

message from the Chicago Bears. Many executives knew what it said before they read it: Walter Payton, one of the best ever to play running back, had died.

For the past several days it has been rumored that Payton had taken a turn for the worse, so the league was braced for the news. Still, the announcement that Payton had succumbed to bile-duct cancer at 45 rocked and deeply saddened the world of professional football.

"His attitude for life, you wanted to be around him," said Mike Singletary, a close friend who played with Payton from 1981 to 1987 on the Bears. Singletary read Scripture at Payton's side on the morning of his death. "He was the kind of individual if you were down he would not let you stay down," Singletary said.

Commissioner Paul Tagliabue said the N.F.L. family was devastated by the loss of Payton. Tagliabue called him "one of the greatest players in the history of the sport."

"The tremendous grace and dignity he displayed in his final months reminded us again why 'Sweetness' was the perfect nickname for Walter Payton," he said in a statement.

In his 13 seasons with Chicago, Payton rushed for 16,726 yards on 3,838 carries, still both N.F.L. records. One of Payton's most impressive feats was that he played in 189 of 190 games from 1975, his first season, until his retirement in 1987. For someone with Payton's style to participate and dominate in that many games—he enjoyed plowing into defenders and rarely ran out of bounds to avoid a tackle—is remarkable.

"He is the best football player I've ever seen," said Saints Coach Mike Ditka, who coached Payton for six seasons with Chicago.

Ditka added: "At all positions, he's the best I've ever seen. There are better runners than Walter, but he's the best football player I ever saw. To me, that's the ultimate compliment."

What always amazed Payton's opponents was his combination of grace and power. Payton once ran over half dozen players from the Kansas City Chiefs, and on more than one occasion he sprinted by speedy defensive backs.

It did not take long for the N.F.L. to see that Payton was special. In 1977, his third season, Payton, standing 5 feet 10½ inches and weighing 204 pounds, was voted the league's most valuable player after one of the best rushing seasons in league history. He ran for 1,852 yards and 14 touchdowns. His 5.5 yard a carry that season was a career best and against Minnesota that season he ran for 275 yards, a single-game record that still stands.

"I remember always watching him and thinking, 'How did he just make that run?'" Giants General Manager Ernie Accorsi said. "He was just a great player.

Accorsi echoed the sentiments of others that Payton may not have had the natural gift of running back Barry Sanders or the athleticism of Jim Brown, but that he made the most of what he had.

"I think Jim Brown is in a class by himself," Accorsi said. "And then there are other great players right behind him like Walter Payton."

Payton was known as much for his kindness off the field as his prowess on it. He was involved with a number of charities during and after his N.F.L. career, and although he valued his privacy he was known for his kindness to people in the league whom he did not know.

Accorsi saw Payton at the 1976 Pro Bowl, and even though it was one of the first times the two had met, Payton told Accorsi, "I hope God blesses you."

"When some guys say stuff like that, you wonder if it isphony," Accorsi said, "but not

with him. You could tell he was very genuine."

Bears fans in Chicago felt the same way, which is why reaction to his death was swift and universal.

"He to me is ranked with Joe DiMaggio in baseball—he was the epitome of class," said Hank Oettinger, a native of Chicago who was watching coverage of Payton's death at a bar on the city's North Side. "The man was such a gentleman, and he would show it on the football field."

Several fans broke down crying yesterday as they called into Chicago television sports talk show and told of their thoughts on Payton.

Asked what made Payton special, Ditka said: "It would have to be being Walter Payton. He was so good for the team. He was the biggest practical joker and he kept everyone loose. And he led by example on the field. He was the complete player. He did everything. He was the greatest runner, but he was also probably the best looking back you ever saw."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues from the State of Mississippi who are justifiably proud of Walter Payton. His home State of Mississippi can look to Walter Payton with great pride. There is a great deal of sadness in my home State of Illinois, particularly in the city of Chicago, with the passing of Walter Payton at the age of 45.

Later today, I will enter into the RECORD a statement of tribute to Mr. Payton, but I did not want to miss this opportunity this morning to mention several things about what Walter Payton meant to Chicago and Illinois.

He was more than a Hall of Fame football player. He ran for a record 16,726 yards in a 13-year career, one of those years shortened by a strike, and yet he established a record which probably will be difficult to challenge or surpass at any time in the near future.

The one thing that was most amazing about Walter Payton was not the fact he was such a great rusher, with his hand on the football and making moves which no one could understand how he pulled off, but after being tackled and down on the ground, hit as hard as could be, he would reach over and pull up the tackler and help him back on his feet.

He was always a sportsman, always a gentleman, always someone you could admire, not just for athletic prowess but for the fact he was a good human being.

I had the good fortune this last Fourth of July to meet his wife and son. They are equally fine people. His son, late in his high school career, in his junior year, decided to try out for football. The apple does not fall far from the tree; he became a standout at Saint Viator in the Chicago suburb of Arlington Heights and now is playing at the University of Miami. I am sure he will have a good career of his own.

With the passing of a man such as Walter Payton, we have lost a great model in football and in life—the way he conducted himself as one of the most famous football players of all time.

The last point I will make is, toward the end of his life when announcing he faced this fatal illness, he made a plea across America to take organ donation seriously. He needed a liver transplant at one point in his recuperation. It could have made a difference. It did not happen.

I do not know the medical details as to his passing, but Walter Payton's message in his final months is one we should take to heart as we remember him, not just from those fuzzy clips of his NFL career but because he reminded us, even as he was facing his last great game in life, that each and every one of us has the opportunity to pass the ball to someone who can carry it forward in organ donation, and the Nation's commitment to that cause would be a great tribute to him.

I yield the floor.

THE DEATH OF WALTER PAYTON

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I rise today to express my sadness at the news of the death of one of football's greatest stars ever, Chicago's own Walter Payton.

Walter Payton was a hero, a leader, and a role model both on and off the field. For 13 years, he thrilled Chicago Bears' fans as the NFL's all-time leading rusher—perhaps one of the greatest running backs ever to play the game of football. After retiring from professional football in 1987, Payton continued to touch the lives of Chicagoans as an entrepreneur and a community leader.

Walter Payton's historic career began at Jackson State University, where he set a college football record for points scored. The first choice in the 1975 NFL draft, Payton—or "Sweetness" as he was known to Chicago Bears fans—became the NFL's all-time leader in running and in combined net yards and scored 110 touchdowns during his career with the Bears. He made the Pro Bowl nine times and was named the league's Most Valuable Player twice, in 1977 and 1985. In 1977, Payton rushed for a career-high 1,852 yards and carried the Bears to the playoffs for the first time since 1963. He broke Jim Brown's long-standing record in 1984 to become the league's all-time leading rusher, and finished his career with a record 16,726 total rushing yards. In 1985-86, Walter Payton led the Bears to an unforgettable 15-1 season and Super Bowl victory—the first and only Super Bowl win in Bears' history. Walter Payton was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1993, and was selected this year as the Greatest All-Time NFL Player by more than 200 players from the NFL Draft Class of 1999.

More important, Walter Payton matched his accomplishments on the football field with his selfless actions off the field on behalf of those in need. He earned a degree in special education from Jackson State University and worked throughout his adult life to improve the lives of children. In 1988, he

established the Halas/Payton Foundation to help educate Chicago's youth.

Walter Payton was truly an American hero in every sense of the term. He died tragically at age 45, but his legacy will live in our hearts and minds forever. Today, Mr. President, Illinois mourns. Sweetness, we will miss you.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to perhaps the best running back who ever carried a football, Walter Payton, who died yesterday at the age of 45. In Carl Sandburg's City of the Big Shoulders, "Sweetness," as Payton was nicknamed, managed to carry the football hopes of an entire city on his shoulders for 13 magnificent years.

From the law firms on LaSalle to the meat packing plants on Fulton, Monday mornings in Chicago were always filled with tales of Payton's exploits on the field from the previous day. We marveled at his ability and reveled in the glory he brought to Chicago and Da Bears. In a life cut short by a rare disease, he blessed Chicago with several lifetimes of charisma, courage, and talent.

Who could forget the many times Payton lined up in the red zone and soared above opposing defenders for a Bears touchdown? Or the frequency with which his 5-10, 204-pound frame bowled over 250-pound linebackers en route to another 100-yard-plus rushing game? His relentless pursuit of that extra yard and the passion with which he sought it made his nickname, Sweetness, all the more ironic. It would take the rarest of diseases, barely pronounceable and unfortunately insurmountable, to finally bring Sweetness down.

It was that passion that inspired Payton's first position coach, Fred O'Connor, to declare: "God must have taken a chisel and said, 'I'm going to make me a halfback.'" Coach Ditka called Payton simply "the greatest football player I've ever seen." Payton's eight National Football League (NFL) records, most of which still stand today, merely underscore his peerless performance on the field and his extraordinary life away from it. The man who wore number 34 distinguished himself as the greatest performer in the 80-year history of a team that boasts more Hall of Famers than any other team in League history.

He played hurt many times throughout his career, and on one notable occasion, when he should have been hospitalized with a 102 degree fever, he played football. On that day, November 20, 1977, Payton turned in the greatest rushing performance in NFL history, rushing for a league record 275 yards en route to victory against the Minnesota Vikings.

Self-assured but never cocky, Sweetness had no interest in indulging the media by uttering the self-aggrandizing sound bites that are all too common among today's athletes. Instead, he would praise the blocking efforts of fullback Matt Suhey or his offensive

linemen, all of whom were inextricably linked to the surfeit of records he amassed. He play the game with a rare humility—refusing to call attention to himself—always recognizing the individuals who paved the way for his achievements.

He once refused to be interviewed by former Ms. America Phyllis George unless his entire corps of linemen were included. Following his first 1,000 yard rushing season, Payton bought his offensive linemen engraved watches. The engraving, however, made no mention of the 1,390 yards he finished with that year, but instead noted the score of the game in which he reached 1,000 yards, underscoring the essential contributions that his offensive linemen made in enabling him to achieve this feat.

And how many times did we see Walter Payton dance down the field, a limp leg, a quick cut, a break-away. He could find daylight in a crowded elevator. And when a tackler finally brought him down, Walter Payton would jump to his feet and reach down to help his tackler up. That's the kind of football player he was. That's the kind of person he was.

Payton lightened the atmosphere at Hallas Hall with an often outlandish sense of humor, even during the years when the Bears received boos from the fans and scathing criticism from the press. Rookies in training camp were often greeted by firecrackers in their locker room and unsuspecting teammates often faced a series of pranks when they turned their backs on Payton. Just last week, as Payton was clinging to life, he sent Suhey on a trip to Hall of Famer Mike Singletary's house, but not before he gave Suhey a series of incorrect addresses and directed Suhey to hide a hamburger and a malt in Singletary's garage.

While Payton lived an unparalleled life on the football field, he also lived a very full life off the field. He was a brilliant businessman, but never too busy to devote countless hours to charitable deeds, most of which were unsolicited and voluntary. Sweetness shared with us a sense of humanity that will endure as long as his records. I had the good fortune on July 4th to meet his wife and children, who are equally fine people. The apple didn't fall too far from the tree. Jarrett Payton, like his father, decided to try out for football in his Junior Year. Jarrett was a standout at St. Viator High School in Arlington Heights, a Chicago suburb, and he is now playing football at the University of Miami. It looks as if he may have quite a career of his own.

In his last year, Walter Payton helped illuminate the plight of individuals who are afflicted with diseases that require organ transplants. Patients with the rare liver disease that Payton contracted, primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC), have a 90% chance of surviving more than one year if they receive a liver transplant. Unfortunately, the need for donations greatly

exceeds the demand. The longer that patients wait on the organ donation list, the more likely it is that their health will deteriorate. In Payton's case, the risk of deadly complications, which included bile duct cancer, grew too quickly. Payton likely would have had to wait years for his life-saving liver. This was time he did not have before cancer took his life yesterday. A day when everyone who needs a life-saving organ can be treated with one cannot come soon enough.

More than 66,000 men, women, and children are currently awaiting the chance to prolong their lives by finding a matching donor. Minorities, who comprise approximately 25% of the population, represent over 40% of this organ transplant waiting list. Because of these alarming statistics, thirteen people die each day while waiting for a donated liver, heart, kidney, or other organ. Half of these deaths are people of color. The untimely death of Payton is a wake-up call for each of us to become organ donors and discuss our intentions with our families so that we do not lose another hero, or a son, a daughter, a mother or a father to a disease that can be overcome with an organ transplant.

Mr. President, today is a sad day in Chicago and in our nation. We have lost a father, a husband, a friend, and a role model all at once. While we are overcome with grief, we are also reminded of the blessings that Payton bestowed upon his wife, Corrine, his children, Jarrett and Brittney, and the city of Chicago during his brief time with us.

So thanks for the memories, Sweetness. Soldier Field will never be the same.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—CONFERENCE REPORT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the conference report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany H.R. 3064 making appropriations for the Government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, what is the time situation with regard to the conference report?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska has 5 minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. Is there a set time to vote, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are to vote in 30 minutes. There are six Senators who have 5 minutes apiece.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, we will hear from the managers of the bill, I am certain. There are two sets of managers, as a matter of fact. This is a bill that combines the District of Columbia