

Communications

To the Editor:

I read with great interest Professor Stratton F. Caldwell's reaction to my review of Mabel Lee's *History of Physical Education and Sports in the U.S.A.* His point about Miss Lee's omission of Jesse Feiring Williams from the twelve leading physical educators of the twentieth century has some validity. I do not know why nor will I attempt to speculate why Miss Lee excluded Williams. However, the twelve individuals she selected—Luther Gulick, R. T. McKenzie, Clark Hetherington, Senda Berenson, Elizabeth Burchenal, Ethel Perrin, Charles McCloy, Jay B. Nash, Elmer Mitchell, Agnes Wayman, Mary Coleman and Dorothy Ainsworth—have been instrumental in the making and shaping of American physical education. Just as Professor Caldwell has made a strong case for Williams, similar cases could be made for Thomas Wood, Arthur Steinhaus, Eleanor Metheny, James McCurdy, Thomas Storey, or Mabel Lee, herself.

There is obvious favoritism in Miss Lee's selection of her twelve leaders, just as there is bias in my review and in Professor Caldwell's reaction. As human beings, complete objectivity is not within our grasp. The one element that strengthens Miss Lee's subjectivity, however, is the fact that she knew these leaders personally and worked with them in various professional endeavors. Her experiences alone qualify her to select the twelve outstanding leaders of physical education in the twentieth century.

Professor Caldwell indicated that I have taken Miss Lee to task for writing descriptive history. That was not my intent nor do I believe that I did. Descriptive history is not without value. The point I made was that Mabel Lee's pioneering research has laid the foundation upon which other scholars can build. Because of her efforts, the stage is now set for historians of physical education to examine their heritage from a more interpretive and analytical vantage point.

If I, as a reviewer, have written a descriptive and narrative review, as Professor Caldwell has charged, so be it! But haven't I, similar to Miss Lee, accomplished my purpose? My review has evoked a response, albeit negative. More importantly, however, it has opened a much needed dialogue on the history of American physical education. To me, that alone was worth the effort!

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