

## EXPLAINING THE STATE OF AFFAIRS AT UGA TO MY FRIENDS AT GEORGIA TECH

Ever wondered how many Georgia Tech fans are walking the earth? I would estimate 900 million, because that is how many have asked me when was I going to write a column explaining to them the civil war at the University of Georgia.

Call me cynical, but something tells me Tech folks are less interested in knowing why everybody is mad at everybody else in Athens and are more interested in watching me squirm. Perhaps it is because I have been a tad heavy-handed in pouring it on about the University of Georgia — the oldest state-chartered university in the nation, located in Athens, the Classic City of the South — being state champions in football, baseball, basketball and probably a lot of other sports I don't even know about. My incessant crowing seems to have irritated the Tech faithful, and this is their way of getting back at me.

Therefore, let me attempt to put the dispute in Athens in perspective so my friends at Tech, can get back to more important things, like wondering if they will ever play in a major bowl game again, or should they just count on going forever to the Whatsit Bowl in Boise, Idaho.

Here is a chronology of the controversy. When Michael Adams arrived at the University of Georgia in 1998 from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, he was appalled at what he found. The students were smart. The faculty was smarter. Alumni were giving money. The athletic program was doing nicely. The UGA Foundation was working hard to support the administration. The Board of Regents seemed pleased with everything and everybody. This concerned Adams, who enjoyed a high profile at Centre. Adams said, "I've got to shake the place up or nobody will ever know I was here, and when they hang my portrait, people will say, 'Who is that?' and somebody will reply, 'Oh, that's John Adams. He was president at UGA, and I think he ran the country a long time ago.'"

Then Adams said, "I am an expert at sports, having supervised the powerhouse athletic program at Centre College. Things are going too well in Athletic Director Vince Dooley's life. I must let him know I am in charge." So Adams made a secret deal with Head Football Coach Jim Donnan to pay him a bunch of money if he ever got fired, and Adams didn't tell anybody, including Dooley. Then he had Dooley fire Donnan. "Tee hee," Adams said, "I love doing stuff like that. Now I think I'll get involved in the basketball program. Anybody have Jim Harrick's telephone number?"

Adams had known Harrick at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, where Adams was vice president and Harrick was basketball coach. One day while waxing their surfboards, Adams said to Harrick, "Jimbo, why don't you leave this dorky place and go somewhere important, like UCLA? Win an NCAA championship, get fired for lying about an expense report and then cool it in Rhode Island for a while. I am going to make a pit stop at Centre College, which is somewhere in Kentucky, and then go to the University of Georgia. When I get there, I'll hire you. You can hire your son, and pretty soon everybody in the country will be talking about Georgia basketball." The rest, as they say, is history.

Remarkably, Adams was able to squeeze some time in his busy schedule to alienate members of the heretofore-docile UGA Foundation. Some thought the president spent donor money like a drunken sailor and had treated Vince Dooley unfairly. They got upset and wanted Adams fired. The Board of Regents turned red in the face and said, "Hey, that's our job," and fired the Foundation instead. Now, everybody at UGA is mad about something, except Michael Adams. He's as happy as a dead pig in the sunshine because he has the high profile he wanted. "No one will ever confuse me with John Adams," he said proudly.

Hopefully, this explanation will satisfy all the Georgia Tech people who have been fretting about the state of affairs at the University of Georgia, instead of checking plane fares to Boise, Idaho. Glad I could be of help.