

It is with the deepest respect and affection that I accept Coach Bo Schembechler's decision to step down as head coach of the Michigan football team following this year's Rose Bowl Game.

Bo is retiring at the top of his form, widely acknowledged to be the top intercollegiate football coach in America. But Bo is more than just a winning coach, though he is that. In his years at Michigan, Bo has come to symbolize the integrity, pride, dedication to excellence, sacrifice for others, and leadership that characterize the best traditions of intercollegiate athletics.

Bo is also widely loved and admired as a remarkable teacher on this campus who has an intense dedication to his student-athletes. His students, colleagues, friends and fans owe him a great debt for the pride he has given to us and to our University--not just pride in winning but pride in the character of our institution and its sports program and athletes.

I know Bo's decision to pass on the reigns as Michigan football coach at this point was not an easy one. I can tell you that it is not an easy one for me--for any of us--to accept, either. But I also know that he has approached this decision with the same of integrity, class, courage, and loyalty that characterizes his entire career at the University. We will sorely miss his leadership on the playing field. Yet we also know he has built a lasting tradition of excellence in his program that we pledge to sustain in the years ahead.

We are deeply indebted to Bo Schembechler for everything that he has done for this University, for everything he has come to symbolize about our University. I look forward to working closely with him in the years ahead to further the interests of sports on our campus and across the America.