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Coach,

I write this letter with the utmost respect and admiration for you as a man and mentor. I appreciate everything that Margaret and you have done for Lindsay, my kids, and me since I was named AD in May 2005. Harrison still talks about coach giving him his first Appalachian t-shirt at Hilton Head.

Through the years and especially recently since "sitting in this chair" I've learned that men sometimes have a difficult time expressing their true feelings when they sit and talk. Last night, as I lay awake trying to figure out the right things, I remembered that you gave me a book the day before our 2005 game against Coastal Carolina. So, I opened it again to read the passage that you wrote thanking me for the energy being created for the first game. Your words were as true last night as they were that first weekend.

Over the past couple of weeks, I've thought a lot about the football program, but, most importantly, you and Margaret. What we've accomplished the past seven years is remarkable when anyone thinks back to the circumstances of 2005. Coach, I am genuinely concerned for you and for Margaret. I see our strengths - the tradition, our reputation, facilities, and scholarship funding - and realize most of this has been accomplished in the recent cycle. However, I also see our weaknesses - the lack of chemistry on your staff, the potential for 6-7 new coaches due to attrition, a new strength coach for the off-season workouts, and the lingering mood surrounding the program from as you describe "a tough season." I also don't see a program that is in disarray because we have good kids and good players, but one that needs new voices. I have no doubts that you will work longer and harder to make it work, but you are only one man of 12-13 others responsible for the direction. What I see for the next year is a man that I revere paddling as hard as he can so as to not drown versus being able to stand and admire all that he has built.

Right now, we have a chance to build the appropriate legacy for you with this program. Without a doubt, you have raised the expectation bar, but I firmly believe that where we are right now goes way beyond wins and losses. At most places, an 8-win season is celebrated, but you acknowledged to many throughout the season that this was your toughest year in coaching. Short of being able to guarantee a championship season, I'm not sure people, especially the ones that matter - will be satisfied. And, honestly, even if we were to win a fourth title, does that make it all good in the end if you have to exhaust yourself physically and mentally to accomplish it? I think back to Margaret's reaction after the Maine game and am worried that the risk to everything you've accomplished is not worth trying to win a few more ball games. As I told you on Sunday, I do not want you to become ██████████ or Appalachian to become ██████████ by you and me trying to make this partnership work too long.

Everybody that loves and respects you is trying to protect you and your legacy. No one wants to see you ██████████. We care too much. Regardless of your willpower and mental toughness, the reality of next season is a year without ██████████, new coaches whose commitment to you and the program is unknown, a new strength coach leading the off-season program, and the

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“is this Coach’s last year” prevalent before and during the season. And, unlike 2005 when I arrived, there is no clear cohesion among your staff about direction and I’m not sure that the proper trust can be created by a group of new coaches in a short period of time. I also think trying to put that staff together is going to be tough given our circumstances... My guess is about right now, you’re getting charged up and ready to fight the fight. That’s not my intention in writing this. My intention is to clearly point out to you the great challenges that lie in front of us in trying to make another season work. Being rational, I do not think the 20-hour days or sleeping in your office is in your best interest.

I write all this to tell you “it’s time.” I also know that everybody who knows your family and our current situation feels the same way. Why?

1. This protects you and your legacy at Appalachian. As [REDACTED] told you, this is the very best possible exit strategy because you go out “a winner.”
2. The timing allows for the proper transition of the program. I am fairly confident that the new coach will keep some of the remaining staff, so these guys can be taken care of as well. We can execute a search quickly after Christmas, so any lost momentum in the recruiting cycle will be minimal.
3. Emotionally, it allows you and Margaret the ability to go do many new and exciting things without the strain of another season. I’ve witnessed this transition with [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
4. And finally, financially, this is the best deal for you and Margaret.
  - i. The job title is “Special Assistant to the Athletics Director.” In essence, you would be a friendraiser and fundraiser for football program... Our ambassador. You can be around the program and kids daily. You will have an office near Rick and me to use as necessary.
  - ii. Technically, we would set the job up to be an independent contractor relationship paid by Yosef Club. This allows you to earn income from speeches, presentations, etc. without undue restraint by the University. You would have to establish your own health coverage, but we can work with the guys at Blue Cross to put something together.
  - iii. This would be a three-year commitment (January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2014) at \$100,000 per year. You also would be eligible to start drawing your retirement, which is an additional [REDACTED] per month. Additionally, your monthly social security is added too. Plus, by retiring, you can immediately receive payment for your accrued vacation time, which is currently [REDACTED] before taxes. So, financially, you are making as much or more as you currently do.

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Coach, I understand what I'm asking. I ask you to share this with Margaret and think about this over the next couple of days. With everything going on, if I didn't think this was in your best interest, I would not come to you with this. I trust you and Margaret understand that.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for reading and thinking about this.