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Short tenure

O'Leary out at Notre Dame after one week

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SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) -- George O'Leary resigned as Notre Dame football coach five days after being hired, admitting he lied about his academic and athletic background.

O'Leary claimed to have a master's degree in education and to have played college football for three years, but checks into his background showed it wasn't true.

"Due to a selfish and thoughtless act many years ago, I have personally embarrassed Notre Dame, its alumni and fans," O'Leary said in a statement released Friday by the university.

A biography released by Notre Dame on Sunday when it announced his hiring said O'Leary received a master's degree from New York University in 1972. O'Leary was a student there but did not receive a degree, said John Beckman, assistant vice president for public affairs at NYU.

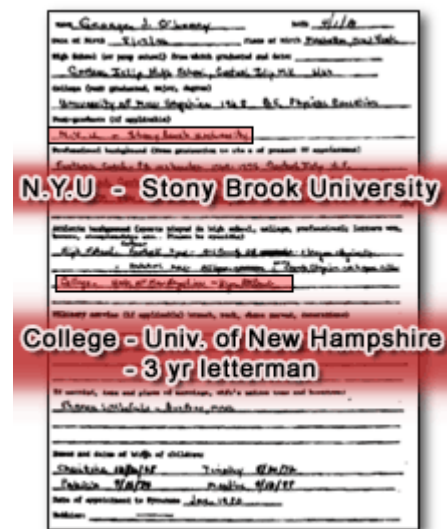
O'Leary, 55, also never earned a letter playing football at New Hampshire even though his biography says he earned three. In fact, the school said he never played in a game.

O'Leary said he regretted not telling Notre Dame officials about the inaccuracies before he was hired.

"Many years ago, as a young married father, I sought to pursue my dream as a football coach," he said. "In seeking employment I prepared a resume that contained inaccuracies regarding my completion of course work for a master's degree and also my level of participation in football at my alma mater. These misstatement were never stricken from my resume or biographical sketch in later years."

The sudden resignation was one of the most embarrassing blows to the storied Notre Dame football program, famous for Rockne, Leahy, the Four Horsemen and winning one "for the Gipper."

"The integrity and credibility of Notre Dame is impeccable and with that in mind, I will resign my position as head football coach," O'Leary's statement said. His resignation was effective Thursday.



In 1980, George O'Leary submitted this handwritten profile to Syracuse University, claiming to have played varsity football and having done post-graduate work at NYU.

Video

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Notre Dame athletic director Kevin White said O'Leary acknowledged problems in his biographical materials, "including his academic background."

"I understand that these inaccuracies represent a very human failing; nonetheless, they constitute a breach of trust that makes it impossible for us to go forward with our relationship," White said.

The search for a new coach will begin immediately, White said, raising the possibility the AD might again turn his attention to Oakland Raiders coach Jon Gruden.

With recruiting entering a dead period from Monday through Jan. 3, there is no longer the same sense of urgency to hire a coach than there was two weeks ago.

"I can't understand how you could go all those years and not catch or correct it," former Notre Dame coach Ara Parseghian said.

Notre Dame quarterback Carlyle Holiday was surprised by the news.

"It's a big shock," he said in an interview with Sporting News radio on Friday. "I never knew anything could happen like this before. [We've] just got to keep going on and find a new coach in a hurry ... try to get things going."

O'Leary, who left Georgia Tech on Sunday to become coach of the Irish, is listed in his biography in the Georgia Tech media guide as a three-time letter-winner at New Hampshire at offensive line and fullback. It also was included in a biography handed out by Notre Dame after his hiring to replace Bob Davie was announced.

But O'Leary went to New Hampshire only for two years, and never made it into a game.

O'Leary transferred to New Hampshire after two years at the University of Dubuque in Iowa. He said he was on the New Hampshire team in 1967 and 1968, but was unable to play his first year because of mononucleosis, and did not play his second year because of a knee injury.

George O'Leary Statement

"For more than 30 years, I have been blessed to be a football coach. That's all I have ever wanted to do. The victories, postseason bowls, honors and success of my players on and off the field speak for themselves. One constant throughout my career has been my coaching philosophy of demanding personal accountability for one's actions.

"Today, I regret to report that last night I tendered my resignation as head football coach of the University of Notre Dame. My resignation has been accepted.

Casey Robin, an offensive guard for the Irish who completed his eligibility this fall, said he agreed with O'Leary's decision to resign.

"He was talking about loyalty and even honesty, and obviously he didn't live up to that expectation," Robin said. "The team needs some honesty and loyalty from a coach."

Officials with Georgia Tech's athletic department did not immediately return a call Friday seeking comment.

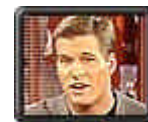
Though O'Leary has said he was not sure how the information got into his



Jim Fennell, a reporter for *The Union Leader & Sunday News* who broke the story about George O'Leary's resume, explains how he found the truth.[Start](#)



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Local Look

It's a little fib that goes back all the way to 1980. And once it was out there, George O'Leary had no way to take it back until it came around to haunt him 21 years later. *The (Manchester, N.H.) Union Leader* reported on its Web site that a handwritten profile of George O'Leary that he submitted to Syracuse University in 1980 included a mythical career on the University of New Hampshire football team.

[Click here for full story.](#)

This action has been taken by me for the following reasons.

biography, a document obtained by *The Union Leader of Manchester (N.H)* indicates he listed the information when hired as a coach at Syracuse in 1980.

Click [here](#) for more.

According to the school's sports information department, coaches and athletes personally filled out the biographical forms. The newspaper reported Friday that O'Leary's documents list "Univ. of New Hampshire - 3 yr. lettered" as part of his athletic background.

The sports information department at New Hampshire said it has no record of O'Leary on a football roster, and that it does not keep records of letter winners.

O'Leary is listed as a 1968 graduate of New Hampshire with a degree in physical education.

"I just am surprised and shocked that he had to resign because of something like this," current New Hampshire football coach Sean McDonnell said. "It's awful, awful sad. He's a tremendous football coach. I've followed his career with interest. From the times I've talked to him, I know him as a guy with great integrity."

O'Leary was 52-33 in seven seasons at Georgia Tech, helping it earn five straight bowl invitations for the first time since the 1950s.

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