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March 20, 1975

Dear Mr. Ward:

Thank you most sincerely for your recent letter with the attached copy of the Culver Alumnus Magazine for February, 1975, which was the Russell D. Oliver Memorial Edition.

I very much appreciated receiving a copy of this booklet because, as you know, Russ and I were very close friends. Having this memorial edition booklet means much to me.

I also want to thank you and your wife for your encouragement and your support. It certainly is wonderful to know that you both have me in your prayers. This is most comforting.

Thank you again for your thoughtfulness and for your concern.

Sincerely,

JERRY FORD

Mr. Morris Ward
1102 North O'Brien
South Bend, Indiana 46628

GRF:Downton

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60 suggest

Pres. Ford

Dear Sir -

I'm just writing you a note on the spur of the moment.

Russ Oliver was a real good friend of mine. I visited him in the hospital and he always talked about you. He told me you would get the job done and I'm sure you will.

I officiated many Grand Rapid Chicks games at South Field when I was umpire in-charge of the All American Girls Baseball League. I officiated basket ball - baseball & football for Russ all the years that was at Culver.

My wife and I have been Pres. 14 Dist. 1 in South Bend since 1939. We are with you 150 pct. May God Bless you and Rep.

Sincerely
Norris Dalgat Ward
1102 N. O'Brien
So Bend, Ind.

46628

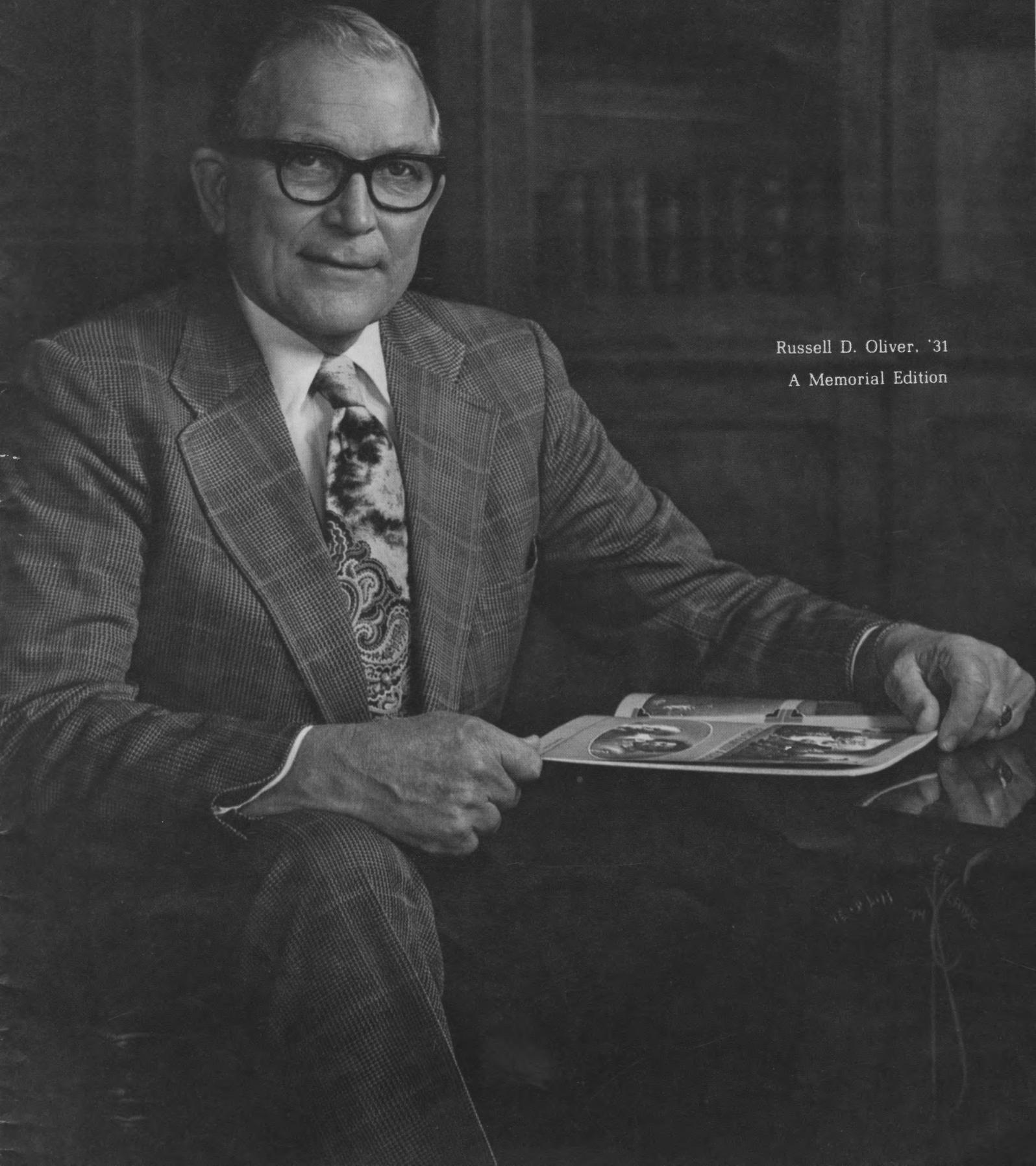
D/ have with correspondence
with Russ @ Holt.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Culver Alumnus Magazine, February 1975
Russell D. Oliver, '31 Memorial Edition

CULVER

Alumnus Magazine February 1975



Russell D. Oliver, '31

A Memorial Edition

CULVER

Alumnus Magazine February 1975

Volume 56 Number 1

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THE NEW COACH — Russ Oliver became Culver's assistant football coach and head basketball coach in 1935 and was named head football and baseball coach in 1936-37.



COVER PORTRAIT — Officers of the Culver Legion, working with Col. Ben A. Barone, commissioned a photo portrait to commemorate Russ Oliver's approaching retirement as alumni director in June. Russ sat for the portrait shortly before entering the hospital for spinal surgery that disclosed malignant tumors. Following surgery and treatments, he returned home to be with his devoted wife, Myra, and many Culver friends. He slipped into a coma Dec. 18 and died Dec. 19. Many alumni returned to the campus Jan. 11 to honor Russ Oliver and to unveil his portrait at the 28th annual Alumni Basketball Game, an event he founded and greatly enjoyed. Highlighting this memorial edition is the cover portrait by David B. LaClaire of Grand Rapids, Mich., who had photographed Russ Oliver's former teammate, President Gerald Ford, on many occasions. Mr. LaClaire tells of his experience with Russ: "Portrait assignments are often but brief encounters. It was special with Russ Oliver. Photographing him was an inspiration because being photographed was difficult and painful for him. The experience was an affirmation of so much that is good and beautiful in life—a light to be followed. He was secure and comfortable in the friendships of his lifetime, and he talked about them. He expressed his concern that what we were doing was for his friends."



FAMED NOTRE DAME COACH Knute Rockne visited a Culver Eagles practice session in the fall of 1930 as the team was preparing to play St. John's at Chicago's Soldiers Field, a charity game sponsored by the American Legion before a crowd of 35,000. [Culver beat St. John's 19-0 and compiled an undefeated season record of 6-0-1.] Talking with Rockne are Bob Peck, a three-year All-American center for the University of Pittsburgh and Culver head coach from 1921-31 who was named to the Sports Illustrated "All Century" football team, and cadet fullback Russ Oliver, who went on to become the fifth man to win nine varsity letters at the University of Michigan and then to become Culver's head football coach from 1936-68.

Russell D. Oliver: Quite a Guy

When Russell Dwight Oliver, '31, joined Culver's coaching staff in 1935, he was told that his job didn't depend on winning. He was told to build character. Not only did he build character but also he managed to win hundreds of games and friends.

Russ tallied a 138-80-14 win-loss-tie record in 29 seasons as Culver's head football coach, 211-137 in 23 seasons as basketball coach and 105-76 in 21 seasons as baseball coach. His tenure made him one of Indiana's veteran coaches, and his

teams' winning records qualified him for special recognition. He established a similar "winning record" after becoming alumni director in 1961.

In contact with well over 1,000 boys in his coaching years, Russ said when he retired from coaching in 1968, "I have worked with hundreds of young men at Culver, and I can only hope I have contributed to their lives in the same manner as these men have contributed to mine.

"Athletics has been my life's

work, and I have enjoyed every minute. The countless friendships I have made through athletics have been invaluable to me. I owe a great deal to the inspiration of really great men like my father, coaches Bob Peck, Harry Kipke and Ray Fisher. And some of our most loyal alumni have played their hearts out for Culver as athletes."

Born July 20, 1910, in Pontiac, Mich., Russ began his athletic career at Pontiac High School, where he lettered in football, basketball and baseball. As a Culver Summer Schools student in 1927 and 1928, he was the heavyweight boxing champion and a member of the varsity eight-oar shell crew.

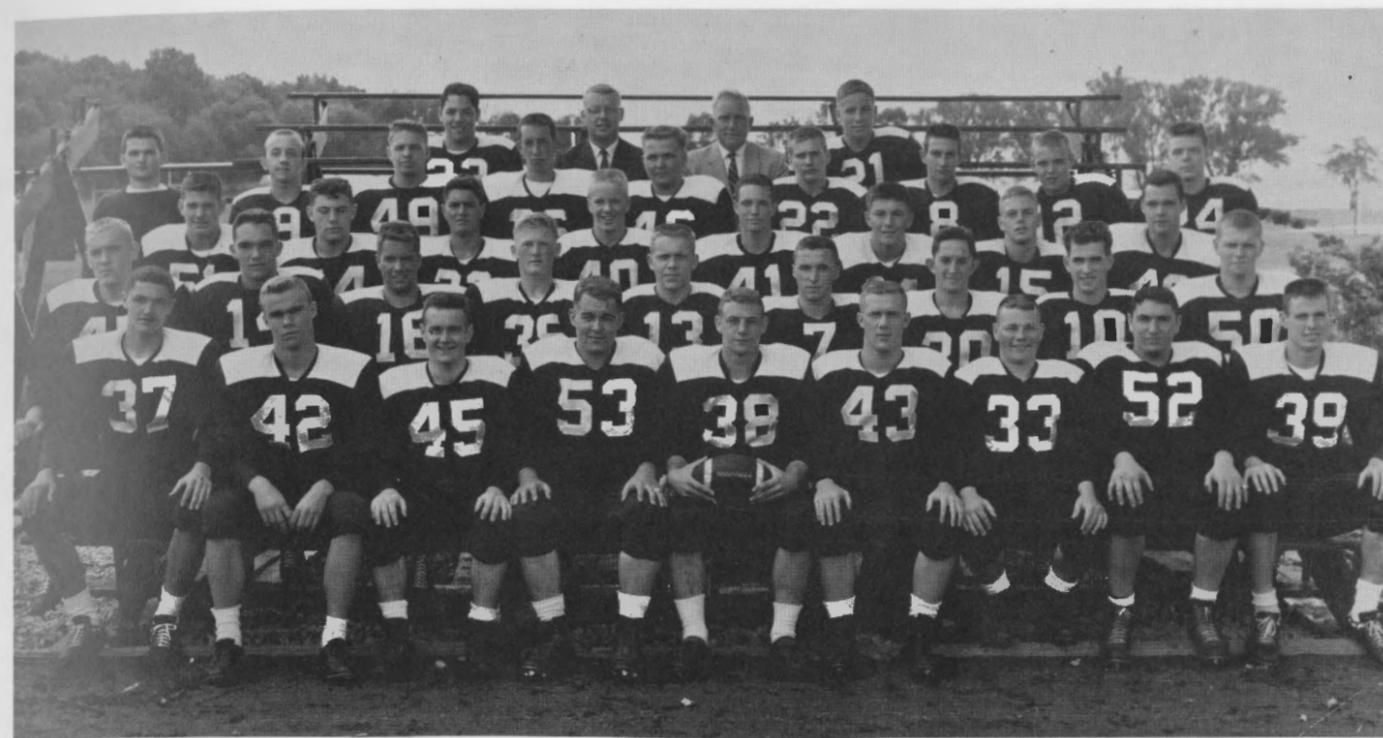
Attending Culver Military Academy for two years and graduating in 1931, Russ earned six letters in football, basketball and

baseball and was named Best All-Around Athlete. He was fullback and Most Valuable Player in football, captain and guard in basketball and captain, first baseman and catcher in baseball.

The fifth man in the history of the University of Michigan to win nine varsity letters—in football, basketball and baseball—Russ graduated in 1935 with a bachelor's degree in literature and education. Syndicated columnist Grantland Rice described Russ's skill as "about as close to a 'natural' as they come." He was captain of Michigan's baseball team and was Harry Kipke's first-string fullback at Michigan for three years, 1932-34. Michigan won the Big Ten and National Football Championships in 1932 and 1933. During their playing years, Russ and the team's center, Gerald R. Ford, developed a friendship that lasted a lifetime.

Russ joined the Culver faculty as assistant football and head basketball coach in 1935 and became head football and baseball coach in 1936-37. His football coaching years, in particular, were marked with innovations. "The Oliver Twist"—a wild offense including all kinds of laterals, quadruple passes and fakes—was a famous play for Culver. He had a hand in three of Culver's five undefeated football seasons—as a

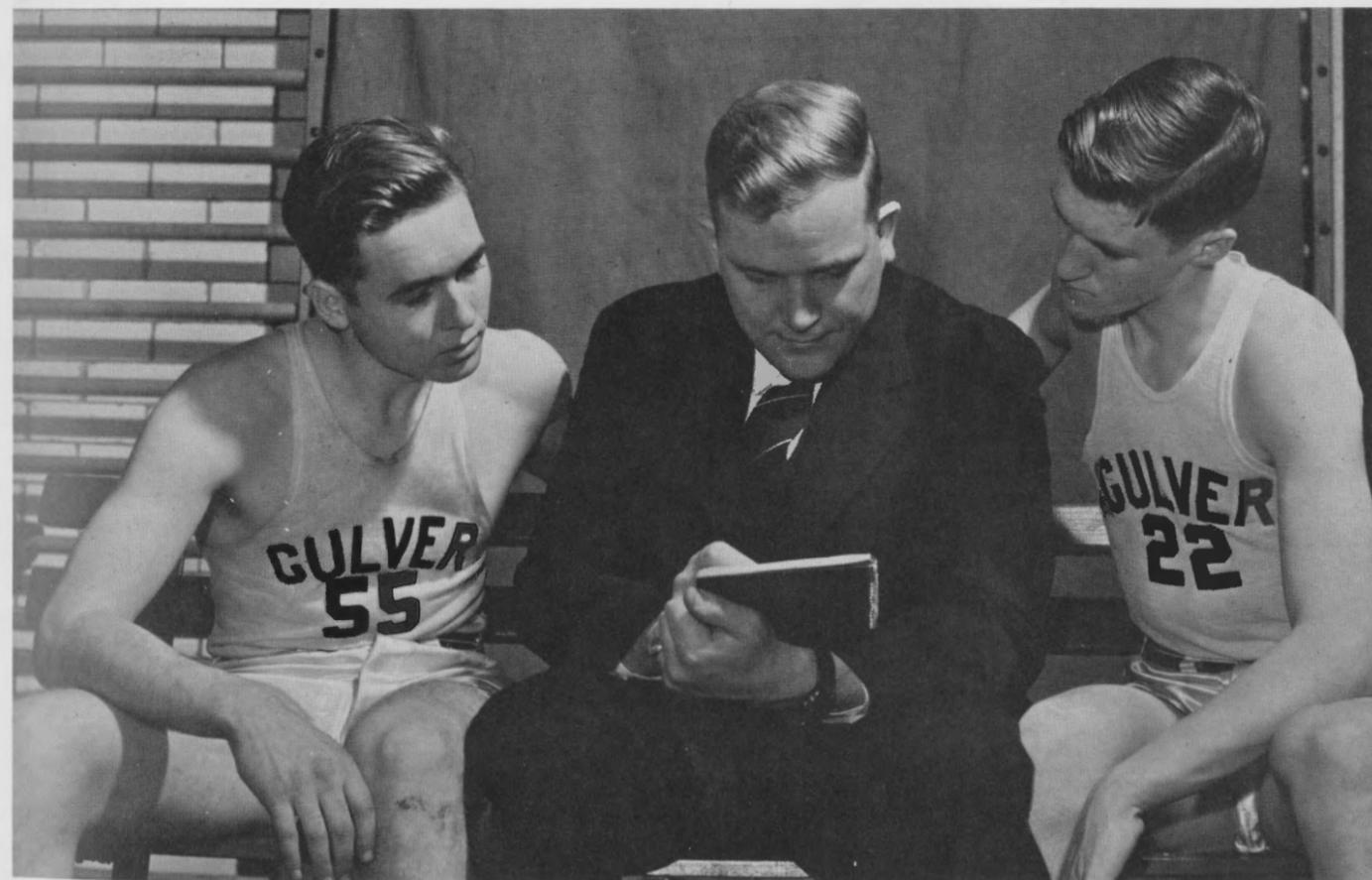
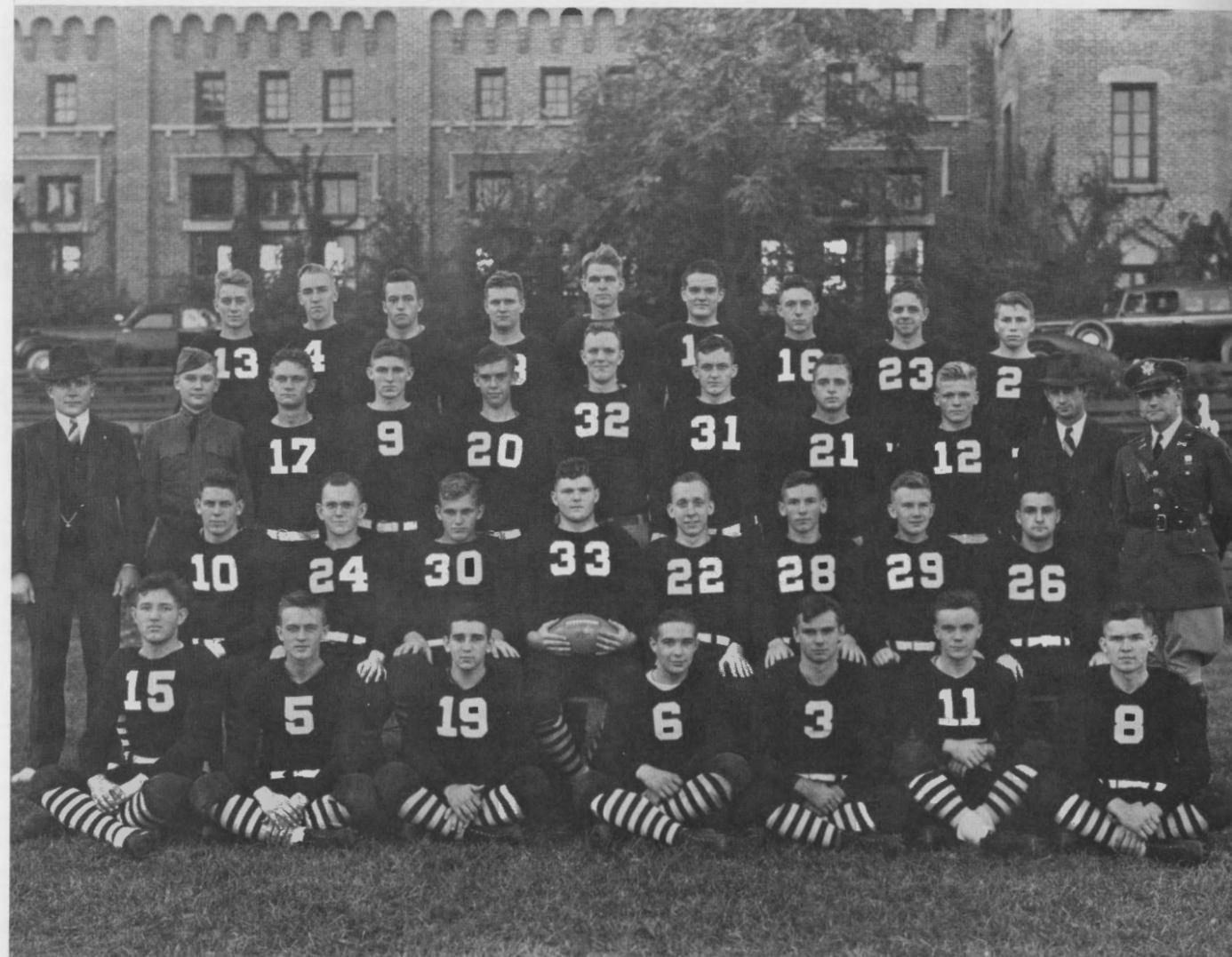
THE UNDEFEATED 1936 football team, Oliver's first season as head coach, scored 223 points versus six points from eight opponents, and those six points came in the final game against Lakeview High School of Chicago on Thanksgiving Day. His captain was the late Hal Roach, Jr., '37, [No. 33], and his assistants were Frank W. Walaitis and Col. C. A. Whitney [at right].

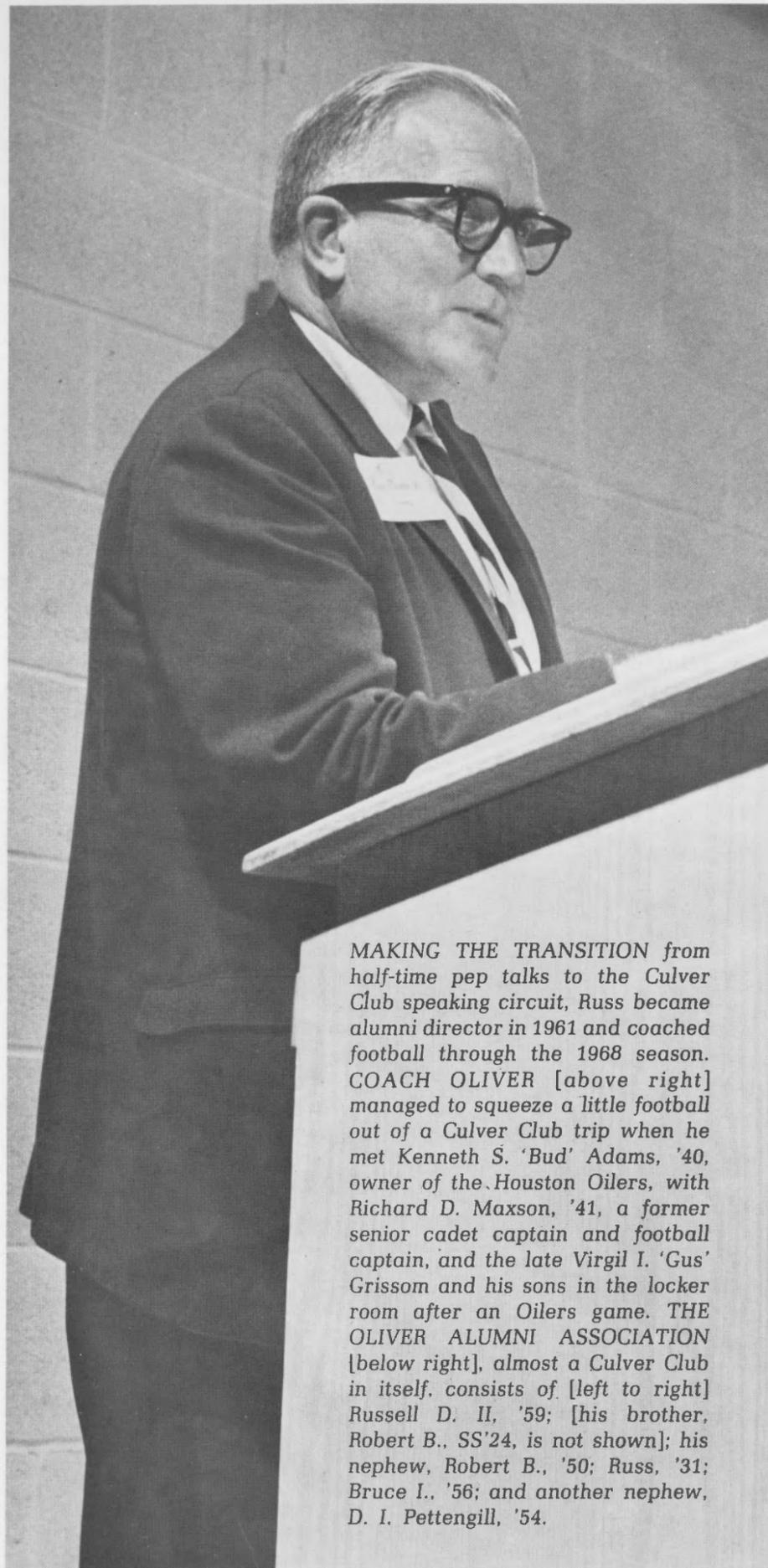


THE SECOND UNDEFEATED TEAM coached by Russ Oliver in the fall of 1958 was led by Albert C. 'Gus' Leader, '59, [No. 38], and Chick Owen [in the back row with Russ]

was assistant coach. Russell D. 'Rusty' Oliver II, '59, is wearing the numeral 13 in the second row. RUSS TALKS STRATEGY [below] with Todd J. Gooding [left] and Guy E.

McGaughey, senior co-captains of the 1941 Midwest Prep Championship team, a title achieved at the University of Chicago Fieldhouse in Russ's sixth basketball season.





4 MAKING THE TRANSITION from half-time pep talks to the Culver Club speaking circuit, Russ became alumni director in 1961 and coached football through the 1968 season. COACH OLIVER [above right] managed to squeeze a little football out of a Culver Club trip when he met Kenneth S. 'Bud' Adams, '40, owner of the Houston Oilers, with Richard D. Maxson, '41, a former senior cadet captain and football captain, and the late Virgil I. 'Gus' Grissom and his sons in the locker room after an Oilers game. THE OLIVER ALUMNI ASSOCIATION [below right], almost a Culver Club in itself, consists of [left to right] Russell D. II, '59; [his brother, Robert B., SS'24, is not shown]; his nephew, Robert B., '50; Russ, '31; Bruce I., '56; and another nephew, D. I. Pettengill, '54.

player in 1930 and as coach in 1936 and 1958.

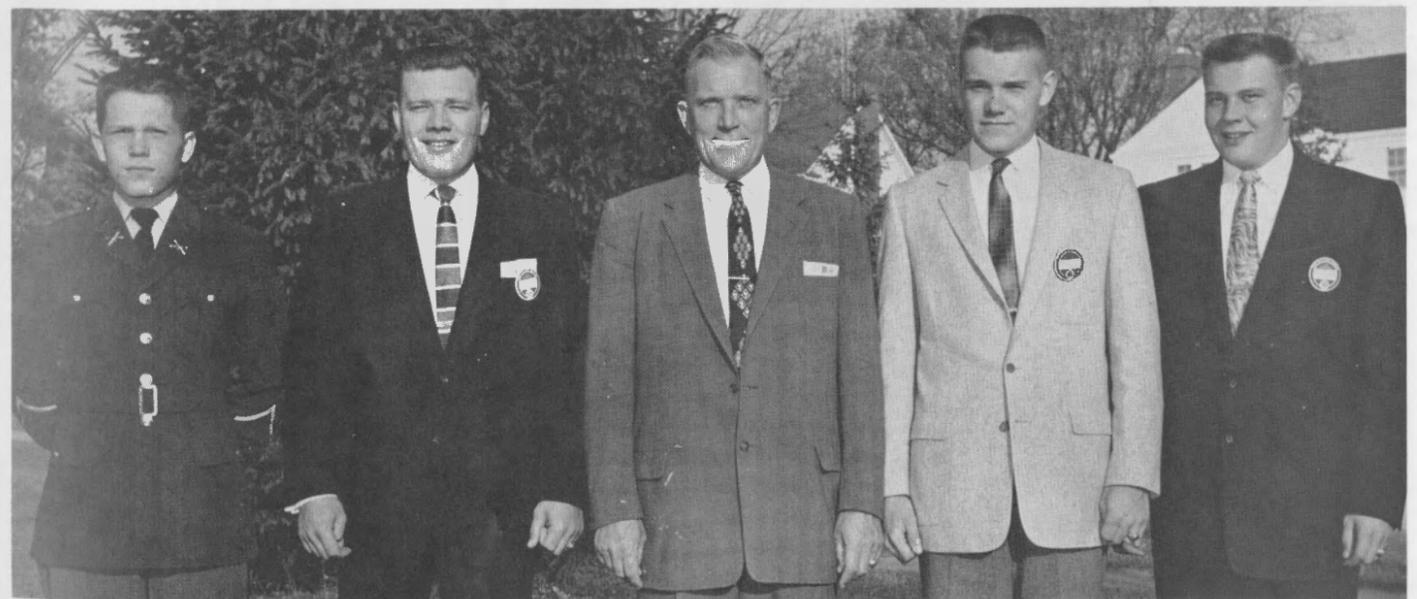
Except for the period from 1942-46, when he served as a major in the Army's 2nd Engineer Amphibious Brigade in the South Pacific, he served continuously at Culver as coach, many years as athletic director, and, from 1961 until his death, director of alumni affairs. He continued to coach football, along with his duties as alumni director, through the 1968 season, and many of his former players returned to the 1969 Homecoming to help dedicate Culver's gridiron as "Oliver Field" in his honor.

An occasional player on Culver's varsity golf team and a freshman golf champion at Michigan, the avid golfer became the Indiana State Seniors Golf Champion in 1972. Serving the youth and schools of Indiana as a football and basketball official for over 30 years, he was the past president of the Saint Joseph Valley Athletic Officials, which cited his service in 1973.

As Culver's alumni director, he served as secretary of the Culver Legion and the Culver Summer Schools Alumni Association, organized major alumni weekends on campus and traveled extensively to meet with Culver Clubs in 65 metropolitan areas throughout the United States. He founded the Alumni Basketball Game and the Culver Golf Roundup, which contributed to ever-increasing levels of alumni participation under his administration.

As he was approaching his Culver retirement this June, Russ planned to devote full time to scouting for the New York Yankees, a team owned substantially by a friend and former student, George M. Steinbrenner, '48. Even in retirement, Russ wanted to maintain his association with athletics, which constituted the dominant part of his working life.

Another highlight in Russ's life was a long friendship with a former teammate who became the President of the United States. "Even in college Jerry Ford was a leader," Russ said this fall, "very sincere, and a great morale factor for the team. I watched his rise in political circles through the years,





DAVID L. NELSON, '53, [left] who played right end for Russ in 1951 and 1952, both 7-1 seasons, succeeded him as head football coach in 1969 after serving as his assistant. THE STEERING COMMITTEE of the Oliver Field Dedication in 1969 met the Olivers after the testimonial banquet [middle, left to right] Alki E. Scopelitis, '55; Russ; George M. Steinbrenner, '48; Myra Oliver; Richard O. 'Moose' Kime, '42; and J. Gregory 'Barney' Poole, '53. They surprised their former coach and his wife with a color television set, a golf cart and a trip to Hawaii.

RUSS FOUNDED the Culver Golf Roundup to raise scholarship funds in honor of Culver's retired and now deceased golf pro, Erv Nelson. Last year's event [above left], the 10th annual, attracted many alumni and, for the first time, included non-alumni golfers. HE ALSO FOUNDED the Alumni Basketball Game, now two games with the JV and Varsity Eagles, which had its 28th anniversary in January. The 17th alumni team in 1964 [below left], like most before and since, fought their way to a 78-57 defeat at the hands of the Varsity. The alumni won in 1951, 53, 54 and 55, and they plan for a year in advance to muster their next victorious team.



DURING THE DEDICATION of Oliver Field, George Steinbrenner reads the inscription of the plaque designed by the makers of the Cooperstown Hall of Fame plaques to Russ and the dedication crowd during halftime of the 1969 Homecoming game, Russ Oliver Day at Culver.



FRIENDS AND FORMER TEAM-MATES President Gerald R. Ford and Russ Oliver met for the last time at an Indianapolis fund raising dinner in October. After their Indianapolis reunion, President Ford spoke with Russ on the phone following surgery, one of many thoughtful gestures during a long and steadfast friendship.

and he spoke at Culver in 1964." Russ had hoped that President Ford might return to Culver for the 1975 Commencement, the year he was to retire from the Academy.

When President Ford came to Indianapolis in October for a Republican fund raising dinner, he told the organizers he wanted to be sure Russ Oliver was there. Spotting Russ in the crowd, President Ford greeted his old friend for a few minutes and said he would call for a longer talk after he returned to Washington. Russ entered the

hospital after their meeting, but the call from the White House came in at his bedside two days after surgery for the removal of a malignant tumor. The telephone conversation and numerous thoughtful gestures from the President and many of Russ's friends boosted his spirits tremendously.

Following treatments, Russ returned home to be with his family and friends. Confident of his recovery in time for the Alumni Basketball Game, Russ remained positive as he strived to reach that goal. Russ lost his bout with cancer Dec. 19, 1974, after slipping into a coma the evening before.

Informed of Russ Oliver's death, President Ford telegraphed his condolences to Myra, and alumni from all over the nation expressed their sympathies. Many alumni and former associates attended the funeral in the Culver Memorial

Chapel, and Russ was buried with full military honors in the Culver Masonic Cemetery. He is survived by his wife, Myra; two sons, Bruce I. and Russell D. II, both Culver Military Academy graduates; a brother, Robert B.; two sisters, Mrs. Dorothy Gould and Mrs. Helen Pettengill; and four grandchildren. The Oliver's were married August 21, 1937.

Alumni of the Culver Academies and the Culver Summer Schools have established the Russell D. Oliver Memorial Fund to continue his memory through The Culver Educational Foundation. And years hence, when fathers explain The Oliver Twist and other athletic exploits to their sons, when new cadets first set foot on Oliver Field, when alumni return to swap stories and "play their hearts out for Culver" once again, they're bound to say, "Russ Oliver was quite a guy."

We meet in this gymnasium to remember, with gratitude and affection, Russ Oliver and the years of service which he gave to the Academy and its alumni. And as we remember Russ, let us recall what Isaiah said of those who live their lives faithfully: "They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." So it was with Russ, and we give God thanks for a man who helped countless boys and young men to "walk and not faint," to "run and not be weary," and who encouraged scores of teams so that they did indeed "mount up with wings as Eagles." In thanksgiving and commemoration, let us pray: We give thanks to thee, O Lord, for thy servants who have done justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with their God. We bless thy holy name especially for those men and women we have known and loved, who by their patient obedience, steadfast hope, and helpfulness in trouble have shown the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. As they have comforted and upheld our souls, grant us grace to follow their steps, and at last to share with them in the inheritance of the saints in light, through Christ our Savior. Amen.

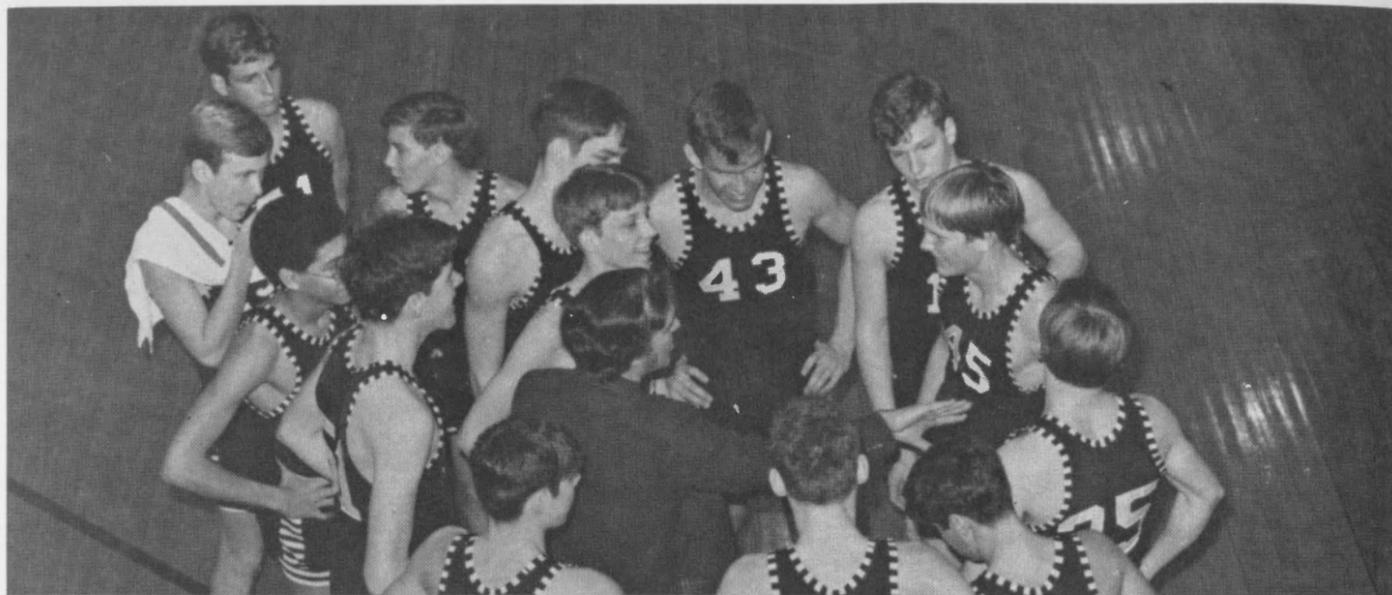
Invocation before the Russ Oliver Alumni Basketball Game
John M. Hartley, Acting Chaplain

THIS YEAR 27 ALUMNI returned Jan. 11 to play in the Russ Oliver Alumni Basketball Games, the 28th year for the alumni event, and to assist Culver Legion President John

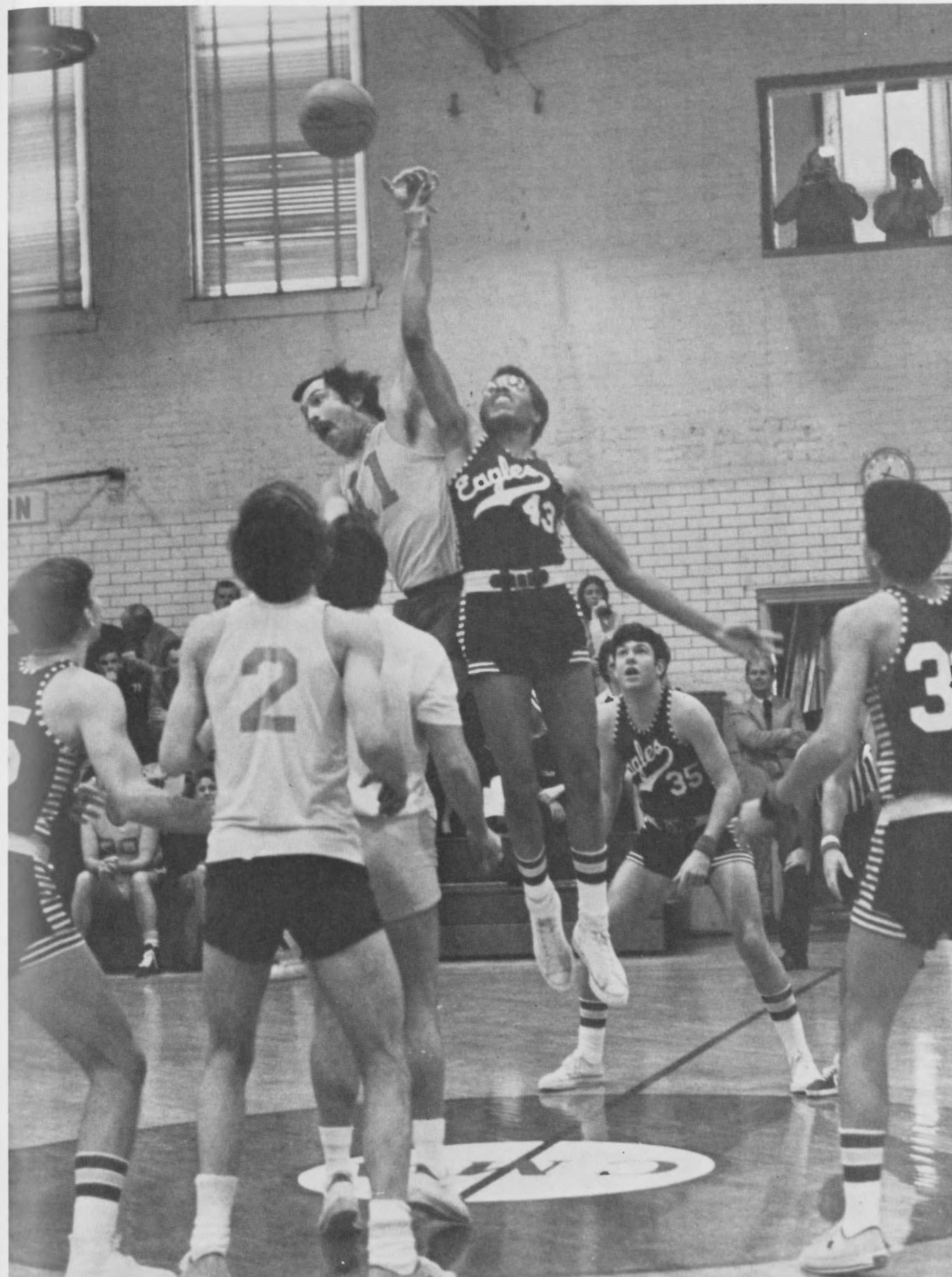
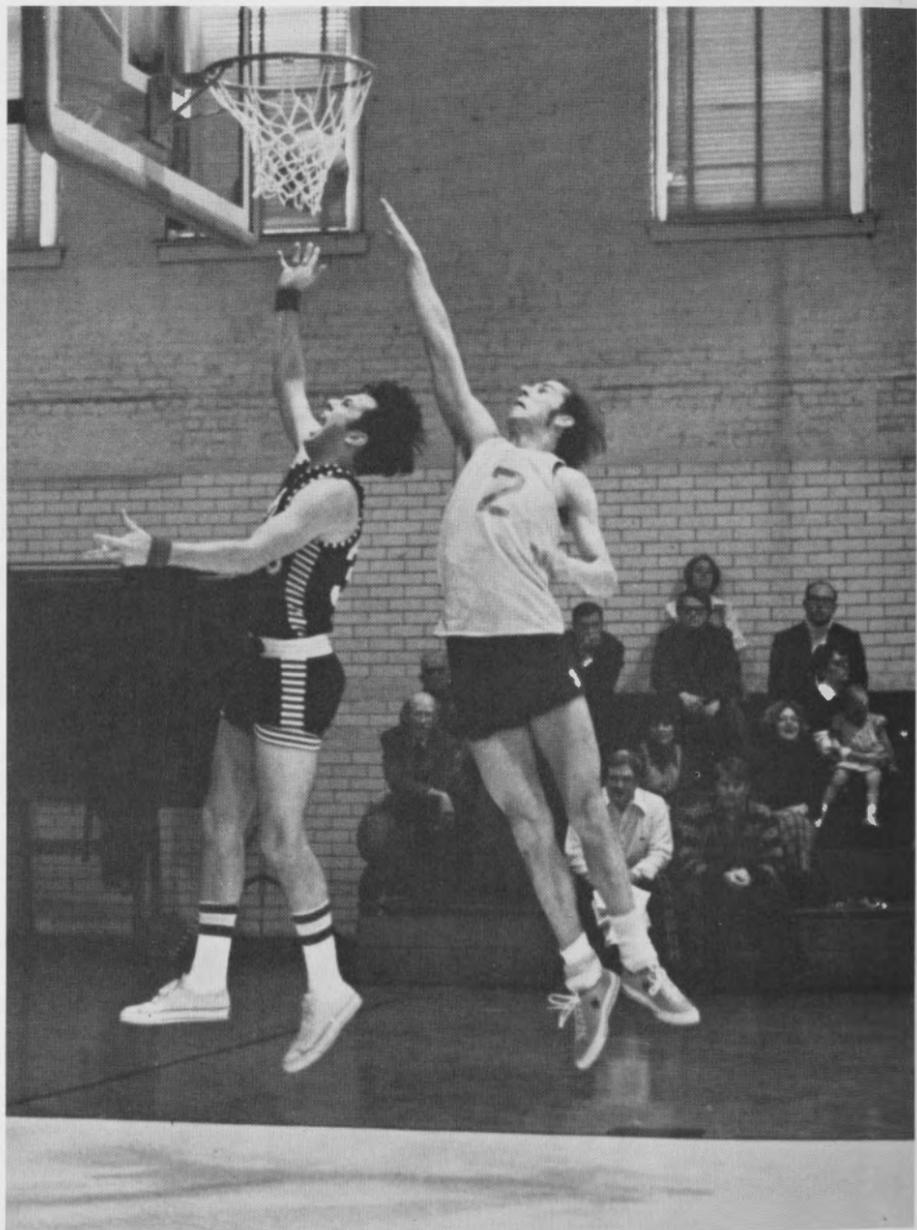
A. Brooke, '53, in unveiling Russ's portrait for Myra and family members, who joined the alumni after the games for a dinner at the Culver Inn.

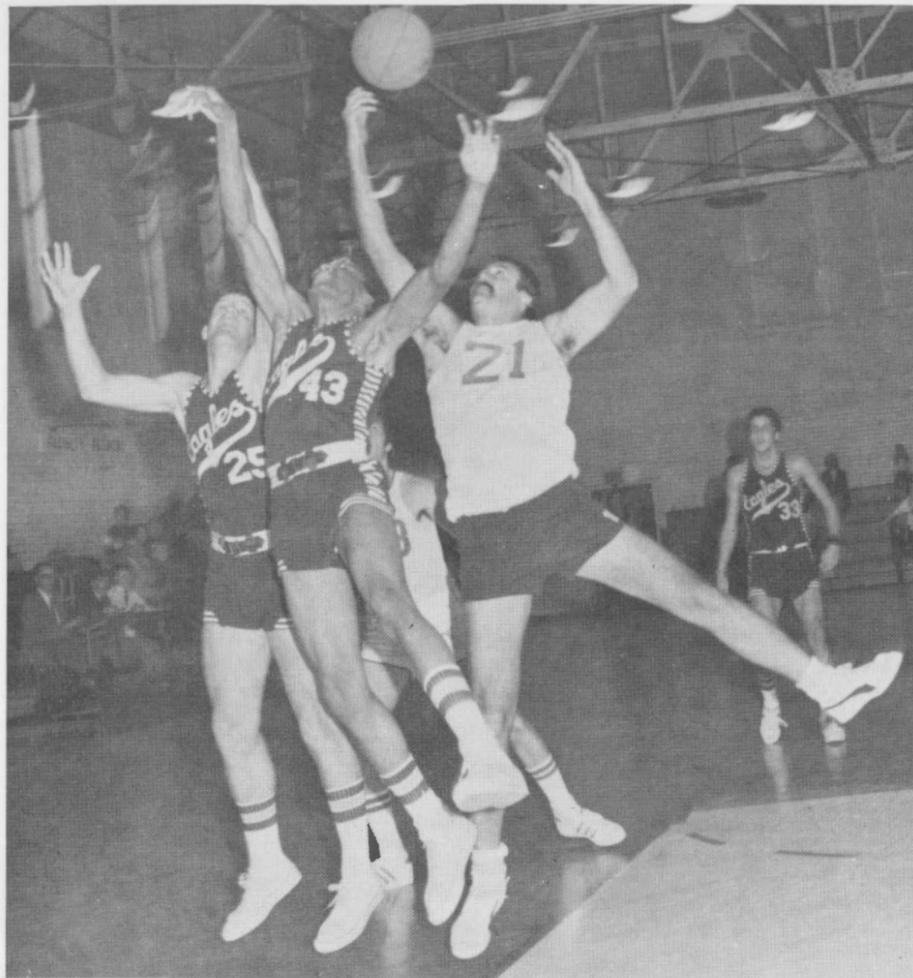
Culver Honors Russ Oliver At 28th Alumni Basketball Game





CONTINUING THE TRADITION established by Russ Oliver, the alumni played hard and well under the coaching of language department chairman John R. Mars. Having probably twice the fun and half the wind of their cadet counterparts, the alumni led the varsity on a merry chase most of the game, only to lose 56-52 at the final buzzer. Athletic director and varsity coach Tom Baker labeled the varsity game as "probably the best game we have had with the alumni in the past 10 years." Junior varsity coach Loren Carswell [above] led his team to a 52-33 victory over the alumni. Richard O. 'Moose' Kime, '42, who has played in every one of the 28 games, caught his breath after the JV game and entered the varsity game for a few minutes opposite his sons Steve and John. In the layup at right, this year's leading cadet scorer, Bob Hater [left], outreaches last year's top scorer, Mike Cervony [2], who is now playing at the University of Minnesota. [Far Right] Admissions officer Pete Salvador, '62, [No. 11] literally gained the upper hand on cadet Don Gardner [43] in a jump ball at the start of the varsity game.





VARSITY PLAYERS [Left] Steve Kime [25] and Don Gardner [43] scramble for a rebound with alumnus Dan Vance, '62. WHERE DID IT GO? [Below] Players in the JV-Alumni game seemingly freeze in their places as they wait to see if the ball [behind the basket mount] reaches its destination. They are [left to right] Walter L. Griffith, '57; Pete Coyle; Jim Houston, '53; Dan Burke; Don Baldwin, '52; Bud Thews; and Jim Tyson, '74. These players and many like them will return to Culver in the years to come to share in the fun and spirit of competition nurtured by Russell D. Oliver.



Like so many Culver men whose lives Russ Oliver reached, I was deeply saddened by the death of a man who constantly inspired me as a youngster to be more than I ever thought I could be. I went to Culver very much wanting to be an athlete and needing very badly to develop considerably more self-confidence. Russ was one of those rare individuals who expected you to do your best and for whom you wanted to be at your best at all times.

Russ Oliver was a coach to be greatly respected and admired. Though outstandingly capable himself, Russ never asked more of his players than he thought was fair or that exceeded their capacity to produce. He taught me never to give up, that success and victory in life only come to those who are willing to be taught and who are the best prepared. He had a way of letting you know that he was intensely interested in you as a person, and no one ever played for Russ who found they did not have something to contribute to the success of the team. Whether in his home, on the bus, on the campus, or the field, you were proud to be with "Coach". His influence was not only present in athletic competition and the classroom but also in barracks.

I always admired the way Russ accepted the change in his responsibilities, and I appreciated the continued dedication to Culver that he exhibited in his position as alumni director. He rendered invaluable assistance to all alumni. He loved Culver; he loved life, people and athletics. He shall surely be missed by all who ever knew him in whatever capacity, and I am very grateful that Russ devoted his life to developing the lives of young boys and for the privilege of experiencing a close friendship with him.

J. G. 'Barney' Poole, Jr., '53

THE SPIRIT OF CULVER

**The hope to win, the zeal to dare,
Contempt for what is base and mean;
Pride in achievement that is fair,
And high regard for what is clean,
The strength that is in Brotherhood,
The courage that proclaims success,
The will to strive for what is good,
And first and always manliness.**

The final of all whistles has signaled the end for one of the greatest players to ever perform on the good Lord's field of play. He was our coach, our teacher, but above all he was our friend.

As our coach . . . every triumph we win in life's continuous battle was won on the playing fields of Culver.

As our teacher . . . by example, we found courage and determination to last us our lifetimes.

As our friend . . . we found the truest of all qualities—loyalty.

If it can be said that one man truly loved another, then surely those who knew Russ, who competed for him, who cherished his friendship long after their final contest, whose lives were so deeply blessed because they were touched by this great man . . . then surely, it can be said that we loved him.

George M. Steinbrenner, '48

No words could really express my feelings for Russ Oliver. Few men have had the honor and privilege of having a coach, friend and idol to set such an example to follow. Russ was all of these to me. Our family was very fortunate to have known Russ, and, in the years to come, we will realize more than ever that he stood for everything that is good in life.

Richard O. 'Moose' Kime, '42

It was a cold, clear, crisp day in January when I first met Russ back in 1951. He immediately impressed me as a warm and friendly coach who knew his business, and, when I looked in those deep blue eyes and listened to him talk, he gained my immediate respect. And a friendship began that has continued.

I believe the privilege is mine to have known and worked with Russ Oliver for almost 25 years, and he sure set an example for all of us who were fortunate enough to have known and loved him. He taught us by his leadership what it is to work, sweat and don't give up when the going gets tough. He taught us to be honest men and that although winning is important, there are some important lessons in life that can always be learned from not winning a game.

One of the most important fundamentals that made Russ stand very tall to me was his absolute belief in winning honestly. I hope that I have the ability to convey this to others, including my own children. Culver has lost a great friend, but his warm, friendly smile and what he stood for will always be remembered.

John A. Brooke, '53

CULVER ALUMNUS

CULVER, INDIANA 46511

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"Let us now praise famous men, leaders of the people by their counsels, wise and eloquent in their instructions; men furnished with ability, living peacefully in their habitations. These were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten; the people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation shall show forth their praise. Some there be that have left their name behind them, and some there be which have no memorial; their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore."

Based on Ecclesiasticus (Apocrypha) Chapter 44

