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BILL CURRY SCORES ONE FOR THE GERIATRIC GANG

Hooray for Bill Curry! He is the new football coach of the Georgia State University Panthers. Yes, I know he is a Georgia Tech man, but that is beside the point. The point is that at the ripe young age of 65 Curry is about to jump-start the football program at GSU, which will begin play in 2010. Mary McElroy, the athletic director at Georgia State, decided that in getting football going at the urban institution, age doesn't matter; quality does.

We have read and seen a lot of media pontification about racism and sexism during the recent Democratic bloodletting between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, and there will no doubt be more in the upcoming presidential campaign. The liberal media will see to that. But is anybody paying attention to the bias against age? How about Republican John McCain? Good man. War hero. But (*whisper*) perhaps he is too old to be running for president. If that isn't prejudice, then Michael Vick is a French poodle.

Blacks, females, Hispanics, gays and just about any other faction that feel discriminated against have special-interest groups — including the media — to stand up for them. They get to hyphenate themselves, march in the streets and holler about inequality — real or perceived. But not older Americans. We don't march or holler (except when our joints ache), and we are reluctant to tell people we are eligible for AARP, afraid they will hand us an African violet, a shawl and a jar to drool in.

It is hard to deny being black, female, Hispanic or even gay. But a lot of people will try to deny aging. They will spend millions of dollars each year on facelifts (most of them bad), hair implants, breast implants, tummy tucks, nose bobs and probably some things best not discussed in a family newspaper.

Bill Curry seems to have no qualms admitting his age. Some may question why he is taking on such a challenging job at this stage in his life. I doubt he needs the money. He certainly has nothing to prove in the game of football. Curry was a star at Georgia Tech, an all-pro with the Baltimore Colts, played for Vince Lombardi at Green Bay, was SEC coach of the year and national coach of the year while at Alabama, owns two Super Bowl rings and is in the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame.

So, why is he getting back into coaching? Maybe to show us that age doesn't matter. If John McCain can run for president at the age of 71 and Ronald Reagan can be re-elected at age 73, if Lillian Carter (you-know-who's mother) can join the Peace Corps at 68 and spend two years as a nurse in Bombay, if Colonel Sanders can take his social security check and start the Kentucky Fried Chicken chain at 65, if Jessica Tandy and George Burns can win Oscars at the age of 80 — well then, I believe Bill Curry can once again coach a college football team.

But he'd better be ready for the negative nattering about his age. (*Hmm.*) Isn't he a little old to be coaching college kids? After all, (*whisper*) he will be older than most recruits' grandfathers and he might not be around more than a couple of years after the GSU program begins because he will then be (*shudder!*) in his late 60's. Shouldn't he go ahead and (*ahem!*) designate his successor now? You know how old people are. He might forget whether right guard is a football position or a deodorant.

Even though I am an unrepentant Bulldog, I am rooting hard for Bill Curry to succeed at Georgia State, just to stick it to all those who worship at the Fountain of Youth in this country and think that football — and everything else — is a young person's game.

I hope you knock their socks off on the football field, Coach Curry. And if my arthritis and editors allow, I'll keep kicking some serious fanny in the paper. Together, we will show these young smarty-pants a thing or two. Let's just call it (*whisper*) the Revenge of the Geriatric Gang.