



January 6, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Presidents and Athletics Directors, The University of Texas System

FROM: William H. McRaven, Chancellor *WHM*

In the past year I have watched the student athletes from each of our institutions compete with great enthusiasm and sportsmanship. Across the country and in some cases across the world, these men and women reflect the values of our university and to a broader degree the ideals of our nation.

Those ideals, the fundamental principles that established this nation -- the rights, and laws under which we live and prosper are manifested in the American flag and are symbolized by our singing of the National Anthem. The flag represents all that is good and decent about these United States. Honoring the flag does not imply that the republic for which it stands is perfect. Far from it, honoring the flag is our collective commitment that we will constantly attempt to get better as a nation, to improve as a people, and to use the freedoms we have been given to make the earth a better place.

In today's world where the values we hold so dear seem to be under constant assault, I believe it is more important than ever for us to show respect for the flag; to demonstrate to the world that we are teaching our young men and women to honor the principles that made this country great, to acknowledge the sacrifice of those that fought and died for those principles and to be prepared to defend those principles against all threats to our freedom.

Additionally, in this age where many young athletes learn their behavior from watching those in the college ranks, what better lesson can we teach them than to respect the flag and the people it represents?

Consequently, I would ask that you encourage your coaching staff and your players to stand up straight when the National Anthem is played; to face the flag and place their hand over their heart as a sign of respect to the nation. It is a simple act but I believe it will have a lasting affect on those that see it, and on the student athletes of whom we are all so proud.

Thank you!

WHM/bc