

Sunday, August 29, 1999

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ANN LANDERS

Readers Scalp Landers Over Hair Opinion

Dear Ann Landers: I was surprised by your response to "Heart-broken in Maine," whose husband wanted to disown their 41-year-old son, "Wally," because his hair was too long. You said, as a sign of respect for his elderly father, the son should trim his hair enough for it to show.

It sounds as if there is a lot more going on in that family than a dispute over the length of the son's hair. That ultimatum did not come out of the blue.

I would be willing to bet that Wally has had several other battles with his domineering father over the years.

And where was his mother when all this hair talk was going on? If my husband told our son he wasn't welcome in our house because his hair was too long, I would remind him that this is my home, too, and he has no right to make such an outrageous threat.

Ann, that father sounds like a tyrant, and his mealy mouthed wife is a doormat. Can you imagine your mother cutting all ties with you if, at the age of 41, you refused to wear your hair the way she wanted you to?

Sign me — A Disgusted Colleyville, Texas, Reader

Dear Colleyville: I caught a lot of heat because of that lame, ill-considered response, and am waving the white flag of surrender. Who was it that said, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread"? This fool rushed in with some

Frank Sells

NAME: George Franklin Sells
OCCUPATION: President Of Surry Community College Since January; Former Principal, Superintendent
AGE: 52
BIRTHPLACE: King
FAMILY: Wife, Amanda Ballingal (33 Years); Two Sons: George Franklin II (31) And John O'Neil (24); Grandson: George Franklin III (20 Months)
EDUCATION: Graduated From South Stokes High School (1965); Two Bachelor's Degrees, In Education And Psychology, From Milligan College (1969); Master's Degree In Reading Education, East Tennessee State University (1971); Educational Specialist Degree, Appalachian State University (Around 1980); Doctorate Of Education In School Administration, Virginia Tech (1987)
HOBBIES: Tennis, Biking, Golf

By JEFF LINVILLE
Staff Writer

DOBSON — When it comes to education, there isn't much Frank Sells hasn't done in his 30-year career.

He has been both a teacher and administrator, covering grade levels from kindergarten to junior college, and has enjoyed every step along the way.

Now the president of Surry Community College, Sells said, "I love what I do."

"Education — the business itself — is a people business," Sells said. "We are in the business of transforming people."

He likes to think everyone who attends SCC goes through a change in that they enhance skills and knowledge, improve their overall quality of life and learn the importance of sharing with and helping others. He said being part of an institution that helps people achieve those things is extremely rewarding.

Sells knew he wanted to go into education as far back as when he was a student at South Stokes High School in Walnut Cove.

The son of Vernon Otis and Lema Hall Sells was the youngest of four children. Sells was several years behind his siblings. In fact, when his sister, Jane Kiser, began high school, Sells was still in elementary school.



Jeff Linville/The Mount Airy News

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From Pico Rivera, Calif.: Ann, I think a lot of long-haired men and boys of today look just plain stupid, but their hair is none of my business.

You said the 41-year-old son should cut his hair as a sign of respect for his father. Well, I am 72 years old and have better sense than to make an issue of hair length, color or style with either my son or daughters. If they were to ask for my opinion, I would give it, but I am careful never to issue any instructions or give any ultimatums.

Chicago: I was appalled by the father who insisted that his adult son (41 years old, please!) cut his hair. I personally find long hair on both sexes extremely attractive.

I was 8 years old when I had my first haircut. My hair came down to my waist and required a lot of time and attention, but I felt

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The son of Vernon Otis and Lema Hall Sells was the youngest of four children. Sells was several years behind his siblings. In fact, when his sister, Jane Kiser, began high school, Frank still was sucking a bottle.

Growing up in King, Sells' father was a heavy equipment operator for the N.C. Department of Transportation and his mother was a homemaker.

"Jane played the piano," Sells recalled. When she graduated from King High School, it had a tradition of one preschool boy and girl serving as mascots for the senior class. Sells was 4 years old when he was named the mascot for his big sister and got his photograph in the school yearbook for 1951.

Sells attended King High School himself until South Stokes opened in the fall of 1964. As a senior, Sells was part of the school's first graduating class and a member of its football, basketball and track teams. "I've always liked sports."

After graduating, Sells knew he wanted to attend a small school where he would feel comfortable and get an education so that he could become a teacher and coach.

He enrolled at Milligan College in Johnson City, Tenn., with a double major in education and psychology. Milligan was a church-sponsored school, he said, and Sells knew a lot of people who had gone there or were planning to; also, it had a good reputation for being a quality small school.

"That was before the days of community college," Sells said. Surry Community College was under development at the time, as part of an evolution leading to today's statewide community college system.



Jeff Linville/The Mount Airy News

At college, Sells began to notice fellow student Amanda Ballingal. A friend helped set up a date between the two early in Sells' sophomore year. A whirlwind romance developed, and the two were wed before finishing school.

Being married put an extra strain on Sells as he carried a full load of classes and worked full-time at a grocery store.

"It was a challenge, but it taught me a lot about responsibility, perseverance and accomplishing your goals."

The marriage was a shock to the pair's parents, but Sells said, "They accepted it. They wanted us to get through college, but they were very supportive."

Two years later, Sells had a newborn son, George Franklin II, and two bachelor's degrees.

Sells started teaching in Roanoke, Va., as soon as he finished college. Then he worked on earning a master's degree: part-time during the school year and full-time in summer.

He taught language arts — English, reading, writing — to middle school-aged children at Mount Vernon School, which since has closed. Amanda taught at Oak Grove School, a fairly new facility then that still is in use.

When he left for college, Sells had envisioned himself as a teacher and coach, but during his freshman year, an adviser pushed him to pursue teaching at the elementary level rather than high school. The adviser thought Sells had potential in school administration and said he would have a better chance of getting a principal's position at the primary level.

Soon after he earned a master's degree in 1971, the Roanoke County school system offered Sells a job as supervisor for elementary language arts and reading.

A year or so after taking this job, Sells traveled back to Stokes County to watch a game. While there he ran into his old high school coach, who informed him that the county was seeking a reading supervisor.

He returned to Stokes and spent four years as reading supervisor for grades 1-12. Then in 1975, he became supervisor for general elementary education. About this time, his second child, John O'Neil, was born.

While elementary education supervisor, Sells worked on setting up the first public school kindergarten in Stokes County.

In his spare time, Sells returned to school himself, taking classes at UNC-Greensboro to obtain principal certification. Sells said that as a supervisor he could see that the real power and leadership came through principals.

He subsequently became principal of Germanton School for three years, during which a new campus opened. He moved on to be principal of King Intermediate

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Favorite Book: "The Notebook" by Nicholas Sparks
Favorite Movie: "Dances With Wolves"
Favorite Music: Beach
Favorite Food: Seafood