From the Sidelines

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I am Penn State

THIS ISN'T THE COLUMN I HAD PLANNED TO WRITE. But because of the crimes of one evil man, and the decisions made by a handful of others, my alma mater, The Pennsylvania State University, is being dragged through the mud from coast to coast. And I am sick about it.

I have a 13-year-old son. It's difficult to imagine his being in the shoes of the victims of the monster who is Jerry Sandusky. I don't see how those men can ever be made whole again, and most likely many of their family members will never get over it either. Perhaps a whole lot of money is coming their way down the road but does anyone really think that will even up things?

No one knows how much Joe Paterno, a great but flawed man, knew or understood about his former colleague's disgusting behavior and now, thankfully as far as I'm concerned, he's done. But amid all the heartbreak and tears, recriminations and finger-pointing, one thing keeps coming to mind: those so-called leaders who failed those young men are not Penn State. I am Penn State.

Dan Douglas, head groundskeeper for the Reading Phillies, is Penn State.

Allen Johnson, head field manager for the Green Bay Packers, is Penn State.

Brad Park, Rutgers University sports turf specialist, is Penn State.

Vickie Wallace, University of Connecticut extension educator, is Penn State.

The student-run IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, which raised $10.7 million for pediatric cancer research at the 2012 event alone, is Penn State.

The Wall Street Journal's #1 school in a survey of top corporate recruiters is Penn State.

A major college football program that graduates 80% of its team and shows no achievement gap between black and white players is Penn State.

If there ever was a very large, very diverse group of Americans who will put their hearts, minds (and yes, wallets) together to make something good come of tragedy, it is the Penn State community, past, present, and future. Just watch and see.