

OPINION PAGES

OUR VIEW

Fallen hero

Rozier's greatness tempered by humanness

Athletes are people too.

The harsh reality of that fact set in when former Nebraska running back Mike Rozier was shot three times and nearly killed outside a bar in his hometown of Camden, N.J., on Nov. 6.

At Nebraska, Rozier had a stellar career, rushing for a school and Big Eight record of 4,780 yards. He rushed for 51 touchdowns. Twenty-nine of those in one season. Both school records.

In 1983, he was awarded college football's highest individual prize: the Heisman trophy. Many thought his talent was the best they had ever seen.

Upon leaving Nebraska, things changed rapidly for Rozier.

He was given a \$3 million signing bonus as the No. 1 draft choice in the 1984 United States Football League when he was drafted by Pittsburgh. Then, the next year, Houston signed Rozier to a four-year deal reportedly worth \$1.4 million. After being cut in 1990 by the Oilers, he struggled to finish out his career with the Atlanta Falcons.

The greatest running back in the history of Nebraska football rushed for only 4,462 yards and 30 touchdowns in seven NFL seasons. He scored one more touchdown than he scored in 1983, his record-setting year, and 318 yards less than what he rushed for in three seasons at Nebraska.

But behind his eye-popping statistics and his reputation for being an NFL bust, Rozier's off-field life was put on the back burner by many people.

He would return to his hometown Camden every year, no matter how rough a town it was. He didn't become a different person because he won a trophy only 60 people have won.

Then one night two weeks ago, Rozier stood on a street corner in his hometown with a friend. A man walked up to them and pulled a gun, as Rozier tells it. The man fired six shots, three times invading Rozier's body and three times hitting his friend, Bart Merrill.

Now Rozier lies in a hospital with blackened bullet holes in his chest and hand.

"I'm the one who got shot," Rozier told The Associated Press. "Now I'm the bad guy."

That's an unfamiliar circumstance for one of the "good guys" of the Nebraska football program.

He was cheered, adored and idolized by a generation of current Cornhusker fans who would love to just catch a glimpse of Rozier at any moment. To watch him play was poetry in motion as he fascinated his audience.

Now he has trouble walking down a hallway just to say "hi" to a wounded friend.

Fans who watch and play sports need to realize that their sports heroes are just like them. People just trying to survive.

MEHSLING'S VIEW



LETTERS

POLICY POLITICS

The University's decision not to extend employee benefits to the domestic partners of lesbians and gay men is in violation of their own equal opportunity and nondiscrimination policies. The policy reads "Educational programs, support services and workplace behavior, including decisions regarding hiring, promotion, discipline, termination AND ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, should be made without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, marital status OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION." (Emphasis mine.)

There shouldn't need to be a panel discussion regarding what areas of benefits would be affected nor any political ramifications of extending these benefits to the partners of gay and lesbian employees. The Benefits Committee shouldn't have the power to override the general Nondiscrimination Policy of the University simply because the question might have political ramifications.

While the university maintains that it does not discriminate against people on the basis of sexual orientation through its nondiscrimination policies, the fact of the matter is that the University of Nebraska has rarely done anything to enforce that particular part of its policies.

Just a few other examples where the university has turned its eyes away from blatant discrimination include allowing ROTC to use university facilities even though the military actively discriminates on the

basis of sexual orientation and also the fact that university housing for married couples is not available to lesbian or gay couples.

In light of these things, one can see that the university's nondiscrimination policy is merely a feel-good statement aimed at appeasement.

Robert W. Anderson
graduate student
unclassified

WORLDLY VIEW

I am writing in response to Tuesday's article, "Travels open student's eyes to other cultures." My purpose in agreeing to be interviewed for this article was to share some of the benefits that I have experienced from traveling and studying abroad with the students, faculty and staff of the University of Nebraska. As I read through the article, I felt as though there were more negative connotations than positive. Therefore, I would like to review what was said in the interview.

At an early age, I was taught by my father that education through traveling was beneficial for my life experience. I began to learn that living in a different culture and interacting with the people who sometimes seem to be so far away had a tremendous impact on my thoughts and understanding of the world around me. I began to understand the importance of learning from people of different ethnic backgrounds. My experiences as a young child prepared me for the future and helped me to step out of my comfort zone so that I could

become completely immersed in another culture.

My time spent overseas has taught me many valuable lessons. It has taught me that every individual on this earth has something to contribute to the world. It has taught me that the similarities in people far outweigh the differences. And it has taught me that the world is becoming smaller and smaller.

Traveling and studying abroad is about education. It is a continual process that will last a lifetime. It helps you put feelings with the faces that you see on television every day. It helps you to grow into a person who is willing to take more risks — to become passionate about events or issues that interest you. It helps you to better understand your role in the world.

The statement in the article about my alleged embarrassment by the behavior of all American tourists was very misleading. While some may exhibit these behaviors, many American travelers are respectful of the people and their ways of life.

I wish to make a formal apology to anyone who was offended by the tone of this article. It reflects neither my feelings nor my experiences with regards to overseas travels, the United States or other countries. I had hoped that the article would help support the efforts of the International Affairs office, to raise the awareness of the importance of international study as part of the undergraduate experience.

Jen Thompson
senior
Spanish

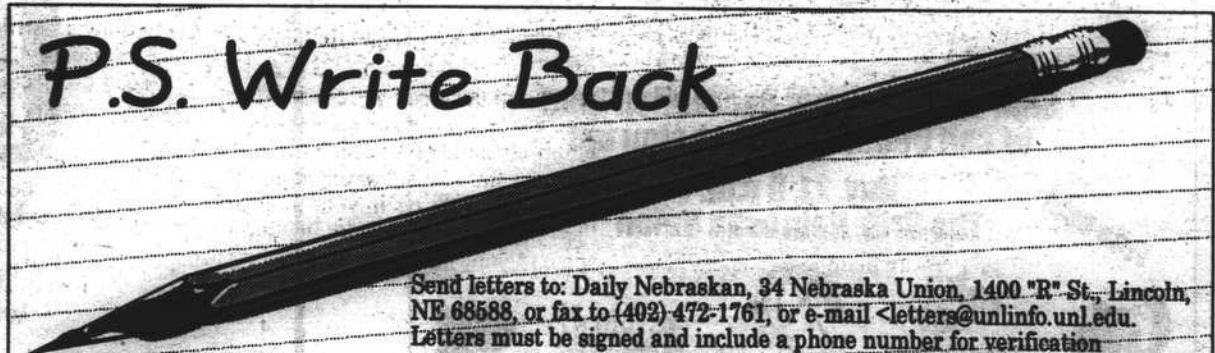
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