

**Oral History Interview of  
Gerald “Corky” Oglesby**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez  
February 1, 2016  
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:**  
*Sports Interviews (University Archives)*

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## Interview Series Background:

The Sports History interviews encompass interviews conducted by members of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library staff. They hope to document the evolution of sports and the role of sports in the social fabric of this region.

## Transcript Overview:

This oral history interview features former Texas Tech University track and field coach Gerald “Corky” Oglesby. Oglesby talks about his career in basketball recruiting at Oklahoma Baptist and then at Texas Tech. Oglesby later became the track and field coach at Texas Tech, a position he held for twenty years. Oglesby reflects on his time at Texas Tech and discusses how athletics has changed over the course of his career.

**Length of Interview:** 02:12:58

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## Keywords

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**Daniel Sanchez (DS):**

My name is Daniel Sanchez, today's date is February 1, 2016. I'm at the Southwest Collection in Lubbock Texas, and we're interviewing Corky Oglesby—

**Gerald Oglesby (GO):**

Oglesby.

DS:

Oglesby. Sorry about that, I knew I was going to say it wrong.

GO:

Oh that's fine.

DS:

And Corky, thank you for being here. Can you state your complete legal name?

GO:

Gerald. Gerald Oglesby. G-e-r-a-l-d.

DS:

And can you tell us your date of birth and place of birth?

GO:

January 3, 1936 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

DS:

Oklahoma City, so is all your family from there?

GO:

Yes, they were.

DS:

What's your dad's name?

GO:

Gerald Oglesby, Sr.

DS:

And when was he born?

GO:

He was born in 1912.

DS:

1912. Also in Oklahoma?

GO:

Yeah, McAlister. And my mother was born 1915, she was from McAlister, Oklahoma.

DS:

And what's her name?

GO:

Her name? Mary Catherine Hope.

DS:

And what did your dad do as an occupation?

GO:

He was a lithographer, and a printer, and an engraver, and during the war, quite a bit of time there, he worked at Douglas Aircraft—you know, working on the airplanes that were fighting the war.

DS:

So you grew up with that, huh?

GO:

Yeah, you know.

DS:

Did you have any siblings?

GO:

Yeah, got two brothers and a sister.

DS:

Are you the oldest, youngest, or the middle?

GO:

I'm the middle, yeah. And my older brother, he was a professor at Western Kentucky University. He was a head track coach there, and then he was the head of the physical education department there for about thirty five years. He's retired over there in Bowling Green. My younger brother Ricky, is a federal mediator, lives in Seattle. And he was school guy that went into the teacher's union you'd say. And he was at Tulsa at the teacher's union and then he went to Milwaukee there, and then he went to Seattle, and was head of teacher's union there for about ten years, and now he's a federal mediator. He likes that side of—he likes being there better than on the other side.

DS:

And you mentioned your brother was also a track guy, so were athletics important to y'all's family growing up?

GO:

Oh yeah, yeah. He was a coach, and then of course I coached, and my younger brother didn't, but he was around it all the time.

DS:

What were the athletics like there in Oklahoma when you were growing up?

GO:

Well we went to Tulsa Central, which was the largest school in Oklahoma at that time—they had a lot of really good athletic teams—wrestling, and football, basketball, track and field, cross country. You know, we just kind of grew up around that stuff.

DS:

Did you do all the sports, or which ones—

GO:

Well I did cross country and track and wrestled a little. But the guy ahead of me was—he'd always—I couldn't beat him, so I went back to track. He wound up being state champion. But I was on a cross country team that in three years, we didn't ever lose a meet. Not because of me—I was just kind of one of the tail end guys, and we won state championship all three years. But they had won it about sixteen years in a row, and so they had a great history of cross country at that high school.

DS:

Were there any names that we'd recognize?



GO:

Oh I doubt it. No, I doubt it.

DS:

And you mentioned all of y'all went on to college, so I guess your parents also placed a strict importance on education?

GO:

Well, yeah, we didn't have any money or anything, but my older brother got a track scholarship to Oklahoma Baptist, then I went there, but I was the manager and the trainer. I ran track one year later, but mainly I just had to work to send myself through school. And then my younger brother went to Oklahoma Baptist, and he also just paid his way through school. But everybody in our neighborhood went—we didn't think anything about it—that's just what you did.

DS:

So what was that college experience like for you?

GO:

Oh, at Oklahoma Baptist?

DS:

Yeah.

GO:

Oh it was great. You know it was a small school, less than two thousand students, and we just—we had a great experience there. And I went to Oklahoma State my second year, but I went back to Oklahoma Baptist.

DS:

Yeah. What was your goal when you were going to college? What were you planning on being?

GO:

I didn't really know. And I was—how I wound up at Texas Tech is that I was the manager and trainer for—I had to have some money to go to school, and I was the manager and trainer for the athletic department, you know just a student, they didn't pay you very much a month. And that's how I got to know Bob Bass. And later on, when I was out of school, I recruited him some guys just on my own, and he won the national championship with them in basketball. He got a job with Denver Rockets, which is now the Denver Nuggets. He was there two years, and then he got this job at Texas Tech, and he hired me as his recruiter. And I came here in '69, what is that—forty-seven years?



DS:

Uh huh.

GO:

And have been here ever since. He left after a year and a half. He left right in the middle of the season. So—went back to the pros.

DS:

So you came in with—how much recruiting experience did you have?

GO:

Well I just—I just—I got him some players cause he helped me out when I was going to school. And the first guy I got him was a guy named Charlie Stewart, and I was getting my master's at Texas A&M, and Charlie would come over to the—not the regular gym, but a kind of an intermural gym, and play basketball with the guys. And Shelby Metcalf, the coach there, he said, "That's the best player in town, but we can't take a black kid here. We don't have any black kids." So Charlie, I guess later that spring, he signed with Grambling, and went to Grambling to play baseball and basketball. And he didn't like it there. He came back to College Station, and I was teaching a couple of physical education classes—I had five classes, I had a graduate assistant in the PE department. And his daddy was—worked in one of the big cafeterias there at A&M. They had two big ones—you know everybody ate family style, and they had these waiters that waited the tables and then Charlie was a—his daddy worked over there in the cafeteria, and he got Charlie a job. And Charlie would go around and set the salads at the tables and set the plates and everything, and he wasn't going to school. But when he was going to the dorm, he would walk across those fields where I was teaching these classes, and I'd seen him playing basketball, and I got to talking to him. And he said, "Well, I didn't really like it at Grambling." And Grambling was really a great place for baseball players—the president of Grambling University at that time, this guy named Dr. Jones, and he was also the head baseball coach. And he had a lot of connections with the major leagues, and put a lot of players in the major leagues. As their football program did, of course, Eddie Robinson, the great Eddie Robinson, they had all those great players in the pros, from Grambling. But Charlie just didn't like it there. And so I said, "Well you still want to go to school?" and he said, "Yeah." I said, "Well Coach Bass up there at OBU—he's looking for some players." And so I picked him up one Saturday and drove him to Shawnee, and actually was really going to go mainly for basketball. And they were having a basketball tryout that morning, and so Charlie just jumped in there, and before it was all over, he had him a full basketball scholarship when that weekend was over. And so he went there that next year. And then I was working for—I was down there at A&M and then I went to work for a boy's camp out in Wisconsin. And I was recruiting kids for the camp, and Coach Bass, I was trying to get him to get his two boys to go to camp, and he had just lost a big 6'9" guy—he'd flunked out of school or something. And he said, "Well if you'll get me a big guy on your

travels, I'll send my boys to camp." Well anyway, I'd be out and around, and I was in Chicago, and this camp was in Wisconsin, so we got a lot of Chicago kids out there. So I was just driving around, I had an interview that night with some people, and I went by this high school there that had a great basketball reputation. And I got to talking to some guy, the coach—well come to find out he'd grown up in Oklahoma. So we kind of had a connection there. He said, "Hey, I got two guys, these two brothers, that are down there in Xenia, Ohio, and one of them is playing at Wilberforce." That's a little bitty old school, little Methodist school in the NAIA. And he said, "His brother's down there, but he's not playing yet. Boy he's great. He's a heck of a player." And he just told me about him, and told me about another kid I went over and saw, and he was kind of a bum kid and I wasn't going to pursue him. Anyway, a few weeks later in the spring, my brother was the guy that was going to be the director of the camp, so in effect I was working for him, and the guy that owned the camp. And so I was down there visiting him, there in Ohio, I had been going around try to recruit kids for the camp, and I'm looking in the Dayton paper, and they got this Sunday afternoon basketball league—this was in January I remember—and I'm looking at this thing, and here are these two guys that the guy in Chicago had told me about, and they were playing in this league, and they were both averaging about twenty-five [points] a game, in this Sunday afternoon league there in Dayton. And so I told my brother, I said, "It's really interesting. Here are these two guys the guy in Chicago told me about." So we got up early that Sunday morning and drove from Lancaster, Ohio over to Dayton, and started watching those games. Yeah, I remember now—Russell and Lonnie Lynn were their names. So anyway, we talked to them after they finished playing that day, and Russell said, "Well I'm already in school." And then Lonnie, the little brother that was really a great player, said, "Well I'm not in school yet, but the coach has got me a job in his dry cleaners, and they're going to get me in, so I'm not interested." So we just sit around and start watching the games. Well I see this kid that's just an incredible player. And so I start asking people in the crowd, said, "Well who is that guy?" And they said, "Well that's that guy, Al Tucker, and he's not going to college now. But there's his daddy, sitting over there in that next section. He's a former Harlem Globetrotter." So we go over there and talk to Mr. Tucker. He's a—"Boy," he said, "Al started out down in a school in Tennessee, and he didn't like it. And he's working at Wright Paterson air base, just pushing a broom out there. That boy needs to be in school. And Gerald, his younger brother, is at Central State." Central State was a—they won the national basketball championship, small college, that year. And Gerald won—I don't know what was going on. But they came up after the game, and old Al said, "I'm not interested." And Gerald said, "Well I'm going to leave Central State. I'm interested." So the daddy got to talking to them. This is on a Sunday afternoon. School starts back at Oklahoma Baptist on a Tuesday. And those two guys said they'd go, plus a third guy that was a great guard. So I got out there to Al's house the next morning about five, and I load him and this other boy—Tommy Skreets [?—and Gerald didn't come with us because he still was taking finals at central state. Well, I drive them in one day from Dayton Ohio back to Shawnee, that was on a Monday. They enrolled in class on Tuesday. Well anyway, the next three years they were playing in the national finals—NAIA finals—so they finished the championship one

year and finished second the other two years. So anyway, Bass got this job in the pros because of that. So he goes to Denver, he was up there two years, and he was having some run-ins with the owners. Well this Tech job came open, and somebody—I don't know how, put Bob's name in the till, and then they called him, and they wound up offering him the job. And so he told me, "I want you to go down there with me." And I was at Western Kentucky as my brother's assistant coach in track. And anyway, I got it worked out, and I wound up here on April 1, 1969.

DS:

Did you come in both as basketball and track?

GO:

No, didn't have anything to do with track.

DS:

Just basketball?

GO:

Just basketball recruiter. That's all he had me do. I didn't coach or anything. They just kept me on the road. If I'd be sitting in the office, he said, "You're not working, get out on the road." I'd go see games. I'd go to California, early in the basketball season they'd have all these junior college tournaments, and I'd see as many as forty-eight teams play in one week. And so then I'd go to New York to the playgrounds and stuff, and Philadelphia, and of course in Texas, we went everywhere in Texas too. But I'd stay on the road all the time. And it's a lot different now because they've got these summer leagues and these summer camps and they didn't do that in those days, they didn't have those.

DS:

And you mention—

GO:

And you know they have all these guys committing when they're sophomores and juniors. Nobody ever did that then. You didn't know who you're going to get until signing day in April of every year. And then you'd hope you'd sign some guys. So that first year, I came in, I didn't know a soul in Tech—I never had been to Texas Tech. took the job, never had seen the campus. I just took it on the strength of Coach Bass wanting me here with him, and I really liked him. And so I came, and he wasn't even here. They made the playoffs, were in the—it was the old American Basketball Association that, you know, blended in to the NBA later. And they were in the playoffs. And so I came here originally and he wasn't even here. So I just started recruiting. I got here, signed up on a Saturday April 1, and I remember I got here, I got here that Friday night, on March 31, I guess. I think there was a snowstorm that day, and the next day, I think there was

a dust storm. I called my wife, and I said, "I think I made the wrong choice." But anyway, they gave me three names, and I called these people up, and they all agreed to visit with me. So that Sunday, the next—I got here, I actually signed the contract on Saturday, and the next afternoon I had lunch with a kid Mike Dukes in Levelland. He was an all-state guard. And I talked to him, and he said he had prayed about it and he was going to the University of Texas. I said, "It must not be the same god I know." (laughs). But anyway, he did, and he went down there to the University of Texas, and great kid. And we wind up getting his little brother a few years later named Grant Dukes, who they honored at a basketball game last Saturday. You know, they honor a former player every Saturday, and Grant was here for the—I think maybe the Texas game. And he's a sporting goods salesman now. And then the next day, I went to Perryton, way up there in the Panhandle. I thought I was on the face of the moon, man. I never had seen any place that—I mean it just looked so stark and rocky and barren to me, and I said, Oh gosh. Back there in Kentucky we still got green grass in the winter. And so I got—and that boy's name was Bob Gobin. Well, the Aggies were trying to get him, and the daddy said, "He's not going to A&M, I assure you." Well the daddy worked for City Services, and the president of City Services at that time was an Aggie. They sent that company plane up there to get him and the daddy. And of course the boy sides with A&M, and had a good career there, was an assistant coach, still runs and lives down there. In fact, Bob Gobin, he still keeps their clock at their ballgames. And then that third guy was a six-nine guy from Odessa High. And I went out and saw him, and he said, "I'm not going to Tech. We played a regional deal in the Lubbock Coliseum. There was something about the light or something, and I just couldn't see that basket. So I'm not going to school there." And he signed with Texas. Well, we played Texas four years in a row, while those two kids were there, and we beat them eight times—we beat them two times each year. So those two guys never beat us, and the Aggies—the Aggies we about split even with them. But anyway, they—that's how it started out that first year.

DS:

Well who's the first kid you got to Tech?

GO:

Well, I signed, well two kids from Kentucky that I had seen play in the state finals. A guy named Virgil Taylor and Mike Parker, and they didn't stay but a year or so, and then they transferred back—because frankly I wound up recruiting better kids than they were from down here. And they were good players, and they fit in there. And we had a freshman team those years. So we'd have a varsity, and we'd have fifteen kids on the freshman team in those days. Of course now they only have about twelve or thirteen scholarships, but we had a lot more scholarships then. And then I signed two junior college guys, first black kids to ever play basketball at Tech. there were two black kids on the football team. There was a tack or a guard from San Antonio, and then Danny Hardaway from Lawton, Oklahoma, who was the first black athlete to ever sign at Tech. And I signed three black athletes that first year—Gene Knolle, who was one of the great



players we've ever had at Tech, and still has—in just two years—still has a lot of the ranked up high in the scoring. And then Greg Lowery, from Oklahoma Military academy. Gene Knolle, by the way, was from Ranger Junior College, and Lowery was a great prolific scorer. He averaged over twenty his senior year. I mean if they'd had the three point line when he came, he'd of been really something. And so those two guys were really good players. Third guy, Ron Douglas, was from Tulsa Central, where I'd gone to high school, and he left and went back up to some school in Oklahoma. But Lowery and Knolle both graduated. And then I, there was a big kid in Houston, Houston Yates, that I started recruiting named William Johnson, really classy kid, smart. His daddy was a coach at Aldine Carver. He lived right—he went right there on Cleburne Street, he could sit there on his front porch and could see Hofheinz Pavilion, University of Houston basketball arena. Well, I started working him, I'd go down there and see him and just see him after school and everything. And really worked him hard, got him for a visit, he had a bunch of chance, he could've gone in baseball—big strong kid—he could have gone in football, they had scholarships, all this in football. And his dad was a basketball coach. And anyway, Houston recruited him, but Guy Lewis, the coach at that time, he didn't even come across the street—it was just two blocks over to William's house and talk to William's daddy. Well William's daddy was a basketball coach in high school, he knew about recruiting, and it really offended him that they just assumed they were going to get him—just cause he lived across the street. And I remember, they brought him for a visit and everything, but we got William. And then the next year, Rick Bullock came along from—we already knew about him from San Antonio in Jefferson, and I started recruiting him, and I stayed in San Antonio longer than I stayed in Lubbock that year. Well, William was such a classy kid, and they kind of formed a relationship when we recruited them, and he helped us get Bullock, and of course Bullock is one of the—without a doubt—one of the top two or three players ever in the history of Texas Tech basketball. And he went in the Southwest Conference Hall of Fame over in Dallas three years ago, and when he made his talk, he told them that I was sitting on his front porch one morning when his mom came to the door to get the newspaper and the milk, I gave them to me, and she turned around and says, “Rick would you sign with this man so he'll get off my front stoop?” (laughs) And anyway, we got Rick, and of course he was a great player, great player. And we had two or three rows in a year there where we won about twenty games, and in those days only one team from the conference could go the NCAA. When Rick was a senior, I had taken over the track team, I wasn't on the basketball staff that year, well they went to the Sweet 16. There was only thirty-two teams got invited. And Rick was one of the best players in the country, he was really a great player. Anyway, I remember I was in New York recruiting Geoff Huston that spring, and Houston was one of our great players too. He was from Canarsie High in Brooklyn, and I was working him, and got him to come for a visit. And so I got a call from Coach King, the athletic director, and he said, “You got to come back. Coach Hilliard,” who's the track coach, “has had a heart attack, and you're the only guy around here who knows anything about track.” And so I said, “Well I've just about got recruiting wound up,” and pretty well had him

committed. So I came back and started helping Coach Hilliard, and we got Geoff, and he was a great player of course.

DS:

Oh yeah.

GO:

Do you remember Geoff?

DS:

Oh yeah. I would always listen to the radio, so yeah, I remember all those guys, all those names.

GO:

Well Geoff was a great player, and after—he was at a really good high school team, they had a great team. They had a kid named Tyrone Ladson, who was a junior, and Tyrone was the one everybody in the country was wanting to recruit. So anyway, he broke his leg there towards the end, and then Geoff just took over. But I got on Geoff real early. And they won the city championship in Madison Square Garden. And so everybody was after Geoff then, but he remained loyal to us and went ahead and signed with us, because I was really the first big school that came—because they were all after Ladson. But Geoff was a great, great assist guy, a great shooter. He led the NBA in assists his rookie year. And so, he was the last guy I recruited in basketball—was Geoff.

DS:

Well, what a guy to go out with.

GO:

Yeah. Do you remember Ron Richardson?

DS:

Ron Richardson?

GO:

Big six-ten guy. He was on that team that went to the Sweet 16. He was from Compton California. And that was an interesting story because Coach Bass' best friend in college was a baseball coach and athletic director at the high school where Bill Walton was from. Remember Bill Walton?

DS:

Uh huh, the big red head [known as the “Big Red Deadhead and the “Grateful Red”] (laughs)  
Yeah.

GO:

So we had a connection to them because of Coach Aldrige [?]. So he called Coach Bass and said, “Look I can get you in with the families. We got our own—you’ll be welcome by the family to try to recruit the kid.” So I flew out there, and they were in the state playoffs, and I went to the game down there in San Diego, and I went and sat with his father, and we visited. And he invited me to their home that night to have dinner. And he said, “But I want to warn you. I went to Berkeley. Bruce,” his older brother, “is a starting right tackle on UCLA’s football team.” And he said his other brother was a starting tackle on USC’s football team. So he said, “I’m pretty sure that Bill’s going to stay in the PAC-10,” that he won’t leave the west coast. I said, “I appreciate you telling me that.” And he said, “I’m going to pass on that dinner. And I’m going to go up here and see the state finals in JUCO basketball, at Long Beach State.” So I went up there to see the game, and Lute Olsen, the great Lute Olsen from Arizona, you probably remember him.

University of Iowa, he was their coach at Long Beach City College, and they had a kid I was looking at. Well it wound up being a double overtime game and Compton won. And there was this big old skinny kid, and he got twenty-seven points, and he was a freshman at Compton Junior College. So I don’t know how I found out where he lived that night, but the next day, I went out there to Compton and found him and took him to lunch and met his parents, and then I started recruiting him. And we wound up getting him. And he really ought to be in our hall of fame—he’s really a terrific player. So anyway, one day he was over at my house. I lived over here on Twentieth. And he’d come by the house and we were visiting. And this was after he’d been here quite a while. He said, “Coach I got a confession to make to you. I was six-three just that last year before when I went to high school. And I grew seven inches in that one year. I really didn’t get to play that much. I’ve only been averaging about three points a game. Our big center got in trouble and the coach suspended him for the game, and that’s the reason I was playing. But I never had gotten more than ten points in a game. But I didn’t want to tell you, because I was afraid you would quit recruiting me.” But he got twenty-seven that night, and then we kept recruiting him, and then we got him, and he was a great player for us. Ron Richardson. And I’m surprised you don’t remember Ron.

DS:

Well what years did you have him?

GO:

Well he was with Bullock, and Wakefield, and Mike Edwards—



DS:

So it would have been in the 74's.

GO:

And you know who Mike Edwards was?

DS:

Yeah.

GO:

He runs the Ford place here in town now. He's from El Paso. And that was an interesting story. Don Haskins called us—

DS:

Was Joe Baxter around that time also?

GO:

Well Joe Baxter worked for Mike, they were best friends, yeah. But Don Haskins called and he talked to Gerald and he talked to me. And he said, "Hey we got this kid down here. We're getting a lot of heat to recruit him to UTEP, but we already offered the last scholarship to another guy—another guard. Why don't you guys come down here and look at him." So I went down there, and he really was a good player. So we invited him for a visit, and he just loved it when he got here. So he committed to me, so I was there on that signing day, early that morning at eight o'clock, I was there sitting there at his front door. And so I went in there, and we were signing, and I remember the door was open, and they had a screen door, and we heard a rap on the door, and he looked up, and it was Gene Iba, who was Haskins' assistant. And Mike says, "Too late, Coach. I just signed with Texas Tech." And old Gene, boy, he was white as a sheet, because he was going to have to go back to Don Haskins they wasn't going to go get him. And what happened is the kid they thought they're going to get backed on them and signed with the University of Detroit—I think it was a Chicago kid. And so they were short a guard, and so they decided to run back out—Mike was their next choice, but it was too late. We got him, and you know I still see Mike and talk to him. He said, "Oh I wasn't going to go to UTEP anyway. I didn't want to stay at home." And I said, "Well, I'm sure glad that Haskins called us and told." Because Don had actually—course he'd won the national championship down there several years before, and they had a pretty popular program going, and were able to get a lot of good recruits.

DS:

Well let me ask you, how tough is it for you to—you know a guy from, especially when you're first starting out—a guy that's working out of West Texas, and you're trying to recruit in California, New York—

GO:

Well, you just go and just talk to the guys and sell them on the program. And I'd tell them how good Coach Brad was, and when Gerald took over—when Bob left, well I just sold Gerald. Tried to tell them how good a coach he was, and how great a school I thought Texas Tech was. And you know, I wasn't afraid to go recruit anybody. You know, you didn't always get them, but at least we'd be in there—and get them to come for a visit. Of course, the first thing you had to do is convince them to make a visit to your campus. And I think, most folks, when they got here to Tech they were really impressed by it, and the beauty of Texas Tech, and it's just—not all just a desert out here. And we had great attendance then. We played in the coliseum then, we had over eight hundred people in the waiting list for season tickets, and we had great crowds—really better than everybody else in the Southwest Conference at that time. So it was—we had a pretty good reputation going on there. And just going in there and try to sell them, and tell them how good you were. And of course, you got to see a lot of kids just to get a few kids. But I got eleven that one year, I think four junior college guys and seven freshman. And you know, we always have a pretty good recruiting class.

DS:

So when you're scouting, like a junior college guy as opposed to just a regular kid in high school, what differences are you looking for?

GO:

Well you're looking at a more mature kid, and a guy you can fit in your—there are a lot of good players, but you might not think they're going to fit into the philosophy of your head coach and how he was coaching. And there'd be some kids that you just know weren't going to fit in, but main thing I looked at, if a guy could run and shoot and could score, I mean I look for scorers, boy. I mean that's how you win games. And we had some really—Gerald was a good defensive coach, and George Davidson, his assistant, was as good a defensive coach there was in the country. And they always—you know, they taught great rules of defense. And we'd play everybody tough. I mean, we may not win every game, but Tech was always in a game when Coach Myers coached, I'll tell you that for sure, because he's a super coach.

DS:

You know, and you mentioned also that you recruited the first three black athletes for the basketball team—

GO:

Yeah, let me tell you about Gene Knolle. Gene Knolle was from Harlem, 126<sup>th</sup> and Atlantic, right in dead center of Harlem. And he played at Loyola of Chicago. And they had won the national championship two years before—that little school, Loyola in Chicago. And all five of their starters were from New York City. And there was a street guy up there, worked with these

kids, his name was Charlie November. You know it sounded like a joke, but that was his name. And he'd send his kids out, and somehow or other, he had a connection with this coach in Chicago, and five of their players who were starters on that national championship team were from Chicago. Well Knolle was a freshman that year, I guess. And so, I don't know what happened in Chicago, I never did ask him, if he flunked out or he just didn't like it there, but he transferred to Ranger Junior College. The Ranger coach, a guy named Ron Butler, who's still down there, he's on their Board of Regents now at Ranger, and was Billy Clyde Gillispie's coach in college. And you know about Billy Clyde here at Tech.

DS:  
Yeah.

GO:  
And Billy Clyde, he's still—he's back there right now and is 18-0. You know, he's coaching at Ranger Junior College. That's a long way from University of Kentucky to Ranger, back down. But he's doing very well there, and that's where he started out. But what Butler—you know after we got going and everything, I just took off and I just started going across and meeting all the JUCO coaches. You know, went down to Snyder, and then I went on over to Cisco Junior College, and just started hitting them, and I got to Ranger, and I just kind of hit it off with Coach Butler. And I watched his practice, and it was just a pick-up game because the season was over. And boy I saw this kid, I said, "Man that's the guy I like. Boy he can play." And he said, "Well, yeah, he is. But he's already signed with Drake." Well Drake had gotten in the final four that year, it was Drake, UCLA, so that would have been the Spring of '69. UCLA, North Carolina, Purdue, and Drake were the final four. So Drake was really riding high then, they had a great coach named Maurice John, and he recruited him some good players for them. And he got two off of San Jacinto Junior College down in Houston, and they'd won the national championship, and he signed Knolle, who was probably the next best player in the junior colleges in Texas. And so Butler says, "Well he's already signed." I said, "Man, I wish I had gotten here sooner. That's the best guy I've seen in a long time." Well about the middle of the summer, I get a call from Coach Butler, he said, "Are you still interested in that Knolle kid?" and I said, "Well yeah, why are you asking me that?" He said, "Well, he didn't get his paperwork into Drake, and they got so many players that want to go there now, since they went to the final four that they just dropped him. He didn't get his paperwork in, and they're tired of messing with him. So he doesn't have any place to go. Would you be interested in him?" I said, "I sure would boy." I sent off a scholarship offer to him up there in New York and everything, and never even—he didn't ever come to visit, you know. Just did it on the phone. So it got time for school to start, and we had enrollment that first day, and he wasn't here. So I called up there, and he said, "I'll be there tomorrow." So this goes on for about a week and he didn't show up. And finally Coach Bass says, "Quit messing with him. Just forget about him." I said, "Coach, he's a pretty good player. We might need him when we start conference." Well anyway, I go over, and I couldn't get away

with this now, and there was this two ladies that worked in the admissions office, and of course I got to know them when we were getting all the other kids enrolled, and I told them, "Well he's got some problems, and he's not here yet. And the last day of enrollment for the fall semester is about to come up, and you know we want to get him in." Well I enrolled him in fifteen hours. Well you couldn't get away with that now, they'd probably fire you, or you'd be in trouble with the NCAA. And these two gals put him in fifteen hours, and of course athletic department was paying for those hours. And anyway, I kept calling and calling, and I got ahold of his mother, and she said, "Coach, have you been watching TV and reading the paper? There's been three planes in the last two weeks that have been hijacked and they're taking them to Cuba." Do you remember when that was going on?

DS:

Uh huh.

GO:

And I said, "Well they're not going to hijack a plane going to Lubbock, Texas." And she said, "Do you know that for a fact?" I said, "Well I don't know. I can't tell you for a fact." She said, "Well there you are, right there." Well anyway, he shows up seventeen days after the first day of enrollment, and just started taking those classes, and got through and passed everything and made it. But you couldn't get away with that nowadays. But you know I had those people over in admissions office that took care of him and got him in those classes.

DS:

Well I'm surprised you didn't jump in your car and drive up there and pick him up.

GO:

Well, I would've of I guess, but Coach Bass kept saying, "Don't mess with him. Don't mess with him." But he sure was glad to get him when he got here.

DS:

Was he worth the trouble?

GO:

Oh gosh, yeah. He was one of the best players that we've ever had around here, but he doesn't ever get any recognition. I think he still has the best scoring average for a two-year player that we've ever had here at Tech.

DS:

How long did it take for him to contribute to the team?

GO:

Well the first day. Because he was our best player. I mean he was a really good player. He grew up on the playgrounds. He knew how to—he had had a great first step. He could go to the bucket and you couldn't stop him. He had this little finger roll that became famous, everybody—all the fans loved it. And he'd go in amongst big, six-foot-ten, seven-foot guys, and they couldn't block his shot. And he—I remember we played Long Beach State, Jerry Tarkanian, the great Jerry Tarkanian from—you know later on at Vegas, who won a national championship—he was at Long Beach at that time. And Gene got—they had lost a couple of days before to UCLA, and then we beat them, and then they didn't lose another game that year until the playoffs. They were really some good players. But old Knolle got twenty-eight points and fourteen rebounds that night, and every time I'd see Tarkanian, he'd say, "Where'd you get that kid anyway? Where'd that kid come from? I never heard of him." But he was really a good player. I mean he was one of the—he could play right now—I wish we had him right now on Coach Smith's team.

DS:

Oh really? He had the athletic skills for today?

GO:

Oh he was really good. Yeah. He was about six-four, and he wasn't a big monstrous kid—he was slim muscle, trim but quick, and he just knew how to play. He understood basketball. He was way ahead of the guys down here in this part of the world. We asked him where he learned that finger roll, he said, "On the playgrounds. If you don't do something, they'll cram it down your throat."

DS:

Yeah, because I guess also the playgrounds, if you can't play, you're not playing.

GO:

That's right. Yeah, I used to enjoy going up there in the summer. My sister in law lived over across the river in New Jersey, and her husband worked in New York City, and I'd ride in with him, and we'd go up to visit, and then I'd go to all the playgrounds. I hit every one of those playgrounds in New York City, and you know you see a lot of good kids—nowadays, you don't do that because all these summer leagues and everything, and it's not the same deal.

DS:

Yeah it's much more structured now.

GO:

And now all the NCAA rules and stuff. There were a lot of kids that could play, but you just couldn't get them in school. But you can make a lot of contacts there. And I remember I was up



in the Bronx, right up, kind of above Yankee Stadium at this ballpark, I mean this playground. I don't even remember what the name of it was. And I was looking at a kid in there, and I'd park my car on the street there, and I had locked the keys in the car. And when I got out, I can't take the keys out, and I couldn't get in. and I told that playground director, he said, "Coach, don't worry a bit. I got a bunch of kids on this playground that can get in your car." So there was two kids, about eleven or twelve years old, coming down the street, they each had a bag of groceries. Their mom had sent them to the grocery store or something, and the guy says, "Hey you guys want to earn a couple of dollars? That man's locked his keys in the car." And I mean, within a minute, they had that car door open, and got me my cars, and I gave them each some money. And they left that playground, director says, "If you had given them another two minutes, they'd have had all four of your tires." (laughs) And another time, I was going over to the Wagner Center, it was named after Mayor Wagner and a big, big rec center where the kids would go play, and a little bit fancier than those playgrounds, and I think they had a little bit higher caliber players there too. But I remember going over there, and I was driving, and I wasn't sure where it was. I kind of knew what neighborhood, and there was a cop on the corner, and I stopped and asked him where the Wagner Center was. He said, "Tell you what. I'm off-duty now. I'm going that direction. If you'll let me ride with you, I'll show you exactly where it is." So we went over and went in the parking lot, and I had this briefcase, and I started to put it in the trunk. I was going in, I was going to put my brief—he said, "Hey you got anything valuable in there?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "I believe I'd go ahead and take it in the rec center with you, where you can guard it. I wouldn't leave it out here. They'll get in your trunk out here." But I never had any trouble on the playgrounds. They were always nice to me and saw a lot of great kids. And one the best kids I ever saw on the playgrounds was—well he's on TV still now. He played at Maryland, was All-American—god, what was his name? Len something [Elmore?]-but I still see him on TV, you know he still does the color and announcing, but he was an All-American at Maryland, and I remember going to see him. He lived out on, over in Long Island. But I couldn't get him to visit—I invited him to visit, but he wouldn't visit. But he knew where he was going. He was going to go down to Maryland. But it was fun, you got to see a lot of great kids, and had some really good relationships with some people up there. You know.

DS:

And then you had to change gears and start doing track. What was that like?

GO:

Oh well, it was probably the best thing for me at the time because my son was getting about the third grade, and I was gone all the time in basketball, and it probably worked out just as well that I went into track. And you know, we had some really good individuals, we didn't have any real great teams because we just didn't have the budget for it at the time. And very very low budget program here, compared to Texas, Baylor, and A&M, but we had some great kids in track. I had

thirty-two All-Americans in those years, but Coach Kittley's had a lot more. And he's a great coach and does a great job.

DS:

Yeah, he continued what he was doing at Abilene Christian, didn't he?

GO:

He sure did. He's great. I'm really fond of him and the job he does. I just really admire him.

DS:

So how hard is it to recruit kids when you don't have any scholarships?

GO:

Well I had the scholarships—

DS:

I mean, you know, you didn't have as many—

GO:

We didn't have the budget. I had the same number of scholarships.

DS:

Oh okay.

GO:

Later on, they put a restriction on how many. When I first came, well you know, Texas would have twenty-six or the Aggies would have thirty and everything, and we had just about the minimum. And then later on the NCAA put a number that you could have. But it still was a chore. It was hard to beat out A&M, it was hard to beat out Texas and Baylor, TCU on sprinters and quarter-milers, and stuff like that. But we really had some good kids over the years. But it was tough recruiting track, I'll tell you. It was tougher to recruit track than it was basketball. And I didn't have any assistants at first for years. I didn't even have one assistant. I'd have to take one of my track scholarships and give it to a graduate student, just to get an assistant coach, have another guy to drive the vans. You know, we'd drive to Laredo, eleven hours in those vans, and drive to Houston, you know nine or ten hours, and everywhere we went, we'd just drove in those tin vans. And you know, everybody else would drive up in those big nice busses.

DS:

And it's hard to evaluate track athletes because they don't have pick up track meets—



GO:

Well yeah, but one thing about track guys is—if a guy can high jump seven foot, well you know—I mean, you've got some measurement in track, and actually—you know. You can pick up and see who the top ranked guys are in the state, and they're going to be the top ranked guys usually in college. So actually, as far as evaluation, I think track is easier in that way—

DS:

It's more straightforward.

GO:

—than it is in basketball, you know, predicting who's going to excel in basketball.

DS:

Yeah, because in basketball, since that is a team sport, if you have a really good teammate, they can help make you look good too.

GO:

That's right, yeah. And you know, you can have a guy from—like James Mayes I got from Hereford, and we knew he was a good high school runner, and that he was going to be good in college. And he was—he was an All-American three times.

DS:

Was he your first All-American?

GO:

Uh no. let's see—(pause)—I think maybe it was—you know that's interesting that you ask that. As far as the first one—he was one of the first. And I believe he was—I believe he was the first one because he got third in the nation in the half when he was a sophomore, I believe. I believe he was—and Terrell Pendleton who was from Louisville, Kentucky made it, but I believe it was a year or so later when he made it. You know, James was really a great—you know he played basketball in high school, he loved basketball, and he played—one year Coach Myers dismissed a bunch of players and he had Mayes out there just to have another guy on the team. But James really wanted to keep playing basketball, as well as run track, and they were going to regroup and get some more players, and he probably wasn't going to get to play. But he got to play that one year because they were out of players, and they got to go to Hawaii that year and the Tennessee tournament, and that was a lot better than getting in the van and driving over to Eastern New Mexico, Clovis. Yeah, Mayes was used to that high life, but he was a great representative for us, and did a great job.

DS:

And I'm trying to think—didn't that happen a couple of times—to the basketball squad, where people would go, put off the team and they'd have to get some other—like football athletes would come and join the team also?

GO:

Well that one year, they had three or four guys that got in trouble, and they let them go, and they wound up having a pretty good year that year with what they had left. But there were just some things they did, and he let them go.

DS:

So what was James like as an athlete—I mean as a person?

GO:

Oh James is great. I mean, he was back here for the homecoming game this last year, for the Oklahoma State game—first time I'd seen him in years, but he was just really a personable, great kid.

DS:

Because he went on to have a pretty good career afterwards.

GO:

Oh had a great career in Europe. He became a—tell you what—where he really did well was, at that time there were two great runners from Great Britain, Steve Graham and Sebastian Cole, who is now the head of England's Olympic movement, in fact he was the head of the Olympics when it was in London this last time—Sebastian Cole, he's Sir Sebastian Cole—he's been knighted by the queen. And he and this guy named Steve Graham, they were [inaudible] trying to break the world record in a mile. And so Jay would go there, and he'd run the half in those meets and everything. Well somehow or another, he got connected to them, and became their pacer. And when they were going to run these meets, when they were going to try to break the world's record, well James would be the pacer. Well, he'd get five thousand dollars up front. All that summer, they were going to these meets in Zurich and Rome and London and in Paris and Oslo and Berlin. You know they have this series of meets, which they still do, and they're big—boy over there they'll have forty and fifty thousand people come to a meet—so it's a big deal. Well, they'll give these guys guaranteed money to run in these races, guys like when Carl Lewis was in his heyday, and these different world record holders. So the good guys can really make a pretty good living, and so James, you know he was running and he'd run some great races and half. But he might get third or fourth. And I don't know what they pay—day money, maybe they call it. But he got to be a pacer for these two guys, and they were in these big time races, so they were on world wide television. And James would run a half, and they'd say we'd want to go the first

quarter in fifty-eight or fifty-nine or sixty, and he just had a perfect clock, and he'd hit that time, and they'd say they want to go in the two on the half—one fifty-eight, and then he'd run that, and then he'd just get off the track. Well he did that, and he made enough money he brought a Porsche back—bought him a Porsche and had it shipped back to America. So he made some pretty good money that summer. He did it two summers, I think. But anyway he gets back to Dallas, and his mother lives—she's still alive and still lives over in Dallas—and she met him at the airport and she said, "James are you sick?" He said, "Well no, mom, why do you ask?" She said, "Son I saw you on TV four time this summer and you quit every race." (laughs) You know, he'd run that half and just step off the track. And she said, "You quit every race; I figured you were sick or something." He said, "No mom, I did pretty good."

DS:

Yeah, I remember watching races like that where they have a pacer, and I'm such a—

GO:

They still do, still do.

DS:

And I'm such a competitive person, I say, Well how can someone agree to run themselves out?

GO:

There was one race where a guy was doing that, and I'm trying—it was some place over in Europe, and the guy kept going and won the race. I don't remember who that was. Well, I'll tell you, there was another kid that ran for Coach Kittley, a Kenyan kid, just a few years ago, and he's become—he's made a ton of money over there running the last couple of summers. And he never really ran very good for Coach Kittley, but he got real good after he left.

DS:

Yeah, well you know, for James—since he was a half-miler, it would have been hard for him to keep up that pace for the whole mile, wouldn't it?

GO:

Oh yeah, I know it. Yeah. James was—where he really turned the corner was during black heritage week they have here at Tech, which I think is coming up this next week or so, because Harry Belafonte is going to be here. And then another guy that somebody, one of the candidates mentioned just yesterday in one of those rallies—some man that's going to be here—gosh what is his name, he's going to be here this next week or so. You know Harry Belafonte is going to be here, and then this other guy—what is his name? I never heard of him before, and then I heard him mentioned twice during those campaign speeches up in Iowa this week. I don't remember if it was Trump or Rubio—it was a Republican, I'm pretty sure that mentioned this guy's name.

But anyway, that's beside the point. But they were having black history week, and Jesse Owens got invited to Tech to come and be a speaker, and so—well, that was a pretty big deal.

DS:

A living legend.

GO:

And George Scott, who was one of the dean of men—do you know who George Scott was?

DS:

Uh huh. He was in business administration too, wasn't he?

GO:

Yeah, and he came the same year I did in '69, and he had been the principal and head football coach at Dunbar High School. Graduated from Langston, up in Oklahoma. And George was a really good friend of mine, and he called me, he said, "Hey coach, Jesse Owens is coming. Would you like for me to bring him over to the track—talk to your track team." I said, "You've got to be kidding me—yeah, I sure—we'll be waiting. I'll have them waiting." And so he came on over, and I got to tell him about Mayes, I said, "I've really been having a little trouble with him because he played basketball this winter, and he's really not—he is just a fanatic on this basketball, but he doesn't have any future, and he has a great future in track." Well anyway, I just told that to him, well he got old Mayes off to the side, you know took him over there, and I didn't really prompt him to, I just was telling him about us, and I got this one kid that's really really, can be a good one. So he visited with him, and I mean it put the spark in James, and boy he started working out and working out. Later on that spring, we were at the Drake Relays, and they ran a special half—an invitational half, and Mayes was one of the entries in it. And at that time, they had dropped football at Drake University, and they did their homecoming during the Drake Relays, which is a big deal—they'd sell out 19,000 seats on both days of the Drake Relays. Well they have this parade down Main Street, there from the state capital on all the way down through town and there's about a quarter-million people there watching that parade that day. And Jesse Owens was the parade marshal, they brought him back because you know he had run twenty-five or thirty years before at the Drake Relays and you know was a hero. So he was—and he was riding on the back of a convertible, up on the back sitting up on the back seat, back there. And we were at the very end of the parade. And James and I were standing there watching, he had his Double T jacket on and everything, and as we go by, Jesse Owens looks over there and sees him. You know, we're in a massive crowd. And he says, "Hey James. You going to run the half tomorrow afternoon. Run a good race." I mean he picks him out of the crowd. He met him that one time here. I mean, that James was never, never another problem the whole time he was at Tech. He'd do ever workout I'd tell him to, just as hard as he could do it, to be a good runner, and he became a three time All-American. But just that little old spark of this great man

had inspired him, and he still talks about to this day, how Jesse Owens had inspired him. Well, it's kind of interesting because my father was a high jumper and he was in the '32 Olympic trials, which was held at Northwestern University that summer, and I still had a program, just a little old fold out deal that had all the athletes in there that were at the trials. And I still have it. Got it over in my office to this day. And Jesse Owens was in it, but he was a high school senior, and he didn't make the team, but his name's right in there, just four or five above my daddy. And I ran home and got that before—and had it there waiting when he got to the track. And I asked him if he'd sign that, and he said, "Oh yeah, I remember your daddy—he was a high jumper." And that was in 1932. And so he signed it up there, it says "To the good old days," or something, "Jesse Owens." And I still got that over there in my office.

DS:

So he had a heck of a memory, didn't he?

GO:

Oh it was amazing. He said, "Yeah I remember your dad, he was a high jumper, wasn't he?" I ought to bring that over—to show that to you.

DS:

I was going to say, you better give it to us someday.

GO:

Yeah.

DS:

If your family doesn't want that, will it to us. (laughs)

GO:

Yeah, nobody really knows I've got it. And I've had a souvenir program from '32 Olympics. It wasn't—it was just all about the Olympics and all the sites there in southern California. Somehow or other he had a copy of that, and I somehow or other I got those two things and kept them. And so—anyway, I've got them in my office. I was going to frame that thing, but I couldn't figure out how to do it to do both sides, because it's just one long page, you know, and so there's one, two—there's just four sides of it. And I hadn't figured out how to do that. But anyway, he was a great inspiration to Mayes, that was a great experience there for James.

DS:

Well when you get a legend like that telling you to—



GO:

Well we had an interesting trip to the—we had a really good two-mile relay team, and so I had Robert Lepard, who's a dentist in Muleshoe now—he was a Brownfield boy, and Greg Lautenslager, who's a coach in New Zealand now. And Greg was from Mesquite, and Mayes, and then we had a kid that I had recruited in New Mexico Junior College, a little Kenyan kid named Joseph Mutai. And we got invited to go to the, run the two mile relay at the Penn relays. And of course the Penn relays are the oldest relays in America, over one hundred years old. Well they had forty thousand show up on Saturday afternoon. And the coach up there was a good friend of mine, and he had gotten us—there was a dorm right there at the end of the stadium, I guess it's still there, and he put us up, gave us free rooms for three days there, if we'd come up there and run. And so I raised some money and we flew up there and we ran, and so we were going to fly out of Newark, and so I called my sister-in-law, who lived there in East Brunswick New Jersey, and when the meet was over, we got in the rent car, and drove up there to—and she had dinner for us, just waiting for us. And it was really a nice dinner, and then we left there, and went through Staten Island across the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, and I took them up through Brooklyn and everything, and then we went across the Brooklyn Bridge, and went down into the financial district, and they looked at the statue of liberty over there, and then we drove up there to Wall Street, and then I let them out down at the corner where Chinatown started, let them go through there at Chinatown and picked them up. And then we drove up, and I think we went over to—I think we went over to Yankee stadium. I let them look at—of course, it was from the outside. And then we came back over and came down through Harlem and through Central Park and then back down to—took them up the Empire State Building, this was all in the evening, this was night. And then we went downtown, I let them out on Broadway, and they walked all up and down Broadway, and it was—and then Eighth Avenue, which was really—between Eighth Avenue and Broadway, Forty-Second Street I believe it was, it was a sin city of the world, I believe, at that time. You know later on, Rudy Giuliani, you know—

DS:

Cleaned it up. Yeah.

GO:

Cleaned up Times Square and all that. But that was—anything you wanted to see or get on that street—I let them out, let them walk down there and everything. They, of course—

DS:

It was eye opening, huh?

GO:

Yeah, they really thought that was kind of neat, and they were around Times Square, and looked into some of the theaters. And one of the things they wanted to do—there was a place called

Studio 54, and Studio 54 was just a big—it was an old movie theater, big movie theater, and you went up inside, and they had taken out all the seats, and had a big flat floor out there, and then they danced up on the stage, what had been the big stage. And they're playing all this disco music and everything. But it had been in the news quite a bit, a lot of the movie stars went there and the celebrities and the politicians, and there was certain things that happened there that got a lot of national news, so everybody knew about Studio 54. Well, that's all they wanted—they wanted to go up there and see that. Well they just kept bugging me and bugging me. So after we went the top of the Empire State building and everything, well I took them up there, and we got there, and we parked up there on Eighth Avenue and got out and walked down there. You know there were all these big cars rolling up, and they had all these velvet ropes, you know hanging on these brass stands, and you had to walk through there, and then they'd let certain people in and kept certain people out. So we just got in line and we got up there and that guy said, "No, we don't have room for you." I said, "Look I've come all the way from Lubbock, Texas, and these guys want to see this." He said, "Well I tell you what—you tell that black kid that's got on that TT on his coat and that cowboy hat to take them off—you guys go down there and go through that parking lot and go around down the alley, and you just be waiting in that alley, and I'll send a guy back there to let you in. You pay him \$15 and he'll let you in." So we did that. We went down there, went down the alley, and there were some other people back there too. Well anyway, they let us in, and the other people, they just went on into the deal. Well we got in, and Mutai, the little Kenyan guy, he didn't come in the door. And I said, "Where's Mutai?" and they said, "Coach, he didn't come in." I said, "We can't leave him out there now." And so about that time, the old boy came running up, he said, "Hey get back out in the alley, the manager is on his way," so we got out, I said, "Well fellows, I believe they just conned us. Those old boys were making a little money on the side. We've been conned—I don't think they intend to let us in or not." Well about that time, the door opened, the guy said, "The manager's gone, come on in." and Mutai said, "Oh Coach, I'm not going in, I'm not going in that place." I said, "Well you go back to the car, and you stay there. Don't you move. This is not just the best neighborhood in the world. You stay right there at that car, and don't go anywhere else. We won't be in here too long, we'll be back." And so we went on, and we'd already given the guy \$15 a piece, and got in there, it was the wildest place I've ever seen in my life. I mean you could not believe the stuff going on in there. And you know, the kids were just—oh they couldn't believe it all. And of course, there's all these people dressed up in these crazy costumes, and some of them were on roller skates on that stage, and they're be-bopping and all this—I mean it was really some scene. And we stayed in there quite a while. The only guy that got to dance was Lautenslager, Lepard—they kept getting turned down, but Mayes—he got him a gal to go dance with, so he got up there on the stage and danced. And so anyway—we finally—they'd seen all they wanted to see, and we left and went back to the car, and Mutai was there and he said, "Oh coach, this is not a bad neighborhood. Everybody is so friendly to me. I had three ladies that came up and asked me if I wanted a date. They are so nice here. But I told them I couldn't leave the car." (laughs) Those guys were really teasing him about that—because yeah, they wanted money from you, Mutai.



DS:

So were they too worn out to run after that?

GO:

Oh we'd run that afternoon.

DS:

Oh you'd already run. Okay.

GO:

We'd been there since Thursday. So we stayed up going around town and everything. I think we went back down to Times Square after that, and they got out and walked around. And the theaters were letting out about that time. I remember Lautenslager saw a gal that was Peter Pan—let's see, what was her name? She was from Tyler Texas, and she was playing Peter Pan there at the Majestic Theater, and she was standing out at the back of the theater. You could see down that alley, and she was giving autographs, and he jumped out of the car and ran over and got an autograph from her. What was her name?

DS:

Wasn't Tanya Tucker, was it?

GO:

Who?

DS:

Tanya Tucker?

GO:

No, no, no.

DS:

Because she was from Tyler, wasn't she?

GO:

It was before her. What was that gal's name? Anyway, she had the lead in *Peter Pan*.

DS:

Oh okay.

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GO:

It was there on Broadway. But anyway, he ran out and got her autograph, then found us, and we were just—just let them walk on through time square and everything, and it was a pretty good adventure. Then finally when we got through, we went to Newark and to the airport. We found our exit gate, and they just slept on the floor until it was time to load the plane up. It was about five or six the next morning, so—

DS:

But you know, it's kind of like—isn't that what this whole thing that you're trying to do for these kids is, you know, expose them to the world, and you know—and it's kind of what the college experience is about.

GO:

They still talk about that. It's probably just the rules of the NCAA, they call it excessive entertainment, but—

DS:

Might be.

GO:

—but anyway, it was really a great experience for them because you know, I always thought it was crazy, you go on these trips, and you just go to the hotel and get ready for the game or the track meet or whatever it is, going and come back, and you don't see anything. I used to—when we'd go to El Paso to run in the El Paso Invitational, well we'd get sack lunches from the dining hall, and we'd leave and go to Carlsbad on the way to El Paso, and we'd go down into the canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, and they'd see all the caverns and take their sack lunch, and we'd eat down there at the bottom, down at the bottom of the caverns, and they'd look around, and then we'd catch the elevator and go back up and go onto El Paso. Always thought that was kind of a nice trip, and I like formed a—when we'd go to do something other than just the event, I mean if they ever had a chance to go some place maybe they'd never been, and I always thought that was kind of important. And they always, the one thing they'd say, they say, "Coach, you always know where the best eating places are. We always get to do that, you know." And so we—I remember one time we went to—we were going to Baylor I think for a meet, and we stopped in Strawn—have you ever heard to Strawn? And if you're on the interstate, you go past Cisco and Eastland and Ranger, go down Ranger hill, and it's about fourteen miles, you turn and go back up to—the rest of that town is Strawn, and there's this great eating place there at that time was called Flossies, and just people would come from all over to eat there, you know, this little old town of about a thousand, and so I'd called ahead—they'd make these great chicken fried steaks. Boy they were big old things, and so you know I'd set it up—told them to set it up for twenty-four people or however many we had, and we'd be there, and they'd have the baked potato and

the salad and the chicken fried steak. So we got down there. We drove off the highway and got down to the little old place, and all these big old cowboys, you know, with their cowboy hats and their blue jeans and everything were going in there to eat, and so anyway, one of the black kids—back there on about that fourth row behind me I heard him say, “Where is that crazy guy taking us to eat now?” And they said, “We’re not going in there. Look at all those old rough boys going in there and eat. Coach we’re not going in there. Man that’s a redneck place, man. You see all those guys going in there. We’re not going to go in there with those.” And all the white guys had already gone on in, and so I said, “Well, I’ve already go this ordered and paid for. Just suit yourself. Just stay out here and deal.” Well, when everyone get to eat, they all came in, they got in there and saw those chicken fries and said, “Man on man, we’d never seen—” And then what was funny was there was a pool table back in the kitchen, so a bunch of them were back there shooting pool in the kitchen. Now why a pool table was in the kitchen I don’t know, but—but anyway, they thought that was pretty daggone cool, and they—I said, “Well, next time I’ll get you the big steak,” and that thing was as big as that platter, those chicken fried steaks, but they thought that was pretty cool. But I never will forget that guy in the back, he said, “Where’s that crazy son of a gun taking us now to eat?”

DS:

You know, and you’re talking about, you know, these athletes of yours, and you know, back in basketball, you had just been the recruiter, and here you were their coach, so you got to know them even a lot more, didn’t you?

GO:

Oh gosh, yeah, yeah. Yeah it was—

DS:

What was it like competing in the Big Twelve in first basketball and then track?

GO:

Well, of course there wasn’t a Big Twelve, it was the Southwest Conference.

DS:

I mean, yeah, Southwest Conference.

GO:

Yeah, there was Arkansas, and Arkansas, they grew to have one of the best track programs in the country, and of course Texas is always good, A&M is always good, Rice had a terrific track program. Every one of the schools in the Southwest Conference had good—TCU probably had a budget not a whole lot better than mine, but he kind of specialized his sprinters and the sprint relay and was able to get a lot of kids from that Dallas area to come over there. And he always had—didn’t have a great team—but he always had—he’d go to nationals every year. And then

Baylor had a strong team, and the Aggies and Texas, of course, they had kids at every event. They'd get more kids to walk on, I mean they'd get walk-ons, guy's I'd offer scholarships to. A lot of the kids, even some of the kids out here in West Texas wouldn't want to run here, and they'd say, "We want to get out of this. We've been running in this wind and dust in the springtime for years, and we want to get out of here." There was a great kid at South Plains, went to North Texas, and he just told me, said, "I've had enough of this wind and dust to last me the rest of my life." And you know, sometimes you couldn't even get a kid from right here in Lubbock to come because they'd want to get away, but anyway—and frankly, we didn't have that great a reputation compared to Austin and A&M, and you know they had big time programs with all the money they needed to travel and do stuff. And those good guys, they want to go to big time meets, so it was tough, and I didn't have any assistants early on, and I finally got one, and we started having some really—he was a really good coach, Abe Brown, and he left me to go to A&M because he was getting a \$3,000 raise, and we wouldn't match it, and we lost a great coach because of that.

DS:

God \$3,000 nowadays.

GO:

Yeah, I mean he left. He had three kids, and one of them starting to college and everything and he thought that was a big amount of money. So you know, we lost him to A&M. And he was a really, really great coach. You know, he was a black guy that could communicate with kids and had great character, and we lost a great coach in him simply because we wouldn't give him a raise, and \$3,000 was nothing I didn't think. But they wouldn't match it, so—and I never did really recover from that because the guys I hired to replace him weren't in his league.

DS:

And I mean, track and field was probably ranking about fourth right, on the Tech campus at the time as far as level of support.

GO:

Oh, we—

DS:

Your track team.

GO:

I mean, I don't think they other spring sports had a lot of money either.

DS:

Yeah, because, yeah—Segrist talked about how hard it was sometimes too, Kal.

GO:

And Coach Kittley has done a marvelous job, and of course, he's got five assistants, and he spends as much money in one weekend as I would for the whole season, but that's the way it was going. I'm glad he—you know, just thrilled that he does because I think he's done a marvelous job.

DS:

How long did you coach?

GO:

Well, I was the track coach for about twenty years.

DS:

What were some of your successes that you remember?

GO:

Oh well, we—you know, we had some—well I'd say one of the better ones was our sprint relay, we got fourth in the nation behind—and set a school record which still is—even all the great teams we've had since then has not broken it, and that was in Indianapolis in let's see A&M won it and USC was second, TCU was third, and we were fourth, SMU was fifth, and Baylor was sixth, so five of the top six teams were from the—I mean, you know, we finished fourth in the nation, and we were fourth in the conference because SMU beat us in the conference. I mean, that's as good—in fact that year, seemed to me like thirteen of the eighteen events were won by Southwest Conference schools, Arkansas or—

DS:

That was some dominance.

GO:

Oh yeah, there was some great teams down here, and that was a great bunch of sprinters, they were really good, and you know, we had Tony Walton was a great athlete, he's three time All-American. Delroy Poyser was. Delroy was from Jamaica. He just went into the hall of fame this fall, in the Texas Tech Hall of Fame, and Delroy came from Jamaica, and I was in Chicago at an international prep meet that they held up there every summer. They'd invite kids from the Bahamas and Jamaica and Canada and of course in America and everything, and it was a big



time meet, it was sponsored by Keebler's Cookies, K-e-e-b-l-e-r, and Keebler, and I guess they're still in existence I don't know.

DS:

Yeah, I think they are.

GO:

But they sponsored it. They'd bring these kids in, they'd pay their way in, and Delroy was one of the guys they brought in from Jamaica, and he was a high jumper, seven-foot high jumper, so we were there two or three days before the meet, the kids would go out to the track and work out, and all the coaches would watch them and everything, and we were in the lobby of the hotel, and everybody had left. I think they had a bus that was taking them out, and Delroy came down late, and he didn't have any way to get over to the track, and so I just said, "Well, get in the car, and I'll give you a ride," and we were going over there, and I said, "Well, where are you going to college?" He said, "Well, I don't have any place to go. Nobody's contacted me. I'm down there in Jamaica at this little private school," and so I talked to him, and I had some catalogues with me and showed them to him and everything, and he wanted to be a dentist. So I, you know, talked to him and everything and he signed with me, and he never had been for a visit. We didn't bring him for a visit or anything. And so he came and he made all—and so he kept getting hurt, his ankle, you know, on that Fosbury Flop method where you get going and plant, kept turning his ankle, we weren't getting anything out of him all that freshman year, and so Abe Brown, my assistant, was really, really a great jump coach, and so he got Delroy over there and started him long jumping and triple jumping, and I mean he just took off right off the bat. He was about six-four, and most of it was legs, he had kind of a small body and long legs, and so next thing you know he's turned into a champion jumper, and then we wind up putting him on the relay, and he as a great relay guy. And I remember that third year, we were running in Oregon, we ran the prelims and won our heat—this was in the NCAA—and we beat Georgia, and they had the great Herschel Walker was their anchorman, you talk about a big guy coming down the track. Wow.

DS:

He was massive.

GO:

Oh he was. Boy he was a beautiful runner. We'd beaten them in the prelims, so we're in the finals of the NCAA, and we were leading, we had the greatest little kid named Stelloff [?], he was the best starter, quickest first leg in America, boy he was really something, and we handed off in the league, and then we dropped the daggone baton, and Georgia wound of winning that thing, and we'd beaten them in the prelims. But boy, Delroy could run that back stretch with those long legs, he was really something, and he wind up making All-American in the long and the triple jump. Then he graduated, got admitted to dental school, but he couldn't get a

government loan or anything because he was from Jamaica and he just couldn't finance it, so he went to—got a job at one of the local banks and got a master's, and he had a degree in chemistry, his undergraduate degree. And he got an MBA next year. I guess we were paying his way to school. We were still paying his way, I don't remember how that worked and he winded up getting a job in a bank, and he's vice president of a big bank over in the Dallas area now and married a Lubbock girl, got two beautiful daughters, and he was a really a—I thought a great story. But he was a tremendous kid. And then Thomas Shelmann [?] from Synder, he was a great long jumper and he played football one year and played baseball—three sport letterman. I've heard from Shellman, and I'm hoping that he'll get in the hall of fame one of these days. But I don't have as many success stories as Coach Kittley's had these last few years, I'll tell you. But we had some really—like I say, we had thirty-two All-Americans, had several pole vaulters and a high jumper. I remember one year we had seven guys qualify for nationals, and it was at Duke, and all seven of them made the All-American. We had a guy Rodrigo Zelaya from Chile, and he's a three-time All-American, the three years he competed, and he came here, and one of my great friends was head of the Peace Corps in Chile, and he just saw Rodrigo at a track meet, and so he got him interested in coming to go to college. He came the first semester, and he wasn't on scholarship or anything, he came on his own and took English courses and passed the test and got into Tech, and then he was a three-time All-American, and then got his MBA, he was in engineering, and then he got an MBA in business his last year, married one of our girl volleyball players, and he wound going to work for a cement company down in Houston, and now he owns the State Farm agency, and his daughter—his one daughter is going to be a senior, and everybody is going to want her in volleyball.

DS:

Oh really?

GO:

Yeah. His name is Rodrigo Zelaya, he was a terrific guy and stayed here in America and still going to—you know is doing real well, got those two daughters and got his own insurance agency, and he went to work for this guy, and the guy was—he did really and the guy retired and just gave him his agency, and so he's doing very well. That's always nice to see those guys. And Terrell Pendleton was an All-American in steeple chase. He's a dentist in Louisville. And Robert Lepard on that great two-mile relay team, he's a dentist up at Muleshoe now—I think I mentioned him a while ago, he was a Brownfield guy, and he's really doing well. You know, it's great to see those. Abe Shevel [?], my manager is really doing well. Ron Butler, Jr. who was the son of the guy I recruited Knolle from in Ranger, he came over, and he and Billy Clyde were on the same team playing for Coach Butler at Ranger.

DS:

Oh did they?



GO:

Yeah, and he said, "Well, you know, neither one of them were very good, but if we ever won a game, I wanted somebody I could hug." That was what Coach Butler said about that. At any rate, Ron came and then got out and went into banking, and he's now the president of First Financial Abilene which has got about fifty banks under them, and he's the president of that whole thing. And then another guy, Steve Beck, who was my manager is the head of all the Covenant hospitals satellite hospitals, and he was my manager for three or four years. Then Time Torres is a great coach over at Coronado now, and he was one of my managers, so those managers have all done pretty good.

DS:

Yeah they have. You know, and you're talking about, you know, that other aspect of the, you know, the managers and the coaches, so what about the coaches from the Southwest Conference? Can you talk about them and how you got along with them?

GO:

Oh yeah, you talk about a great fraternity of guys, I don't know if the coaches nowadays have the same kind of relationships with the other coaches. I think maybe they all make so much money they're afraid to be friends. But we had a great fraternity of guys that—Clyde Hart from Baylor who's still down there; he coaches their quarter milers still. I'm eighty, and he's got to be eighty-one, eighty-two, and he's still coaching and healthy and everything. And Tom Tellez at Houston who was not very friendly with the rest of the coaches but great coach, you know, he had Carl Lewis and all those guys. He had three or four Olympians and world champions under him, he was a great coach. John McDonnell at Arkansas won about thirty national championships, he's still a great friend of mine. He's a really terrific fellow, and Guy Shaw Thompson at TCU was—who's now dead was really a terrific guy. The coach at Texas, he didn't get along with a lot of the people in the conference, but he was a great friend of mine, Cleburne Price, and a great coach. Of course, anybody ought to be a good coach at Texas with all their resources. If you're not, you ought to get fired down there. And Charlie Thomas and Ted Nelson at A&M were just absolutely dream guys, and Charlie's dead now, and Ted's still one of my great friends. I went down to see him just a few weeks ago, and—

DS:

What do you all talk about?

GO:

Just you know all of our wild days of coaching and just different—he's just a great friend. And James Blackwood who was an assistant at Texas, in fact, he called me today, and was just—but

we really had a great group of guys that most of us were very friendly. The Rice coach was a great fellow, I loved him, Steve Strong, and you know it was a great fraternity of guys. The Oklahoma coach still one of my best friends in the world, J. D. Martin, great coach. The Kansas coach, Bob Timmons, who's now dead was terrific. DeLoss Dobbs who was the coach at K-State before he became athletic director at—

DS:

UT?

GO:

—at Texas. I wasn't a buddy of his. I wasn't a running buddy, just knew him, but one time I got a hurdler from Eastern Oklahoma Junior college, and he was trying to recruit him, and he had recruited his buddy from that junior college a year before that was running for him, so he kind of assumed that he was going to get that guy, and I had—the guy's coach was my best friend from college, and I kind of had an in on him. Then apparently this kind a year before really didn't like Coach Dobbs up there, and he told him, he said, "You don't want to come up here to K-State." But anyway, after I signed him, DeLoss called me and he accused me of getting him a car, and I said, "DeLoss if anybody around here is going to—I'm driving a '53 Ford—if anybody around here is going to get a car, it's going to be me." But years later, Rodney became the head coach at Oklahoma, and DeLoss Dobbs was the A.D. in charge of the liaison from the athletic directors, and he was in charge of track or just saw over it. You know, he'd just come to our meetings and stuff, and so he asked old Rodney, he said, "Rodney where'd you go to school?" And he said, "I went to Texas Tech." He said, "Well, he probably cheated to get you." You know, DeLoss just couldn't take that I'd beaten him on Rodney.

DS:

Well, you know, it's interesting, you mention the cheating, because, you know, in other sports around that era, in the Southwest Conference, they—SMU had their problems—

GO:

And maybe there might be a little of that going on right now too. There's still—Coach Knight and Coach Meyers and I were—that's interesting you bring that up—we were talking about that at lunch today, and Bob was telling us that Pat who's now the scout for the Indiana Pacers, of course, he goes around to all these colleges, and he said, "Dad, there's a bunch of stuff still going on with these big time college basketball players. I see it in my deal." So I don't know, I never—

DS:

So Bob's still in town?

GO:

Yeah, yeah, we had lunch with him today.

DS:

Wow. You've mentioned two of those three.

GO:

Oh okay.

DS:

Because there's Haskins, Knight and Vitale up there.

GO:

Yeah, yeah, old Vital came to town for one game and he and—let's see, who else was here that deal, we all went out to Fifty Yard Line, I got a room, one of those special rooms, and Coach Knight and his wife came, and I guess Coach Meyers came, and we had Yippy and Judy Rankin were with us. Do you know who Judy Rankin is?

DS:

Yeah.

GO:

And you know, she does TV, and she's a friend of all them's. So they were there, and we all went out and had dinner. I had to pick up Vitale at the airport, and he just is—goes just like he does on TV just the whole time we were driving out there. He was really, really funny. Boy, he just never stopped talking.

DS:

Is he a natural wit?

GO:

Well, he was very enthusiastic about everything, just like he is on TV. Old Musburger was the other guy. I guess they were doing, Vitale and Musburger were doing a game the next day, it was on national TV, and we all went out there and had dinner, and Vitale was—that's the only time I ever met him, but no he was a pretty interesting guy. And of course, Bob's a pretty interesting guy, too.

DS:

Yeah. So what is he—what is he like as a friend, as a—

GO:

Oh he's a—you know, Bob's a, you know, very—he dominates the table when he's at a table, you know, with his stories and everything. He always has a lot of them, but he's really been a good friend of mine, ever since I got here. He's really treated me nice. I mean, he called me this morning to find out where we're going to lunch. But he's told me that he's, between now and this summer, he's got, I think he said he had—that he'll go back to Montana, he's got a house there, he'll go back there in the spring. I think he's told me has thirteen different speeches he had to make. He's leaving tomorrow for Pasadena, then he's going to go back and speak in Indianapolis, then he's going to Houston, but he said, "I was looking at my schedule. I've got some speech to make every week of all the spring—"

DS:

Just staying busy.

GO:

And he said, "Then I go to Arizona with La Russa to spring training," and he said, "I'll spend a week or so out there watching the ball." He loves baseball, and he and Tony La Russa were great friends, and they've got a charity deal where they get dogs and give them to wounded veterans because they think—you know as a companion, they—I don't know exactly what the whole premise behind it is, but he and La Russa have a big charity where they raise money for that cause.

DS:

Wasn't he also like a fly fisherman or something like that?

GO:

Oh he is, yeah. He was talking about that today at noon. Yeah, he goes everywhere fly fishing. That's one of his big passions. Fishing, hunting, he doesn't hunt deer or anything like that, but he just hunts quail and dove and turkey. He doesn't ever hunt four-legged animals. He never does that. And then he just fishes all over, but doesn't ever keep them, he just throws them back in. But he's just a fanatic fisherman, and I don't have that much patience. But it'd be my luck, I'd go on one of those trips in Canada, and I'd get lost up there in the north woods or something.

DS:

Well, you know, and you mentioned Gerald also, what's it been like knowing Gerald all these years?

GO:

Well, he was a—you know, I was his assistant those years, and I mean he didn't have to keep me when he took over as head coach, and I've always really—see I was here with Coach Bass and

they promised—we had a full freshman team when I first came, and they had a graduate assistant that—or part-time guy—that taught over in the physical education department that was coaching the freshman team. Well, they had promised Bob they'd let him hire a third guy, and so the first game we played that year was against Houston Baptist, and Gerald was the head coach down there, and Bob wanted to visit with him because Polk Robison, the A.D., had coached Gerald and was really high on him, and he had recommended that Bob consider him, you know, he said he'd be a great guy to have out here, the connection to West Texas, and he was—Gerald was the first guy to ever make All Southwest Conference when we got in the league. He was the first All Southwest Conference performer in any sport that Tech had, so he's really a local hero. Then he did a great job coaching at Monterrey, so Polk really recommended him highly, and Bob didn't know him, you know, and that first game we were going to play them, so he wanted Gerald to come over to the hotel and visit, and Gerald was really uptight, he's such a great competitor. You know, he was concentrating on that team, that ballgame, he wanted to make a good showing against this team, and so Bob didn't really get to visit with him, and he wanted to. So at the end of the year, when the season was over, well they were starting the state playoffs and everything, and so I was going down to Houston to—I think to see William Johnson, that big left-handed kid that we eventually got. And so Bob said, "Look, you go out there to Houston Baptist and kind of hang around and visit with Gerald and let me know what you think about him and you know what his personality is and everything." And so one of my best friends from college was head of the drama department at Houston Baptist, and so I'd called him and we went out there and I went out there to see him and then I took him over and we got Gerald. But I used my excuse to be there with my friend Dr. Talley. So we—Gerald and I visited. He was going to some games that night too, and so we joined up at the game and then wound up spending about two days going around town to the regional high school games. And then on Saturday, the region, the western region or the state regional or something junior college tournament was being held at Amarillo at the civic center. So we flew back up here to Amarillo and went to that tournament, so I actually spent about three days with him, and so I just told Bob, I said, "Boy he loves basketball. He knows it. He's a hard worker. He's all basketball" So Bob called him later—I don't know whether it was that week or the next weekend—and invited him to come up and interview with him. And so Gerald gave up a head job to come to go with Bob, and he wanted to learn under Bob. So then thirteen games into the next year, Bob quits and goes back to the pros, and so Gerald takes over on Wednesday I guess, till they moved him up, and we didn't know we were going to get to stay. And of course I think back hard, he didn't have to keep me. He could have hired somebody else, so I'm indebted to him for that, so he took over, we went down to TCU, and I mean we played like dogs down there. Boy and I mean he was mad. We went in that dressing room and Gerald was letting them have it. He said, "Man, if we're going to go down, we're going to do it my way. You'd better get ready for workouts and stuff." And we wind up having—I think we finished third that spring. Of course, we had Knolle and Lowery, and they were really good players, and then the next year I brought in William Johnson and several of those other kids, and we had a good season, and I think we along there two or three seasons, we



won about twenty in a row. If we didn't, it was close to it. But Gerald was just, you know, he was an intense, intense competitor boy, and he worked man, he really, you know the scouting, looking at film, and getting the—doing things to get the team ready to attack their defense and for us to—our defense to attack their offense, and he was a great technician and a tireless worker. He'd get up in the middle of the night and watch films. One time his wife—and he had a little old—it was like a laundry room back in there, it was close to their master bedroom, and she said, "I'd wake up at night and I'd hear that film going [imitates projector noises]," just back and forth. Old Gerald's in there watching that film. He'd wake up in the middle of the night and be watching those films and studying them. She said, "Man I wish he'd move that room to the other side of the house so he wouldn't wake me up." But I mean that's how intense he was, boy, he was twenty-four hour a day basketball coach. And I mean he's serious minded during the season, and later, you know, after the season was over, he's a pretty relaxed. But boy, he was intense, and still is to this day.

DS:

Does he ever talk about moving from coaching to the athletic director?

GO:

Well, see he got fired as basketball coach. Well, they thought enough of him that they kept him over there, and they just moved him to like assistant A.D. He didn't really have much to do. T. Jones was the A.D. And he—and you know, he'd turned down Iowa State. I mean, he had the job. He probably could've gotten the OU job at one time when Billy Tubbs got it. I think he'd have really—he went up and interviewed, and I think if he'd have really, really pushed that, he could've had that one. But he turned down Iowa State. It was his job if he wanted it, and they've got a great, great basketball following at Iowa State. The guy that took his place, though—the guy at Michigan State. Anyway, they've got a statue of him up there as you go in the building, so he did pretty well up there. And the same thing could have happened, but Gerald loved Tech and he didn't want to leave Lubbock and he didn't want to leave Tech.

DS:

Yeah, I was going to ask you, did he ever say why he decided not to?

GO:

Well, Lorrie was a senior that year, that's his daughter, and she was going to come to Tech, and he just—he was prepared to come up here and take the job, and he said he was driving from his house to school and he got all sick thinking about it, and he just called them and told them he was staying at Tech because, you know, this was his school and his town, and he loved it. He probably would've—you know, sometimes you can go away and do better than you can at home, but Gerald is—he loved Tech then and he still does, and he still works hard for Tech as the athletic director emeritus. He still tries to raise money and do things for the athletic department.

DS:

And how about you? What made you stick around all these years?

GO:

Well, I need a job (laughs).

DS:

Do you still do color for the basketball team?

GO:

Oh no, no, I got fired from that. You know, after Coach Knight got out, they hired—got somebody else to do it. And I would probably have done it as long as he was coaching. But I, yeah I had a good time doing that. I guess they wanted somebody more technical.

DS:

How has the game changed over the years?

GO:

Well, I think it has changed definitely. And one of the changes is the three-point line. That changes the strategy of basketball up totally different. You know, and then the thirty second clock. You know, when I first started, well you could stand out there and hold that ball a long time, and you know, you're going to delay game. I remember when I was in college, and Coach Bass, that was one of his big things was to delay game. He'd get a lead, and he'd just sit on it, and I think a lot of coaches did that. Then they put that three point line in, and that changed up your strategy because I mean, you can change the game with a just a couple of trips down the floor, you know you can go—as we saw two weeks ago, we can go from a four point lead to a four point loss in fifty-four seconds, had a guy came down here and he hit two straight three pointers against us when we should've had that game won. Now if you could run a delay game, they'd have had to foul us or we could've had the ball, but when you can only hold it for thirty seconds, you now you're going to give it up.

DS:

And I think that just happened—Oklahoma's great guard did the same thing just on Saturday. He had two straight threes, put them back in.

GO:

Against LSU?

DS:

Yeah.

GO:

Well, he had a bunch of them against us, I can tell you. But it's a—and I think guys, we've got bigger—you know, in those days, if you had a big old guy, usually he was pretty slow, you know, and lumbering and everything. Now the big guys, they do it like guards where they can handle the ball and jump and run, and I don't know whether—I think maybe now you don't have as many guys that are fundamentally sound, but it seems like you've got a lot more better athletes than you had in those days. I mean, you know, you wouldn't have one guy hardly, two guys that could jump up and dunk it. Well, now the six-foot guys can run up and dunk it. I mean, it's a—you know, it's a different game than it was.

DS:

Do you think that, you know, and one thing we mentioned earlier on, you were talking about, you know, you'd go recruit at these playgrounds, and now it's not really playgrounds, it's leagues and summer leagues and stuff.

GO:

Oh yeah, you've got these summer leagues—

DS:

I think that's impacted it.

GO:

See now, you could go down there—I've been once or twice, I remember going down there a couple of years ago when Bubba Jennings was recruiting at that tournament that Mike Kuestat [?] has, and if Mike had the budget, he'll have sixty, seventy teams there. You just go from gym to gym just trying to see all these players. Well, when I was recruiting, I mean, you just, you'd maybe get to see one guy in a day, and you know, you'd go to the high school gyms, watch them work out, or go to a game. Well, now you can go to one of these tournaments and see seventy teams in one weekend or as many teams as you've got—you know, you can start early in the morning and go to late at night, and of course, all the other coaches are there too. But it's—I don't know, boy you had to really work hard, and you know when I was—I mean I guess you do now too because the good kids are always hard to get, I don't care who they are. And I don't think—I think in those days, you could find some kids that would go unseen. But now with all the tapes and the television—

DS:

All the technology.

GO:

And all this stuff, and the computers, and the—you know, now—

DS:

Everybody's doing their own highlight reel.

GO:

I can go over there and—okay so Rayford Young was one of our great players. Well Rayford Young's son, just yesterday in the Oklahoma City paper, I've got the article on the computer, in fact, I made a copy and gave it to Gerald this morning, and it's telling about him, he's just a junior, and he went and played in some league last summer in Virginia or somewhere, and he's being recruited by UCLA, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas Tech, Kentucky, Duke, those are just a few of the—Kansas. I mean all the—when you think about basketball, the blue blood schools are KU where the game was invented, or the guy that invented it coached there, and Kentucky and Duke, and then UCLA at one time, but those are some of the greatest schools in the country, you know like Texas in football or Alabama, and they're all wanting this kid. Well, you know, twenty-five years ago, the only schools that probably would've seen him were Oklahoma and Oklahoma State and maybe Kansas might, you know that's close to them, but now every school in America knows him. And I could go over there, get on the computer, and look at his highlights, the films that they have of him. I mean, I could find a trace, again, on the computer, I could do it right now, we could sit there. I saw the guard we've signed from Florida. I looked on there today, and it had all of his highlights from sophomore and his junior year. He's a senior now, but they have all these highlight deals for him, and you can just get on the computer and look at them, you don't have to drive a thousand miles or do like I did when I'd go to California. I remember one week, those junior college tournaments they have out there, they have one of the best—Chaffey down at Cucamonga, one at El Camino—they'd have all these junior college tournaments in like the first week in December, and everybody's going to go to these tournaments and get three games in on the weekend. And I remember seeing forty-eight teams play that week and just going from gym to gym to gym, going to Modesto and over to LA, and now you can get on the computer probably and see all those and never leave your office because it all gets put on these social media. And you can look up a guy—you know, I can get my phone right now and punch in and I could see guys' highlights. Well, you know, you'd have to beg to get a film of it, you know, a stick of 8 mm or 16 mm film. You look at the guy and everything, and you don't have to. You know, you don't have to go to seventy different schools, you could see them. But I saw forty-eight deals—games that weekend. And one of those other coaches said, "How come you don't write anything down?" You know, they'd be writing down all this stuff in their programs. I said, "Well, if I've got to write it down about a kid—"

DS:

He's not memorable.

GO:

—he ain't good enough for us. If I can't remember him to know who I want, he ain't good enough for us if I've got to write him down." And so—

DS:

And that's to the point.

GO:

Yeah. Well, I mean that's the way I felt. I knew who the good players were and where they were. But I mean, I can remember getting in the car—I remember one time I got in the car and drove and hit places from here to Tallahassee, Florida, over one ten day period or something. And one year, in December, I was home four days. I was on the road scouting.

DS:

That's got to be a rough life.

GO:

Well, it—you know, and I remember calling Gerald one time there was this big old kid that he wanted me to look at out in California, and I said, "I've got some good news, and I've got some bad news." He said, "Well, tell me the bad news first." I said, "Well, the kid is six-foot-ten, but he can't jump very well, he can't shoot very well, can't defend very well, and he can't run very well." He said, "Well, tell me the good news." I said, "The popcorn in the concession stand is the best I've had this year." He didn't think that was very funny. But you know, you just get up and go, and then if you could get them—if they were good enough, you'd try to get them to visit. You know, you got, there's not many of them you're going to get unless they come and look at your campus.

DS:

You know, and you're talking about the technology that we have today and how that makes it easier to see what somebody is doing now. Back then, you had to depend on your network of friends and coaches and all that. How long did it take to develop a really good network?

GO:

Oh it takes years, you know, to, but you get to where you know somebody and you can talk to them, and they'll tell you a good player.

DS:

Can you name a few of those guys that you counted on?



GO:

Well, I really—Ron Butler at Ranger was a great guy, and he's still a great friend of mine, I'm going to see him on Thursday. You know, he was a great guy that—one of the great coaches that we all admired, and you'd go over there, was Ralph Tasker at Hobbs who's one of the winningest high school coaches, you could always go over there and see some good players. You could ask him, he'd tell you, say, "Yeah, you know, Clovis has got a guy or—" and he was a great friend of ours. It wasn't early on, but when Rob Evans came, came over here to coach, well Rob had played at Hobbs, and we developed a great relationship with them, you know, through Rob. And I never could get a kid—I never could sign one from Hobbs. But after Rob got here, well we got inroads in there, Ralph became a great friend. You know, you had several of those—you got the guy at Eastern Oklahoma, a guy named Brown, Don Brown, and a friend of mine named Don Sumner I'd gone to college with at St. Gregory's. And both Dons told us about Greg Lowery who was playing at Oklahoma Military Academy. We went up and got him and Coach Brown at Eastern had this Sam Sebert [?] that we got that was a great player that didn't stay here, and that was one of the biggest upsets we ever had. I got Sam, he was a first-team All-American, he was about six-foot-eight, thin guy, but quick jumper, great jumper, and Sam came and he—and Bass was still here. That was his last semester, and we felt like with Sam we probably could win the conference. Well anyway, Sam had some other problems that more than basketball, I guess back home or something. Anyway, he wound up—he actually, he flunked out, but I think he was going to leave anyway. And he went to Kentucky State. Well they national NAIA the next two years, and he led the nation in rebounding in rebounds, twenty-one a game. Twenty-one rebounds a game.

DS:

Not a bad average.

GO:

And he's still a great friend of ours. He lives in Fort Worth. He married—he came back and married a girl that he met here at Tech, and there was a big kind of an engineering firm there in Fort Worth, got about fifty trucks. He does all this underground work, you know, for pipes and wiring and different stuff, and he's done really well, but he didn't really play for us but one semester. I remember the first game we played. In those days, they didn't keep blocked shots stats, and you know, they just—you know, like they did free throws and stuff. They just didn't keep a stat on blocked shots. And we played San Diego State in the opening game over here in the coliseum, and Sam blocked fourteen shots, and then he just, and of course he was a really terrific rebounder, but anyway, I think if he had not flunked out and left that Bob might not have gone back to the pros. But when Sam didn't make it, I guess Bob knew, you know, he had his chance to go back and make a little more money, and he left and went back to the pros and I don't think he would've if we'd have had Sam because we were probably going to win the conference. But that was a great guy was had that we lost and never—he never did have success

here at Tech because of—I think he could've been a great one. He's still around. We still see him, and I was with him at Marques Haynes, the great Globetrotter, was a great friend of a couple of us here in Lubbock because of George Scott who was our Dean of Men here. And George was the first black faculty member, or staff member, that Tech ever hired. Well, he and Marques had gone to college together at Langston and played football and basketball, so they were great friends.

DS:

I did not know that.

GO:

So we got to be great friends with Marques over the years, and he came out here to Lubbock quite a bit, and he loved Coach Knight, and he'd go come to the games, and you know, he'd come out three or four times a year, and so—but Sam was a great friend of Marcus', too, I think. Sam played for Kansas City before they moved to Sacramento. He was a first-round draft pick, and I don't know how long he played in the pros before he came back. But I was going to say, last time I saw him was at Marques' funeral in August. But, you know, we really had a—I wish Sam would've stayed because he was going to really be something before he graduated. And like I say, guy averages twenty-one rebounds a game.

DS:

Yeah, could've changed history a little here.

GO:

Yeah, he could've, but those are things that happen, and you know, and if Bob would've stayed, it might've been different. I don't know how much different it would've been. Bob would say he didn't like Lubbock and Tech as much as Coach Meyers did.

DS:

So were you involved with the basketball in any aspect when they brought in Bubba Jennings?

GO:

No, no, Rob was—Rob took my place from when I took over the track program, and Rob really recruited Bubba. I mean, he spent a lot of time in Clovis that year. Bubba had a lot of offers, could've gone to a lot of schools, and he choose to stay here thank goodness. But Bubba is another guy that loves Tech and loves Lubbock.

DS:

I just saw him—didn't talk to him—but I saw him walking into the First Pitch banquet the other day, last week.

GO:

Yeah. Yeah, he was a—I went to the Monterrey/Tascosa basketball game. I sat with him the other night, a week ago Friday. Tascosa's really got a good team this year.

DS:

Oh do they?

GO:

Yeah, they were 24-0 at that time. I guess—well, they were going—oh yeah, well I guess they, yeah, they beat Frenship Friday day, so right now they're—I think they play Coronado tomorrow night, and Coronado had a chance to beat them. I went to that game. Bubba was at that game when they played out here in town. Coronado's got a pretty good ball club too. And they got one kid, a Culver kid that's really a great player that's a junior I think Tech's interested in. His brother won high jump at Albuquerque last week for us, his older brother.

DS:

Oh. Does it help when you have somebody's sibling on your campuses? Does it help recruit them?

GO:

Well, I don't think it can hurt you. You certainly have an in there. That doesn't mean it's going to happen, but it sure helps, I'm telling you.

DS:

Gives you a leg up maybe.

GO:

Yep. Yep. I mean, anything that you can use to recruit anymore is good. And that doesn't mean that's it's always going to happen, that they're going to do it. There's a lot of little brothers don't want to go where their—you know, we—you know, Jeff Taylor's one of the greatest basketball players we ever had, and his, of course, Jeff lives in Sweden. And he sent his son back over here to live with his mother and play his senior year at Hobbs High, and we couldn't get him. He went to Vanderbilt. And here his daddy's in our hall of fame. You know, Jeff was a great player for us. But he didn't have any loyalties to us, just simply because he'd been in Sweden all those years, so it didn't help that his daddy played for us, and his uncle, you know, Vince Taylor. And then we had all those other Hobbs players because he knew no history of that because he—so it doesn't always work for you.

DS:

Yeah, Vince Taylor, that's another name.

GO:

Yeah, Vince, he's still coaching over there in Hobbs. He's a great guy, great kid. Boy he could jump, couldn't he?

DS:

Oh yeah.

GO:

Yeah. He and Jeff both could jump right out of the gym. And both great kids, great guys, good men. And that's a very good family.

DS:

And you know, when you were talking earlier about kids wanting—not staying local—it's kind of like when I interviewed Hadnot from the football team, and I asked him why Tech. He goes, "I wanted to get away, stay in Texas, but get away from—far enough away from Jasper that I wasn't going home every weekend because I was homesick."

GO:

And you know, Hadnot's still here, still around town.

DS:

Yeah, he is.

GO:

You know, he's a great girls softball fan. He goes to all the girls softball games.

DS:

I didn't know that.

GO:

Yeah, his daughter was a softball player, and he got interested in it, and you'll go out there to a game, and he'll be there.

DS:

I did not know that.

GO:

Yeah, and I like old Hadnot. I remember when he was in college, you'd say, "Hi James." He'd say, "All right." He'd always—no matter what you said to him, he'd say, "All right. All right." And that was a big joke around the athletic department because he'd always say that. He

wouldn't say hello. You know, he'd say, "All right. All right." That's what he'd say. We used to joke about that.

DS:

Well, you know, it's probably after five, do you need to be going home soon?

GO:

Oh is it?

DS:

Yeah.

GO:

I don't have any place to go. I didn't know it was that late.

DS:

Yeah. I heard the five o'clock warning a while ago.

GO:

Oh you did?

DS:

Yeah, we have a—because all our students have to get out at fifteen till five.

GO:

Oh they do?

DS:

Yeah.

GO:

Why is that?

DS:

It's because of a regulation that was put in places years ago.

GO:

Oh okay. I'd better get out of here.



DS:

For the—you're not the kids, but you know, it's—it makes it easier because we have supervisors throughout the building, and so if there's students in another area of the building, they want to make sure they're out. That way they don't have to go back and try to find them all.

GO:

Yeah. Well, I don't guess it'd be good to lock somebody in here at night in a museum, would it?

DS:

Exactly.

GO:

Yeah. Well, I hope I told you something that was interesting.

DS:

Well, I think you did, and if you ever want to drop by again, just let me know and we'll—

GO:

Yeah, I mean I don't know if any of that is stuff you can use.

***End of Recording***

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