

State of the Union – Big Boat Racing

Steve Benjamin, North Sails

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FOR THIS STAFF

North Carolina State when his father died.

His grandfather broke through barriers as an African-American scholar and athlete and Russell Wilson has emerged as one of the bright young stars in the NFL, fully cognizant of those who came before him.

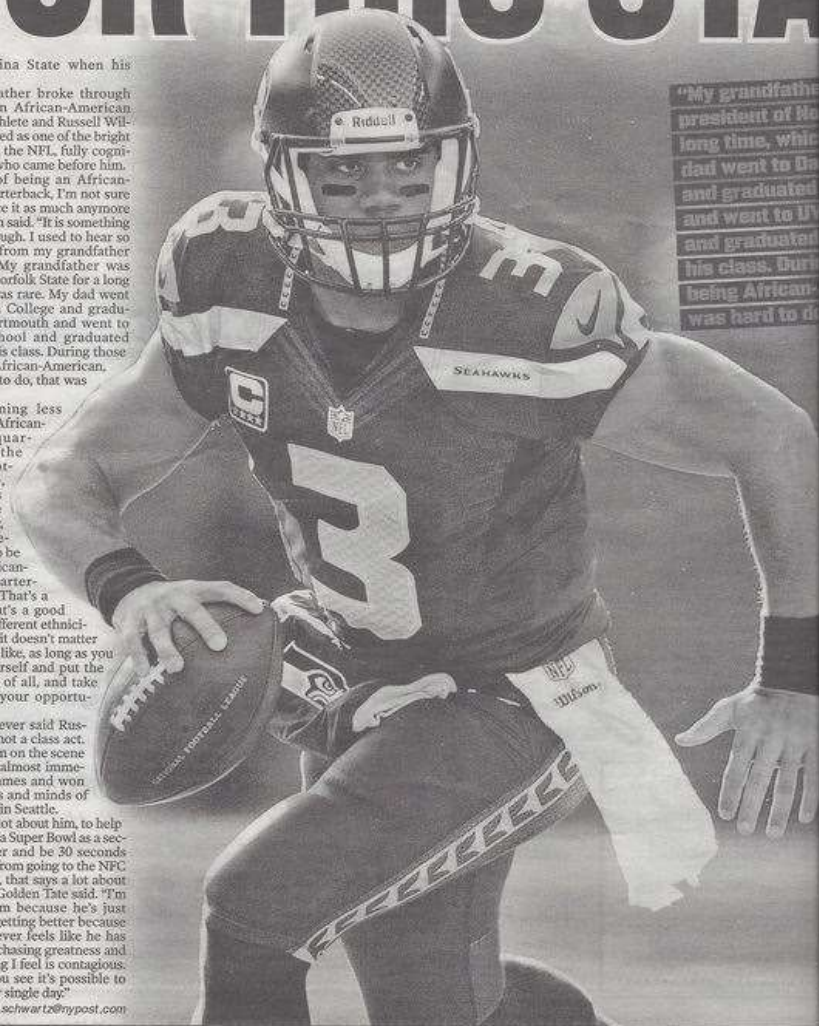
"In terms of being an African-American quarterback, I'm not sure if people notice it as much anymore or not," Wilson said. "It is something that's real, though. I used to hear so many stories from my grandfather and people. My grandfather was president of Norfolk State for a long time, which was rare. My dad went to Dartmouth College and graduated from Dartmouth and went to UVA Law School and graduated president of his class. During those times, being African-American, that was hard to do, that was rare."

"It's becoming less rare to be an African-American quarterback in the National Football League, which is changing the game in a way, which is awesome. I want to be one of the African-American quarterbacks to win. That's a real thing, that's a good thing. To let different ethnicities know that it doesn't matter what you look like, as long as you believe in yourself and put the work in, most of all, and take advantage of your opportunity."

No one has ever said Russell Wilson is not a class act. He has not been on the scene very long, but almost immediately won games and won over the hearts and minds of his teammates in Seattle.

"That says a lot about him, to help carry a team to a Super Bowl as a second-year player and be 30 seconds away last year from going to the NFC Championship, that says a lot about him," receiver Golden Tate said. "I'm excited for him because he's just going to keep getting better because mentally he never feels like he has it. He's always chasing greatness and that's something I feel is contagious. Guys see it. You see it's possible to get better every single day."

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RAISED

Trail-blazing father, grandfather set up Wilson for success

By PAUL SCHWARTZ

Of all the many life lessons his father taught him, Russell Wilson says he will never forget the "three Ps" his father, Harrison B. Wilson III — called Harry B. by all — instilled in his son.

"One thing that I learned from my dad is that you always have to persevere, have a great purpose in your life and understand where you're trying to go, have a great perspective," Wilson said a few days before he started at quarterback for the Seahawks against the Broncos in Super Bowl XLVIII. "Those three things — those three Ps — that he used to always tell me, were so real and they still stick with me today. It's the same thing going throughout this week with all the talk. I'm as calm as I can be, to be honest with you."

In one sense, it sounds almost impossible the 25-year old Wilson could really be as calm as he insisted he was during the week in Jersey City leading up to the Super Bowl. After all, this is only his second NFL season, this is his first Super Bowl and when he looked around him he did not see one teammate who had ever before played in a Super Bowl. But in another sense, Wilson was born for this as he is in every way his father's son and his grandfather's grandson.

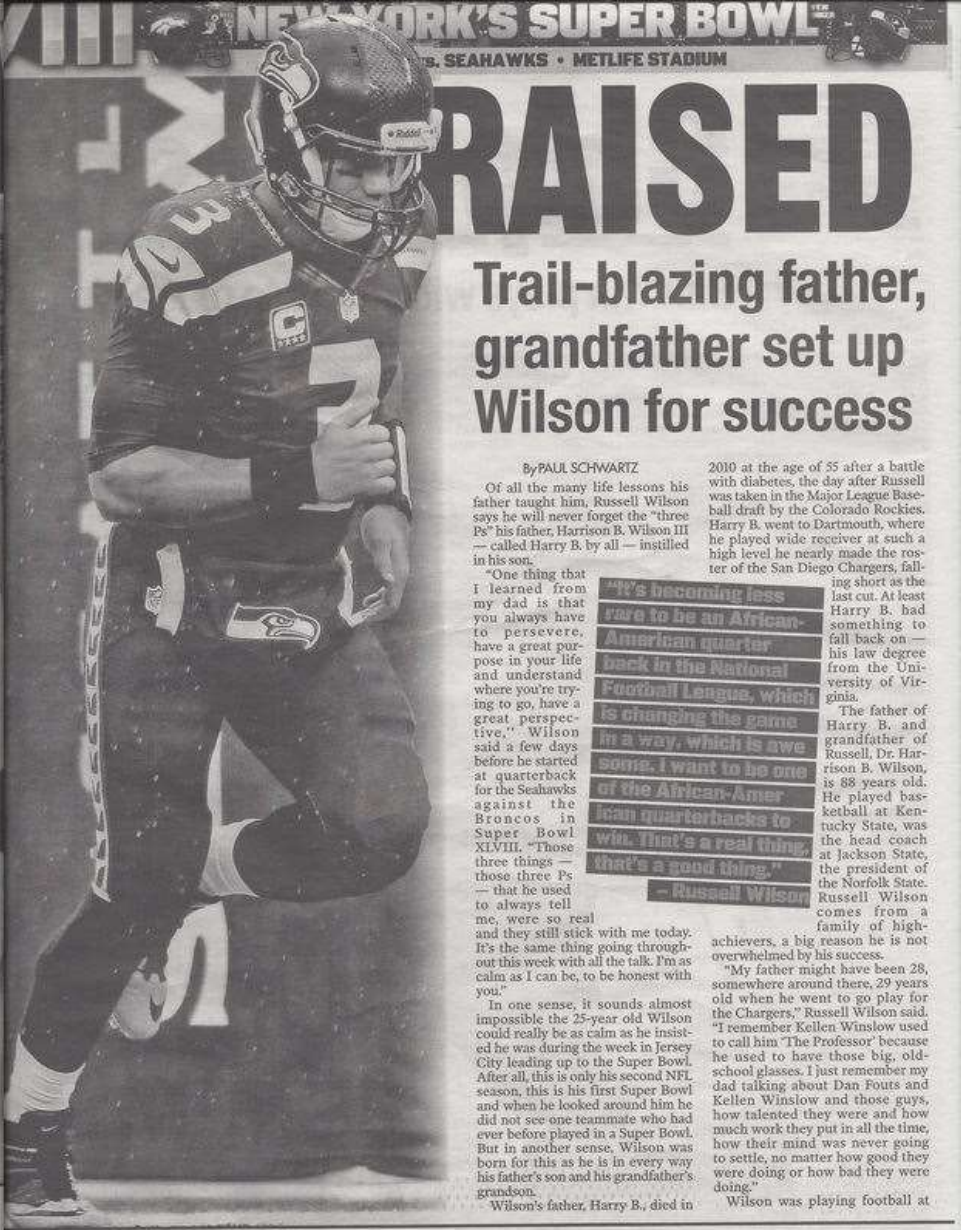
Wilson's father, Harry B., died in

2010 at the age of 55 after a battle with diabetes, the day after Russell was taken in the Major League Baseball draft by the Colorado Rockies. Harry B. went to Dartmouth, where he played wide receiver at such a high level he nearly made the roster of the San Diego Chargers, falling short as the last cut. At least Harry B. had something to fall back on — his law degree from the University of Virginia.

The father of Harry B. and grandfather of Russell, Dr. Harrison B. Wilson, is 88 years old. He played basketball at Kentucky State, was the head coach at Jackson State, the president of the Norfolk State. Russell Wilson comes from a family of high-achievers, a big reason he is not overwhelmed by his success.

"My father might have been 28, somewhere around there, 29 years old when he went to go play for the Chargers," Russell Wilson said. "I remember Kellen Winslow used to call him 'The Professor' because he used to have those big, old-school glasses. I just remember my dad talking about Dan Fouts and Kellen Winslow and those guys, how talented they were and how much work they put in all the time, how their mind was never going to settle, no matter how good they were doing or how bad they were doing."

Wilson was playing football at





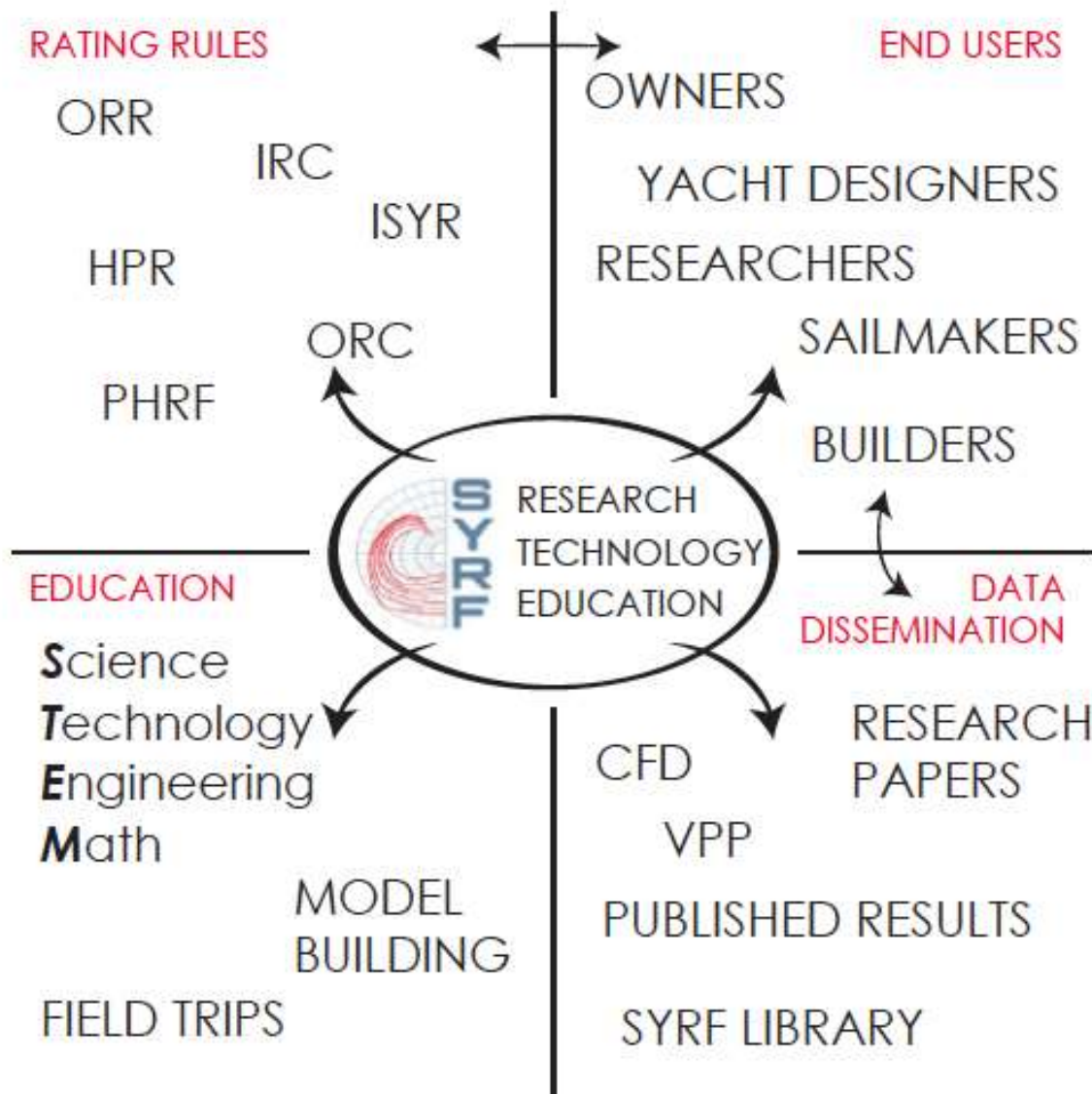




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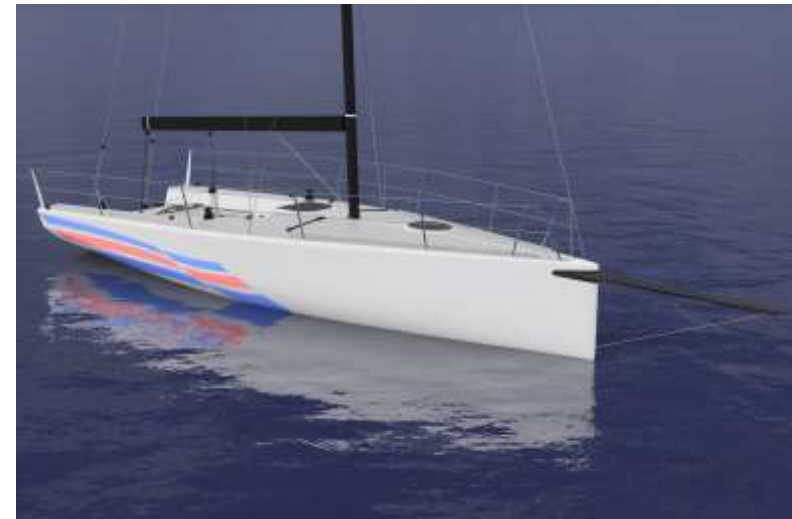
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