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Black Student Union

Black Activism and Education

1970

Bill Russell Memorial Correspondence 1970

Bill Russell

Robert A. Sunderland *University of San Francisco*

Harold Logwood University of San Francisco

Black Student Union University of San Francisco

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Mr. Bill Russell c/o Hal Perry 5227 East 14th Oakland, California

Dear Bill:

ast year, at the urging of and in cooperation with the Black Students Union, the University sought to find a manner in which it could honor you, its greatest athlete. After much talk and many ideas, Joe Marshall and Harold Logwood of the Black Students-Union, Pete Peletta and I worked out what we thought would be a fitting memorial dedicated to you. I later presented this to the President and Trustees and they, too, concurred that what we had in mind would not only be something that would bring an additional honor to you, but it would provide the proper setting in which future students might see some of the athletic tradition of their school.

We are now in the process of creating the Bill Russell Room which we feel will not only be the most distinguished and most beautiful room on campus, but which will be a most fitting tribute to you. We found in our research that one of the best ways by which Universities honor their greatest athlete is to have a large room which is dedicated to him and in which is contained some of his awards, trophles, his development from youngster to adulthood through pictures, his retired jersey, and other mementoes which will give to future students, alumni, and friends some insight into and feeling of pride for the athlete so honored.

To provide such a room, we have taken two rooms in the gymnasium which are on the same level as the basketball court, knocked down the wall between the rooms, and now we are presently paneling the room with rich wood, carpeting it, putting in a display case, covering one wall, which will, we hope, show some of your awards, trophies, and other mementoes, and four or five other smaller display cases to honor other great USF athletes. We hope that the room will serve not only as a place where students, alumni, and friends may visit to see the historical mementoes of you and other great USF athletes, but as a suitable place for press conferences, special small gatherings of Father President, and other important events.

The room is currently under construction and we are hoping that it will be finished sometime around the middle of March. The purpose of this letter is not only to inform you of the Bill Russell Room, but Harold and I would also like to find out when and if you would be available to come to the dedication of the Room. After its completion, we would hold the dedication anytime in March or April that you would be available. Also, and this, of course, is preliminary to your seeing the Room, we would like to have you share with us by displaying them in the showcase, any trophies, awards, pictures, or other honors that you feel would be appropriate.

We would be most honored and happy if you could be present for the dedication and if you could put on display those awards, trophies, pictures and so forth that you would think appropriate to the Room. If there are any questions concerning the Eill Russell Room or the dedication, we would appreciate hearing them from you.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Sunderland, S.J. Vice President for Student Affairs

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Father Jonsen,

It is well known within the Black Student Union, the Black community and the White community that our past alumni, Bill Russell, is a great athelete and man. As you know the University of San Francisco is about to dedicate a room to Bill Russell. The Black Student Union feels this is an admirable gesture in his honor. but we think that the University should take action which he would consider more personal. It is our desire to see that Mr. Bill Russell receives an honorary degree from University of San Francisco as a tribute for his outstanding accomplishments, both in sports - (where he was selected as the greatest athelete of the decade) - and in his work towards the dignity of man. Such a move in this direction would undoubtedly receive strong support from students, faculty, and alumni of the University of San Francisco. as well as the community of San Francisco. It would seem appropriate that upon the dedication of the Bill Russell roomhave the presentation of the honorary degree which would be an additional symbol of our respect; and also this would afford d Mr. Bill Russell the opportunity to express his opinions.

Sincerely,

The Black Student Union Harold Logwood - Chairman

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