



# Dear Jay, Love Dad: Bud Wilkinson's Letters to His Son

*Jay Wilkinson*

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## **Dear Jay, Love Dad: Bud Wilkinson's Letters to His Son** Jay Wilkinson

College football fans need no introduction to Bud Wilkinson, but few of them know the great University of Oklahoma football coach as a devoted father. In *Dear Jay, Love Bud*, Jay Wilkinson, Bud's younger son, shares forty-seven letters his father wrote to him while he was in college and graduate school. Spanning the early to mid-1960s, these letters reveal Bud's deep love for his son, as well as the philosophy and values that led to his remarkable success in sports and in life.

Beginning with the first letter Bud wrote when Jay left home, this collection shows a father guiding his son toward his own path while stressing the importance of service to others. The embodiment of the scholar-athlete, Bud mixes encouragement with intellectual discussions. When Jay reads American philosopher William James for a class at Duke University, his father, a serious student of literature, reads the book, too, and uses its insights to help Jay deal with the challenges of his freshman year. Bud writes about his own challenges, as well, including his debate over whether to accept the Kennedy administration's invitation to head the President's Council on Physical Fitness. Jay's comments about each of these letters provide context and further insight.

By the time Jay becomes a graduate student at the Episcopal Theological School, the correspondence turns toward religion and politics, as Bud reflects on the philosophical issues of the day and on his unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate in 1964. His belief that the greatest leaders are not always the most popular made him an unlikely politician even then, but a wonderful role model and interlocutor for his son. Bud's thoughts on ethics in business and politics are as inspiring today as when he wrote them a half-century ago.

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