

Bring Borlaug into effort to retain Olympic wrestling

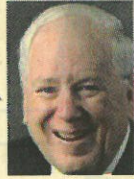
With the NCAA Wrestling Championships taking place in Des Moines, Iowa wrestling legends such as Dan Gable and Cael Sanderson will be at the forefront of discussions about how to preserve wrestling as an Olympic sport. However, another former Iowa wrestler may be the most improbable but perhaps most effective individual to lead this endeavor. That person is the late Norman E. Borlaug, a plant pathologist, father of the Green Revolution and the man whose “miracle wheat” is credited with “saving a billion lives.”

Borlaug developed his passion for wrestling at Cresco High School in northeast Iowa and then at the University of Minnesota. The founder of the World Food Prize Foundation that I head, Norm is enshrined in the NCAA Wrestling Hall of Fame in Stillwater, Okla., for both his prowess as a collegiate athlete and his extraordinary achievements as a plant scientist.

Next year, during the centennial observance of his birth in 1914 on an Iowa farm, his statue will be unveiled in Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol where he may be the only former wrestler among the statues of the 100 greatest Americans from all 50 states.

Above all, what Borlaug

Iowa View



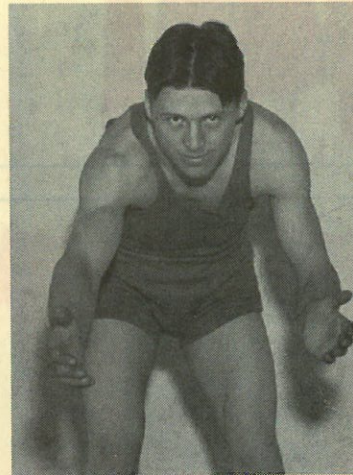
KENNETH QUINN, the president of the World Food Prize Foundation, was a friend of Norman Borlaug. Contact: kquinn@

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would bring to the effort to keep wrestling in the Olympics is the enormous respect in which he is held throughout Africa, South Asia and Latin America — all parts of the world with little participation in wrestling and thus likely little support for the sport within those countries' Olympic committees. Borlaug's legacy could change all of that.

Borlaug, who passed away in 2009, said determination and grit that he learned on the wrestling mat, combined with the exhortation of his wrestling coach, Dave Bartelma, “to never give up,” gave him the persistence and perseverance to carry on for decades in the most remote parts of Mexico, until he finally developed a new, high-yielding variety of wheat. He then rushed his new seeds to India and Pakistan in the 1960s, where both countries faced imminent mass starvation.

The lifesaving impact of his discovery was such that Bor-



Norman Borlaug wrestled at Cresco High School and the University of Minnesota. WORLD FOOD PRIZE FOUNDATION PHOTO

laug was called to Norway to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. As such, he is regarded as one of the greatest agricultural scientists and humanitarians to have ever lived.

In going before the International Olympic Committee, as well as in dealing with national Olympic committees of other countries, the argument could be made that dropping wrestling would be a tremendous affront to the memory of this man who did so much to ensure that there would be food to feed hundreds of millions of hungry people. Furthermore, it would be a travesty to drop the

CELEBRATION

The World Food Prize Hall of Laureates in Des Moines will be open today and Monday to celebrate Norman Borlaug's birthday.

TODAY: The building will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the Food Bank of Iowa will be collecting donations for the needy. The hour-long documentary about Borlaug, “Freedom from Famine,” will be shown at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

MONDAY: The building will be open from 5 a.m. to 3 p.m., with WHO Radio's Van and Bonnie broadcasting their show from there. Food Prize President Kenneth Quinn and Borlaug sculptor Benjamin Victor will speak at 11 a.m. “Freedom from Famine” will be shown at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

sport that taught him those traits and personal characteristics which enabled him to persist until he made the scientific discoveries that led to “the single greatest period of food production and hunger reduction in all human history.”

To learn more about this unique Iowan, I hope all who are here for the NCAA wrestling tournament might take time today between sessions to visit the Norman E. Borlaug Hall of Laureates on the bank of the Des Moines River, just of few blocks south of Wells

Fargo Arena. Admission is free, and the stories about Borlaug are priceless.

Further, wouldn't it be wonderful if during the NCAA wrestling tournament a photo of Borlaug could be shown and a mention made of his history as a wrestler and his great agricultural and humanitarian accomplishments?

After all, it should be an immense source of pride and a great inspiration to every NCAA wrestler, that among all the individuals who were ever NCAA athletes in any sport, no one has had a more significant achievement in his or her life than this college wrestler from Iowa.

In that regard, I hope the NCAA might consider establishing an award to be presented each year to that wrestler who best emulates Borlaug's grit and determination in competition, and in advancing science and alleviating human suffering, whether during their college years or later in their professional lives.

And, wouldn't it be a magnificent moment if the International Olympic Committee were convinced to retain wrestling as an Olympic sport as a tribute to Norman Borlaug — that man who is revered around the globe for saving more lives than any other person who has ever lived.