

## LETTERS

To the Editor,

Regarding the article entitled "The Color Line in Midwestern College Sports, 1890–1960," published in the June 2002 issue of the *Indiana Magazine of History*, I read this article with great interest.

My father, Herbert William Laffoon, Sr., was born and raised in the city of Terre Haute, Indiana, at a time when Indiana was controlled to a great extent by the KKK. After much negotiation with the coach at what was then Wiley High School (1924), he became, in his junior year, the first African American to play football in the city of Terre Haute (Vigo County), Indiana. That year he became the second African American to be named as "All State." He was the first fullback to be named as "All State." I mention my father because he experienced the same racial discrimination associated with his activities (sports) that the author mentioned were experienced by African Americans at the college level. An article from the Terre Haute *Tribune Star* from October 23, 1924, gives but one example of discrimination encountered by my father when his Wiley High School was to play Henderson High School of Henderson, Kentucky. The first paragraph of the article reads:

One of Wiley's best football players will be on the side lines Saturday afternoon when Henderson, Ky, high invades Terre Haute for its first tussle with the red and white school here. Herb Laffoon, smashing fullback and mainstay of the team, according to the contract, cannot be played against the "Moonshiners," as the Blue Grass bunch refuses to play against a colored athlete.

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