

Ohio State's Paul Bete Ran 56.3 Miles For NAACP Legal-Defense Fund



Paul Bete, a four-year runner and recent Ohio State graduate, ran 56.3 miles from Columbus to Wilberforce, Ohio. Bete said his goal was to raise money to benefit the NAACP Foundation's legal-defense fund while being "an ally in the fight against systemic racism."

"I thought the idea of running 56 miles would be outlandish enough to really raise awareness," Bete told Dayton Daily News. "and make people want to donate, especially people who want to do something but don't really know a good way to do it."

Bete, who was a three-time OSU Scholar-Athlete, strived to raise \$5,000. As of June 8, he had reached more than \$9,551 in donations, bringing in more than 191 percent of his initial goal. Anyone can contribute at RallyUp.com.

Bete, who was an All-Big Ten runner for the Buckeyes, began his run at the Jesse Owens statue outside of Ohio State's Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium and finished at the Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument in Wilberforce.

Under the headline, "Be an Ally in the fight against systemic racism," Bete wrote about his motivations:

"For much of my life, I've avoided the topic of race. And like many people of my background it wasn't due to any explicit biases, but rather it was easy and convenient to not confront a system in which I was privileged and had an advantage to succeed.

"The murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police department, as well as the murders of countless other black people, have been a wake up call. A call to no longer just condemn these actions in my mind or in talking with friends, but instead to go out in the world, protest, and take tangible action to stop the machine that allows these actions to happen.

"As a member of the Ohio State track and field program, my life has been shaped over my college years by strong black coaches/role models such as Karen Dennis and Khadevis Robinson. I had the privilege of competing with and getting to know dozens of black teammates whose constant strength in the face of adversity over the past weeks and years has changed my life and inspired me to do whatever I can to change the lives of others.

"In light of this, I will be using my ability to run that so many of these people have helped cultivate in me to raise money for the NAACP legal-defense fund."

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