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Hall of Famer Kindred Donates 50 Years of Sportswriting to Illinois Wesleyan

July 21, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— National Hall of Fame sportswriter and Illinois Wesleyan University alumnus Dave Kindred has donated a wealth of materials documenting his 50-year career as a sportswriter to the University's Tate Archives and Special Collections.

The Dave Kindred Collection comprises approximately 45 boxes of material, a significant portion pertaining to Muhammad Ali. Kindred first began writing about Ali 50 years ago, as a young sports reporter for the newspaper in Louisville, Ky., Ali's hometown. The collection includes audio recordings of interviews Kindred conducted for his 2006 book *Sound and Fury*, a portrait of the decades-long relationship between Ali and sportscaster Howard Cosell. Also included: correspondence with Ali's trainer, Angelo Dundee, and official press packets from Ali fights, including "The Rumble in the Jungle" against George Foreman and "The Thrilla in Manila" with Joe Frazier.

Kindred said he believes he has written more about Ali than anyone else over the past 50 years. In recent media interviews marking Ali's death, Kindred spoke about interviewing the heavyweight champ in bed in a Las Vegas hotel suite and another memorable encounter while careening down an old logging road in the Pennsylvania woods with Ali driving his Cadillac at 80 miles per hour.

In addition, the collection contains more than 300 of Kindred's reporter's notebooks, scrapbooks from his trips covering the Olympics, and personal correspondence with readers, friends and family members.



Kindred returned to campus to speak at an Alumni Showcase as part of events celebrating the Inauguration of President Eric Jensen.



The decades-long relationship between Muhammad Ali and sportscaster Howard Cosell is the subject of Dave Kindred's book *Sound and Fury*. (Photo from the Dave Kindred Collection)

Kindred is currently a contributor to *Golf Digest* following a career writing for the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Washington Post* and *Sporting News*. Over his career he has covered every major sporting event in America, many of them multiple times. Press passes for dozens of these events (Super Bowls, the Masters, the World Series, the Olympics, Kentucky Derby, the Indianapolis 500, and others) are included in the collection. A member of the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association Hall of Fame, Kindred has been enshrined in the U.S. Basketball Writers Hall of Fame and received the Curt Gowdy Award for outstanding contributions to basketball. He is the 2012 winner of The Dick Schaap Award for Outstanding Journalism, and has received the Associated Press Sports Editors' Red Smith Award for lifetime excellence in sports journalism and a lifetime achievement award in journalism from the Professional Golfers' Association.

"The Kindred acquisition is something that is rare in my experience," said University Archivist Meg Miner. "It is remarkable that we have the entirety of his work life to share with others."

Another strength of the collection, said Miner, is the significant number of letters from Kindred's readers. Kindred said he understood the passion a reader felt in response to a story or column when the reader would go to the trouble of finding a piece of paper, a pen, an envelope and a stamp, and take the time to write. "Usually it was the people who were the most upset who would most likely go find a stamp," Kindred quipped.

Kindred nearly always wrote back to those readers — whether they admired him or called him names. "When I was a teenager I wrote a letter to a sportswriter in Chicago," Kindred recalled. "I never got an answer, so I had resolved early on, anytime that anyone wrote to me, I answered."

The Kindred Collection also includes firsthand accounts of the 1972 Munich Olympics terrorist attacks in letters to Kindred's mother; and a series of letters to Illinois Wesleyan alumnus Fred Young, longtime sports editor and columnist at *The Daily Pantagraph* of Bloomington, where Kindred got his start in the world of daily newspapers. A native of Atlanta, Ill., Kindred attended Illinois Wesleyan on a journalism scholarship provided by the *Pantagraph* and worked there part time throughout his four years at IWU before graduating in 1963. He also played varsity baseball on a team led by legendary Titan coach Jack Horenberger. Kindred received the University's Distinguished Alumni Award in 1998.

"My four years at Illinois Wesleyan shaped the next 50 years of my life," Kindred said. "I had the great good fortune to be able to write about anything involving the sports world in any way that I wanted. All of that is represented in this collection through notes, interviews, and in the actual stories that were produced."

The collection is "basically the whole broad array of what a journalist does, and it's represented in the way that I did it for 50 years," he added.

In fact, Kindred believes his attention to his craft may be one of the collection's most valuable aspects. Kindred's focus was influenced, in part, by his fascination with the craft of athletes. "I'm always interested in asking, 'How did they do that?' Every event I go to, I always want to look for something I haven't seen before. So when I see something I haven't seen before, I want to find out why that happened."



Dave Kindred (far left) and his then-boss, George Solomon of *The Washington Post*, chat with Howard Cosell, circa 1979. (Photo from the Dave Kindred Collection)



Long after he had changed his name to Muhammad Ali, some media outlets still referred to Ali as Cassius Clay, evidenced by this 1970 Dave Kindred column.

take a trip through an era of what sports was like in America, from 1970 forward, as seen by a guy who was trying to write better than he could, it's all there."



"Mostly, I just write about people, doing what their passion has moved them to do, and I try to come to that with my own passion," he added.

Miner said Kindred's financial assistance will hasten its availability to scholars and others, tentatively scheduled for late 2017. "Dave's generous donation manifests itself in three ways: he saved these materials in the first place, he funded a project archivist who began organizing the collection immediately upon receipt, and he continues to share his time as a consultant so that we can help the public understand the range of his work," she said. "I look forward to working with others to make it available to our students, scholars, journalists and even just fans of Dave's and people he's encountered in his remarkable career."

Kindred said forming a "collection" never occurred to him – he confesses to being a "packrat" and one thing just led to another. Over the years, he had researched primary sources in other collections in preparation to write one of his 10 books, and he began to think his own work might help a researcher in the future. "I felt a kind of an obligation in a sense that I was there for a lot of history, and thought I might as well leave my stuff to a great institution of learning rather than boxed up in my basement," Kindred said. "People who want to