIA. THEY BECAME THE 9TH AND 10TH MEMBERS OF THE BIG 12.

SINCE 2010 AND 2011, THE BIG 12 HAS BEEN OVER ANALYZED AND OVER SCRUTINIZED BY THE NATIONAL SPORTS MEDIA. SOME OF THE CRITICISM HAS BEEN THAT THE BIG 12 ONLY HAS 10 TEAMS AND THAT IT WAS THE ONLY CONFERENCE WITHOUT ITS OWN TV NETWORK. FOR EXAMPLE, IN AN UNFAIR ARTICLE BY ANDY STAPLES, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED FEATURED A HEADLINE "BIG TROUBLE IN THE BIG 12." STAPLES SUMMED UP THE MAJOR CHALLENGE OF

THE BIG 12 THIS WAY: "BEFORE THIS YEAR, COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY HAS SPENT MORE TIME REFUTING THE NOTION THAT THE LEAGUE'S MEMBERSHIP (WITH ONLY 10 SCHOOLS) AND THE MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS (ONCE THE ACC NETWORK LAUNCHES IN 2018, THE BIG 12 WILL BE THE ONLY POWER 5 LEAGUE WITHOUT ITS OWN CABLE NETWORK) WILL FORCE IT TO EVENTUALLY DISSOLVE."

I KNOW OF NO ONE IN THE BIG 12 THAT BELIEVES THIS KIND OF NONSENSE. THE BIG 12 HAS 10 FIRST-RATE UNIVERSITIES.

STILL, I DO FEEL TODAY SOMEWHAT LIKE I FELT FROM 1990 TO 1994 WHEN THE BIG 8 ONLY HAD 8 SCHOOLS WHILE THE OTHER CONFERENCES WERE ADDING NEW MEMBERS. FRANKLY, I AM AFRAID IF THE BIG 12 DOES NOT ACT IN SOME FASHION OR ANOTHER IN THE NEAR FUTURE THAT SOME OF OUR SCHOOLS COULD BE PICKED OFF. THE REALITY TODAY IS THAT THE SEC, ACC, AND THE BIG 10 CONFERENCES EACH HAVE 14 UNIVERSITIES. RIGHT NOW, THOSE 3 CONFERENCES SEEM TO BE SATISFIED WITH 14 SCHOOLS. NOBODY CAN PREDICT THE FUTURE.

BUT I THINK IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SEC, ACC, AND THE BIG 10 COULD DECIDE IN THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS TO ADD TWO TEAMS EACH SO THAT EACH OF THOSE 3 CONFERENCES WOULD HAVE 16 TEAMS WITH AN EVEN NUMBER IN ONE DIVISION AND AN EVEN NUMBER IN THE OTHER DIVISION. IF WE ARE STILL AT 10 SCHOOLS AT THAT POINT AND IF THE 3 CONFERENCES ARE ADDING TEAMS, I AM NOT AT ALL SURE THAT OUR CONFERENCE COULD WITHSTAND THE PRESSURE BECAUSE THE SEC, THE ACC, AND THE BIG 10 WOULD SENSE THAT THE BIG 12 CONFERENCE MEMBERS MIGHT BE THE MOST VULNERABLE TO DECIDING TO LEAVE THE BIG 12.

PART II

MY PROPOSAL

"A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12"

IN JULY OF 2017, GORDON GEE, THE PRESIDENT OF WEST VIRGINIA, WAS PREPARING TO BECOME THE CHAIR OF THE BIG 12 CEO'S FOR THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO. HE HAD READ MY NEW BOOK ON MY 23 YEARS AS PRESIDENT OF KANSAS STATE. HE KNEW THAT I HAD BEEN A LEADER IN THE BIG 8 CONFERENCE TO CONSIDER A MERGER BETWEEN THE 8 BIG EIGHT SCHOOLS AND THE 8 SCHOOLS OF THE SWC. PRESIDENT GEE ASKED ME TO COME UP WITH SOME OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BIG 12.

FROM THE LATE SUMMER OF 2017 TO EARLY IN 2018, I CONSIDERED MANY DIFFERENT OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BIG 12. AFTER 5 OR 6 MONTHS, I CAME UP WITH A CONCEPT PAPER THAT COULD STRENGTHEN BOTH THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 CONFERENCES.

I ENTITLED MY CONCEPT PAPER "A PROPOSAL FOR A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12."

JON WILNER, WHO HAS WRITTEN SPORTS STORIES FOR THE BAY AREA NEWS GROUP, RECENTLY STARTED A NEWSLETTER ENTITLED "THE PAC 12 HOTLINE." HE HAS ARGUED THAT THE PAC 12 NETWORK HAS NOT GENERATED THE EXPECTED REVENUES FOR THE SCHOOLS OF THE PAC 12 CONFERENCE. I HAD READ THAT A NUMBER OF PAC 12 ATHLETIC DIRECTORS WERE VERY DISAPPOINTED IN THE REVENUES GENERATED BY THE PAC 12 NETWORK.

INDEED, MANY OF THEM WERE STATING THAT THEIR NETWORK WAS OVER EMPHASIZING THE TELEVISIONING OF VARIOUS OLYMPIC SPORTS RATHER THAN TELEVISIONING MORE FOOTBALL AND MEN'S BASKETBALL GAMES. RATHER, MANY OF THE PAC 12 AD'S FAVORED THE STRATEGY OF THE BIG 10 NETWORK THAT EMPHASIZED THE TELEVISIONING OF FOOTBALL AND MEN'S BASKETBALL GAMES.

WILNER WROTE THAT THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE PAC 12 NETWORK, LYDIA MURPHY-STEPHANS, WAS FIRED BECAUSE SHE CONSISTENTLY OVERSTATED THE REVENUES THAT COULD FLOW TO THE PAC 12 SCHOOLS. THE WASHINGTON STATE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS ESPECIALLY CRITICAL OF THE REVENUES GENERATED FOR THE 12 SCHOOLS. WILNER ADDED THIS COMMENT: "NOT ONLY IS DISTRIBUTION LAGGING. . .THE EXPENSES FOR A WHOLLY OWNED, SEVEN FEED NETWORK ARE EXTRAORDINARY."

IN DOING AN ANALYSIS ON THE BIG 10 CONFERENCE AND ITS TV REVENUES, WILNER DID HIS HOMEWORK. HE GOT HIS INFORMATION FROM FINANCE ANALYSTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN FOR 2018. LIKE THE PAC 12 PRESIDENTS AND ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, WILNER WAS SHOCKED THAT THE BIG 10 WOULD BE SENDING \$51.1 MILLION IN 2018 TO EACH OF ITS 14 SCHOOLS. HE SUBMITTED PROJECTIONS FOR 4 OF THE POWER 5 CONFERENCES IN 2018.

1. THE BIG 10: \$51.1 MILLION FOR EACH OF THEIR 14 UNIVERSITIES IN 2018
2. THE SEC: \$45 MILLION FOR EACH OF ITS 14 UNIVERSITIES IN 2018
3. THE BIG 12: \$39 MILLION FOR EACH OF ITS 10 UNIVERSITIES IN 2018 (DOES NOT INCLUDE TIER 3 RIGHTS)
4. THE PAC 12 \$32.5 MILLION FOR EACH OF ITS 12 UNIVERSITIES IN 2018

WILNER CONCLUDES HIS ANALYSIS THIS WAY: "THE ABOVE IS NOT A PRETTY SIGHT FOR THE PAC 12, WHICH IS GETTING LAPPED BY THE BIG 12 CONFERENCE EVEN WHEN TIER 3 RIGHTS ARE NOT INCLUDED."

I WANT TO GIVE SOME CREDIT FOR MY THOUGHTS ON A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 10 TO ONE OF OUR NATION'S GREATEST AND MOST CREATIVE FOOTBALL COACHES: NICK SABAN, THE HEAD FOOTBALL COACH FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA. I

ONLY KNOW OF ONE POWER 5 FOOTBALL COACH WHO HAS DECLARED THAT POWER 5 FOOTBALL TEAMS SHOULD ONLY PLAY GAMES AGAINST OTHER POWER 5 TEAMS.

COACH SABAN RECENTLY MADE A STATEMENT THAT WAS HARDLY COVERED BY ANY SPORTS WRITERS: NAMELY, THAT EACH SEC FOOTBALL TEAM WOULD SCHEDULE ONE MORE LEAGUE GAME EVERY YEAR; THAT SEC TEAMS LIKE ALABAMA SHOULD NOT BE PLAYING TEAMS LIKE LA TECH OR BOWLING GREEN BECAUSE THE FANS DO NOT WANT TO SEE THOSE GAMES AND THE PLAYERS DO NOT WANT TO PLAY IN THEM; AND THAT THE SEC, THEN, WOULD MANDATE THAT THEIR REMAINING GAMES FOR EACH OF THE 14 UNIVERSITIES WOULD HAVE TO BE SCHEDULED AGAINST TEAMS STRICTLY WITH SCHOOLS IN THE FOUR OTHER POWER 5 CONFERENCES.

RIGHT NOW, I THINK THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER AN AGREEMENT FOR A "STRATEGIC ALLIANCE FOR THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12."

HOW THIS ALLIANCE MIGHT WORK:

1. THE INDEPENDENCE OF BOTH THE BIG 12 AND PAC 12 CONFERENCES WOULD REMAIN TOTALLY INTACT. EACH CONFERENCE WOULD MAINTAIN ITS OWN LEAGUE OFFICIALS AND STAFF AND ITS OWN RULES AND REGULATIONS.
2. EACH SCHOOL IN THE BIG 12 AND PAC 12 WOULD PLAY 9 CONFERENCE GAMES.
3. EACH SCHOOL IN THE BIG 12 AND PAC 12 WOULD SCHEDULE 3 GAMES A YEAR WITH TEAMS IN THE OTHER CONFERENCE.
4. THIS MEANS THIS STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WOULD HAVE 30 NEW POWER 5 GAMES BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND PAC 12 WITH, FOR EXAMPLE, 10 GAMES IN SEPTEMBER, 10 MORE GAMES IN OCTOBER, AND 10 GAMES IN NOVEMBER. ALL OF THEM WOULD BE TELEVISED NATIONALLY.
5. OVER THE YEARS, FOOTBALL ANALYSTS—INCLUDING THE LEADERS OF THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF—HAVE STRESSED STRENGTH OF SCHEDULE. IF A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WAS EVER APPROVED, ALL 30 OF THESE INTERLEAGUE GAMES BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 CONFERENCES WOULD STRENGTHEN THE RESPECTIVE RPI RATINGS OF ALL 22 UNIVERSITIES.
6. OVERALL ATTENDANCE WOULD INCREASE FOR ALL 22 SCHOOLS; TV RATINGS WOULD IMPROVE FOR EACH UNIVERSITY; AND THE CABLE AND TV NETWORKS WOULD SERIOUSLY INCREASE THEIR FUNDING FOR ALL 22 UNIVERSITIES; AND, IMPORTANTLY, FOR THE PAC 12 SCHOOLS, THEY WOULD HAVE AT LEAST 15 GAMES TELEVISED AT CENTRAL STANDARD TIME--MEANING MORE OF THEIR GAMES WOULD BE TELEVISED AT PRIME TIME.

7. AT THE END OF THE SCHEDULED GAMES, THE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS FROM THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 COULD PLAY A GAME FOR THE INTER LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP. THERE ALSO COULD BE A SCENARIO WHERE THE NO. 1 TEAM IN THE BIG 12 WOULD PLAY THE NO. 2 TEAM FROM THE PAC 12 AND VICE VERSA WITH THE TWO WINNERS PLAYING FOR THE OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP. THIS ALSO WOULD ASSURE FAR MORE TV FUNDS FROM THE CABLE AND NATIONAL NETWORKS.
8. THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME WOULD BE ROTATED EVERY OTHER YEAR BETWEEN THE ROSE BOWL AND THE DALLAS COWBOYS STADIUM.
9. THIS ALLIANCE WOULD INCLUDE 22 OF THE GREATEST PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD.
10. THE WINNER OF THIS INTER LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME MIGHT BE ASSURED OF ONE OF THE 4 SPOTS IN THE JANUARY FOUR TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME-- IN PART BECAUSE THIS ALLIANCE WOULD REPRESENT ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF ALL POWER 5 SCHOOLS.

I SENT A CONFIDENTIAL EMAIL CONCERNING THE IDEA OF A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 TO A FRIEND OF MINE, DICK ROBERTSON, WHO WAS THE PRESIDENT OF WARNER BROS. TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION FOR 21 YEARS FROM 1989 TO 2010. DICK HAS WORKED IN THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY FOR 50 YEARS. HE UNDERSTANDS TV RATINGS AS WELL AS ANYONE IN HOLLYWOOD.

I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY AND EVEN ON THE WEST COAST DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW MOST OF THE PAC 12 UNIVERSITIES ARE LOCATED IN CITIES WHERE THEIR FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL PROGRAMS HAVE TO DIRECTLY COMPETE AGAINST NUMEROUS NFL TEAMS, NBA TEAMS, MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TEAMS, AND EVEN NHL TEAMS.

THUS, THE MAJORITY OF PAC 12 SCHOOLS ARE IN CITIES WHERE THEY HAVE TO COMPETE WITH BIG-TIME PROFESSIONAL SPORTS FRANCHISES--INCLUDING UCLA, USC, STANFORD, UC BERKELEY, WASHINGTON, ARIZONA, ARIZONA STATE, AND EVEN UTAH. THE CITIES OF CORVALLIS, EUGENE, AND PULLMAN RESEMBLE MORE THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL TOWNS OF THE BIG 12. EVEN WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS IN AUSTIN, IT DOES NOT HAVE TO FACE HEAD-ON PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, HOCKEY, AND BASEBALL TEAMS.

ROBERTSON BELIEVES THAT THE PAC 12 NEEDS THIS ALLIANCE AT LEAST AS MUCH OR EVEN MORE THAN THE BIG 12 FOR SEVERAL REASONS: (1) BECAUSE PAC 12 GAMES ARE NOT AS WELL ATTENDED AS GAMES IN THE OTHER POWER 5 CONFERENCES DUE TO THE MONUMENTAL COMPETITION FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT DOLLAR; (2) BECAUSE FEWER PEOPLE ON THE WEST COAST WATCH AS MANY GAMES ON THE PAC 12 NETWORK AS FANS IN THE OTHER FOUR MAJOR CONFERENCES; AND (3) BECAUSE THE PAC 12 SCHOOLS WILL RECEIVE THE

LOWEST AMOUNT OF TV REVENUE OF ANY POWER 5 CONFERENCE IN 2018 WITH \$32.5 MILLION IN NEW TV REVENUES FOR EACH SCHOOL IN 2018.

AGAIN, DICK ROBERTSON, AS A WEST COAST MEDIA LEADER, IS COMPLETELY CONVINCED THAT THE PAC 12 CONFERENCE LEADERS, THEIR PRESIDENTS, AND ATHLETIC DIRECTORS OF EACH SCHOOL WILL QUITE LIKE THIS ALLIANCE.

THEN, DICK ROBERTSON SENT ME A RIVETING EMAIL ON THE FRIDAY NIGHT BEFORE THE FIRST SATURDAY OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL IN 2017. HE WROTE THE FOLLOWING EMAIL AND ENTITLED IT THIS WAY:

"IF THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 GET TOGETHER ON A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE IN THE FUTURE, THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN:"

GAMES IN THE FALL OF 2017

TEXAS EL PASO AT OKLAHOMA
TULSA AT OKLAHOMA STATE
WESTERN MICHIGAN AT USC
MONTANA STATE AT WASHINGTON STATE
CENTRAL ARKANSAS AT K-STATE

GAMES IN THE FALL OF 2018

BOWLING GREEN AT OREGON
NORTH DAKOTA AT WASHINGTON
IDAHO STATE AT CALIFORNIA
UC DAVIS AT STANFORD
AKRON AT IOWA STATE
SOUTHERN AT TCU
TULSA AT TEXAS
LAMAR AT TEXAS TECH

IF THESE PRESESON GAMES LISTED ABOVE ARE REPLACED BY 30 POWER 5 GAMES BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 CONFERENCES, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE 22 TEAMS OF A NEW STRATGEIC ALLIANCE STAND TO HAVE HIGHER RPI RATINGS BECAUSE THE STRENGTH OF THEIR RESPECTIVE SCHEDULES WOULD BE SERIOUSLY ENHANCED. AGAIN, THE LEADERS OF CFB PLAYOFFS SINCE THE 4 TEAM PLAYOFF WAS INTRODUCED IN 2014-15 HAVE UNDERLINED THE MONUMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTH OF SCHEDULE.

THERE ARE OTHER REASONS WHY 30 NEW POWER GAMES WOULD HELP EACH OF THE 22 UNIVERSITIES THAT WOULD MAKE UP THIS NEW STRATEGIC ALLIANCE OF 22 EXCELLENT

POWER 5 UNIVERSITIES. RIGHT NOW, THE BIG 12 CONFERENCE HAS 4 FEWER UNIVERSITIES THAN THE SEC, THE ACC, AND THE BIG 10. THE PAC 12 HAS 2 FEWER UNIVERSITIES. WITH 6 FEWER SCHOOLS THAN THE TOTAL OF THE SEC, ACC, AND THE BIG 10 CONFERENCES, THE 30 NEW INTERLEAGUE POWER 5 GAMES WOULD HELP POSITION THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 IN THEIR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL RANKINGS.

THE FORMER FIRST-RATE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS AND THE FORMER COMMISSIONER OF THE AMERICAN LEAGUE, GENE BUDIG, WORKED CLOSELY IN 1997 WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL, BUD SELIG, AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE TO COMPLETELY TRANSFORM A CENTURY OF TRADITION THAT HAD BEEN TABOO FOR AMERICAN AND NATIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS TO PLAY ONE ANOTHER DURING THE REGULAR SEASON.

WE HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL HAD BEEN THE OLDEST, MOST TRADITIONAL, AND MOST CONSERVATIVE SPORT IN AMERICA SINCE 1900. MOREOVER, GOING BACK TO THE 1920'S TO AT LEAST THE 1970'S, BASEBALL FOR DECADES WAS AMERICA'S FAVORITE PAST TIME.

THESE BASEBALL LEADERS AGREED IN 1997 TO LAUNCH A BOLD NEW ERA OF INTER-LEAGUE GAMES: MEANING THAT THE NEW YORK YANKEES WOULD NOW PLAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THE NEW YORK METS; THE CHICAGO CUBS WOULD PLAY THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX; AND THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS WOULD PLAY THE KANSAS CITY ROYALS. TODAY, EACH MAJOR LEAGUE TEAM PLAYS 20 INTER-LEAGUE GAMES PER SEASON.

COMMISSIONER BUD SELIG AND MANY BASEBALL EXPERTS SAID THE NEW INTER-LEAGUE GAMES REVITALIZED BASEBALL'S HISTORIC FANS; GAME ATTENDANCE INCREASED; TV RATINGS SHOT UP; AND EVERY MAJOR LEAGUE TEAM MADE MORE PROFITS. ONE BASEBALL WRITER REPORTED THAT THE NEW INTER-LEAGUE SCHEDULING "WAS THE END OF A SILLY AND POINTLESS DIVISION THAT LEFT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON THE TABLE FOR YEARS."

I WOULD ADD THIS SIMPLE SENTENCE: IF THE HISTORIC AND CONSERVATIVE MAJOR BASEBALL LEAGUES COULD PRODUCE AN EXTRAORDINARY CHANGE LIKE INTER LEAGUE BASEBALL IN 1997, CERTAINLY THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 CONFERENCES COULD AGREE ON A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

LET ME REITERATE THE PLUSES OF A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12.

I BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT THIS IS A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN. IT IS A NATURAL.

THIS ALLIANCE WILL DEFINITELY STRENGTHEN THE ATHLETIC PROGRAMS OF EVERY SCHOOL IN THE TWO CONFERENCES. IN TERMS OF STRENGTH OF SCHEDULE, ALL 22 SCHOOLS COULD SEE HIGHER RPI RATINGS. THE LEADERSHIP OF BOTH THE BIG 12 AND PAC 12 CONFERENCES WILL

RECEIVE PLAUDITS FROM THE SPORTS INTELLIGENTSIA OF THE NATIONAL WRITTEN PRESS AND THE TELEVISION SPORTS GURUS OF CABLE TV.

MORE IMPORTANT, THE EDUCATED AMERICAN PUBLIC WILL GIVE THIS ALLIANCE A 5-STAR RATING BECAUSE OF ITS SHEER ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY. TODAY, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR FIRST-RATE LEADERS WHO WILL TAKE RISKS, SHOW CREATIVITY, AND WHO HAVE INCREDIBLE PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS.

FOR THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12, "THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE" WILL STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE BOTH CONFERENCES. WITH THIS ALLIANCE, WE CAN PROCLAIM TO THE ENTIRE NATION THAT EACH CONFERENCE WILL HAVE A PARTNERSHIP WITH 22 OF THE BEST UNIVERSITIES IN AMERICA.

WITH THIS PLAN, EACH OF THE BIG 12 AND THE PAC 12 CONFERENCES WILL PLAY 30 KEY NATIONALLY TELEVISED GAMES IN FOOTBALL EACH YEAR. THERE COULD BE 10 EXCELLENT INTER-LEAGUE GAMES IN SEPTEMBER, 10 MORE IMPORTANT GAMES IN OCTOBER, AND 10 MORE FUN GAMES IN NOVEMBER AND EARLY DECEMBER.

IN MY OPINION, THESE 30 GAMES EVERY YEAR WILL DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE OVER-ALL ATTENDANCE FOR EVERY SCHOOL; IMPROVE TV RATINGS FOR EVERY SCHOOL; AND IMPROVE FUNDING FROM THE NATIONAL AND CABLE TV NETWORKS FOR EVERY ONE OF THE 22 UNIVERSITIES. EACH CONFERENCE, MOREOVER, WILL MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENT STATUS.

NO ONE CAN PREDICT THE FUTURE. WE ALL KNOW THAT THE NUMBER OF ESPN AND FOX CABLE SUBSCRIBERS HAS DECLINED IN THE PAST 5 YEARS. BUT BOTH BIG 12 AND PAC 12 CONFERENCES AND THEIR LEADERS ARE LOOKING AT VARIOUS APPS AND NEW PLATFORMS LIKE GOOGLE, AMAZON, AND FACEBOOK TO STEP IT UP IN STREAMING LIVE POWER 5 CONFERENCE FOOTBALL GAMES. THERE COULD EVEN BE SOME PAY-PER-VIEW GAMES IN THE FUTURE.

TO BE SURE, THIS ALLIANCE OF 22 UNIVERSITIES FROM THE GREAT PLAINS TO THE WEST COAST WOULD PROVIDE THE VITAL CONTENT OF BIGTIME FOOTBALL GAMES THAT WOULD DOVETAIL NICELY WITH THE NEW DEVELOPING PLATFORMS OF THE INFORMATION AGE.

JON WILNER WROTE IN AN ARTICLE IN HIS PAC 12 NETWORKS NEWSLETTER ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2017 THAT MARK ZUCKERBERG AND FACEBOOK OFFERED \$600 MILLION FOR A FIVE-YEAR DEAL TO STREAM INDIAN CRICKET MATCHES. FACEBOOK LOST OUT TO RUPERT MURDOCK'S OFFER OF \$2.6 BILLION. AS WILNER WROTE, "THE FACT THAT ZUCKERBERG AND FACEBOOK OFFERED \$600 MILLION FOR STREAMING INDIAN CRICKET MATCHES IS A BIG BOLD DECLARATION THAT HIS COMPANY WILL WRITE REAL CHECKS IN THE FUTURE FOR MUST SEE SPORTS CONTENT."

MEANWHILE, TWITTER AND AMAZON HAVE GOTTEN THEIR HANDS ON HIGH PROFILE SPORTS PROPERTY--LIKE 10 GAME PACKAGES TO STREAMLINE NFL GAMES ON THURSDAY NIGHTS.

OUR SMART, VISIONARY, AND STRATEGIC COMMISSIONER OF THE BIG 12, BOB BOWLSBY, HAS MADE A COMPELLING COMMENT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF NATIONAL TELEVISION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE POWER 5 CONFERENCES: "I REALLY SEE A TIME WHEN THERE ARE GOING TO BE A LOT OF PLAYERS IN THE MARKETPLACE AND THERE ARE GOING TO BE A LOT OF DISTRIBUTION METHODS. THE UNKNOWN IS NOW MUCH IT IS ALL WORTH. I DON'T THINK THERE IS ANYONE ANYWHERE WHO LEGITIMATELY KNOWS WHAT ALL OF THIS IS GOING TO BE WORTH."

MY HOPE IS THIS: "LET'S GET IT DONE!"

JON WEFALD, PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, 1986 TO 2009
DICK ROBERTSON, PRESIDENT, WARNER BROS. TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION, 1989-2010