

No Corky in the CoB

Another year, another trip to the NCAA Regionals for the USM baseball team. This one (2009), however, was an improbable trip that came courtesy of USM's recent 3-win, 1-loss C-USA tournament. Yes, Corky Palmer's Golden Eagles took down Tulane twice and national power East Carolina once en route to the championship game against former NCAA champ Rice. That game, a close 6-8 loss to the Owls, also helped clinch the Eagles' 2009 trip into the NCAAs. Clearly, Corky Palmer is the crown jewel of USM's athletics department.

Unfortunately, the CoB has no one of the Corky Palmer sort. Current dean (head coach) Lance Nail is hardly ever around. He is becoming as much a ghost as various CoB faculty who are infamously invisible, such as Mark Klinedinst, who is actually known by some in MGT as "the ghost." Nail's absences might be excusable if there were some tangible results from it all, ala the Eagles' current string of NCAA tournament bids. But, there are only rumors and unsubstantiated stories of fundraising efforts regarding Nail's off-campus activities. None of this, however, is to say that the CoB *never had* a Corky Palmer. It did, once upon a time. That individual was Tyrone Black, the second permanent dean in the history of USM's b-school, who governed from the mid-1980s through the mid- or late-1990s. Black built the CoB into a regional academic power, much like USM's baseballers.

Black has been gone for quite some time now, and there hasn't been a proper replacement since. Like the CoB, USM is about to be Corky-less. The veteran coaching legend announced his retirement a few weeks ago, and some are already predicting that improbable (and probable) runs into the post-season will soon only be a part of USM's past, much like having a respectable b-school. The Palmer story shows us all that the "brain drain" from USM continues. With it so goes USM's prospects for future success, at least in the eyes of many.