



# People For Southern African Freedom

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Dr. Robert MacVicar, President  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, OR 97331

Dear President MacVicar:

We speak for many in Eugene in commending you for your recent refusal to support Coach Dale Thomas' efforts to take an OSU wrestling contingent to South Africa. Coach Thomas attempted to portray the wrestlers as mere individuals, not as official OSU representatives. The apartheid regime of South Africa would nevertheless have reaped considerable publicity benefits from the tour by advertising it as an OSU delegation. The wrestlers themselves would probably have suffered serious damage to their athletic careers.

Coach Thomas' attempt to arrange the tour was irresponsible in the extreme, as have been his other sporting connections with South Africa. Last fall, he trained 17 South African wrestling "coaches" who evidently took back their knowledge to the police and army of South Africa. Further, since 1962 Mr. Thomas has annually hosted South African wrestling teams at OSU. These actions constitute gross violations of the United Nations embargo on sports contacts with racist South Africa and of the official U.S. policy of discouraging such contacts. We consider it highly unlikely that a man with 30 years of coaching experience and a long history of international sports dealings would have been unaware of the boycott against South Africa.

Mr. Thomas has repeatedly shown himself to be totally insensitive to conditions in South Africa, to the feelings and perceptions of African students and persons of African descent here, and to official U.S. and U.N. conventions. Moreover, following the recent ruling that taking the OSU students to South Africa would violate NCAA restrictions on summer competition, Mr. Thomas told the Salem Statesman-Journal that he would seek other PAC-10 athletes willing to accompany him on the trip. This is reckless and unjustifiable behavior. Mr. Thomas is apparently bent on sacrificing the athletic futures of any students he can find in order to take advantage of his close ties to apartheid South Africa.

Just what is the substance of these ties? In 1962, Mr. Thomas set up the "Oregon Wrestling Cultural Exchange", which has evidently been the conduit for South African financing of OSU trips to that country ever since. We wonder: how much South African

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money has flowed to Mr. Thomas over the years? How much has OSU itself contributed to Thomas' past South Africa connections?

We consider Mr. Thomas a liability and an embarrassment to the Oregon State System of Higher Education and to organized sports in this state. He has had ample opportunities to reverse his support for sporting contacts with South Africa, and has defiantly refused to do so. Should Mr. Thomas persist, despite the boycott in maintaining ties to racist South Africa (and in risking the careers of his students), we suggest that the value of his service to OSU be brought under serious scrutiny.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

*Christina Cowger*

Christina Cowger for  
People for Southern African Freedom