

## Donna Conkling

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**From:** Mark Bezos <mark@bezos.nyc>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 19, 2021 9:30 AM  
**To:** Mayor; Clerk's Department  
**Subject:** Rippy Philipps

**CAUTION:** External sender.

Dear Mayor Samwick and Clerk Conkling,

My name is Mark Bezos and I've lived here in Scarsdale for the past sixteen years. My wife, Lisa, grew up in Quaker Ridge in the 1970's and graduated from Scarsdale High School ('86).

When we decided to move out of the city not long after 9/11, my wife made it clear that she wanted to return to Scarsdale to raise our family. Originally from Texas, I was not terribly familiar with the town, but her desire to return spoke volumes about what it was like to be raised here. What I soon learned is that Scarsdale is full of families who return to raise their children in these supportive, tree-lined surroundings. Our four children benefitted greatly from their time in Fox Meadow & Heathcote Elementary Schools, SMS and SHS. I have no doubt that when the time comes to raise their own families, they will strongly consider doing so right here.

It would be a wise choice.

Obviously, the strong school system is a big draw. But just as compelling is the large number of caring and selfless citizens who volunteer their time to maintain this community. Chief among those individuals is my friend Rippy Philipps. I knew *of* Rippy long before I got to know Rippy. His presence in the community is as big as he is.

As a football fan from Texas, I could go on and on about what an amazing coach he is teaching the kids the X's and O's, but the biggest impact that Rippy had on my family (and so many others) didn't take place on the football field. My youngest son, Owen, had a pretty good arm – or at least he did for a fourth grader. The coaches took notice and decided to make him a quarterback. But Owen has learning differences – he is dyslexic. As hard as he tried, Owen couldn't process the plays – his brain just couldn't make sense of "Spread 2MO Jet TB Sweep 27." But he was nine and he tried to bluff his way through it. Needless to say, there were a lot of missed hand-offs, fumbles and incompletions. His teammates were frustrated and he was embarrassed – he wanted to quit.

To say that this experience could have had a lasting and detrimental impact on Owen is an understatement. But Coach Rippy was there – he understood Owen's challenges and worked with his strengths to maintain his love of the game and his passion for team sports. Owen was not long for the quarterback position, but he stuck with football and made one heck of a corner back. More than that, with caring support and encouragement from Rippy, he continued to lean in and try to get better – and in the end, isn't that all that any of us want for our kids? The self-confidence to keep trying when they fail?

In Texas, it's unlikely that most youth football players will go on to play at an elite level. It's even less likely here in Scarsdale. But what generations of these kids have gained from their experience – in the presence of Coach Rippy over the past 30 years – are the important things: persistence, grit, humility, sacrifice, teamwork and leadership.

I fully support the idea of naming the Crossway football field in honor of Rippy Philipps. There's no one more deserving.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mark Bezos

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Scarsdale