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## An Interview with Brad Rothermel

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

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The UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV  
University Libraries

University of Nevada Las Vegas

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The Oral History Research Center at UNLV – University Libraries

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The transcripts received minimal editing. These measures include the elimination of fragments, false starts, and repetitions in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the material. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the narrator.

The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project. Additional transcripts may be found under that series title.

Claytee D. White, Project Director  
Director, Oral History Research Center  
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## Table of Contents

Personal history and professional background; coming to UNLV, 1981; background on applying to UNLV; PhD studies in exercise physiology; responsibilities of athletic director; athletic programs at UNLV today; mention of Runnin' Rebels and NCAA; description of UNLV in 1981; discussion of budget for intercollegiate athletics; mention of boosters like Brian Greenspun, John Woodrum, the Boyds, the Gaughn and Herbst families.....	1-8
Mention of UNLV president Leonard "Pat" Goodall, Bill "Wildcat" Morris, John Unrue, Jerry Tarkanian, Tony Knap, Irwin Molasky...all in reference to search committee for athletic director; comments on Jerry Tarkanian and men's basketball program; mention of Bob Maxson (president of UNLV, '84 to '94); short history of NCAA sanctions on Tarkanian's basketball program; comments on Tarkanian as friend, colleague, and coach; comments on other coaches; academic and physical demands on players.....	9-18
Baseball program at UNLV; comments on and memories of Coach "Chub" Drakulich; recognition of women's sports, specifically Coach Regina Miller and women's basketball; women's track and Coach Al McDaniels; retirement in 1990 and return to UNLV to create master's program in athletic administration; mention of successive administrators Dennis Finfrock, Fred Albrecht, Jim Weaver, Charlie Cavagnaro, John Robinson and Mike Hamrick; most memorable moments as athletic director; traveling with teams and average workweek; comments on daughters, grandson, former football star Randall Cunningham, current responsibilities in development, fundraising and the community.....	19-22
Opinions on the university's role in community and interaction with gaming; mention of wife's role as teacher (44 years) and social supporter; comments on Jim Reitz, swimming coach, and his wife Nina, swimming teacher; Barry Bartoe, soccer coach; Dwaine Knight, golf coach; Freddie Dallimore, head baseball coach; opinions on funding and success of athletic programs; more family history: meeting wife Suzanne, birth of daughters Beth and Christy, their education and professional status.....	23-27
Further lengthy comments on average day as athletic director; explanation of UNLV's affiliation with athletic conferences: PC-2A, Big West, Western Athletic, and Mountain West; mention of President Carol Harter; comments and opinions on football at UNLV; cannon rivalry between UNR and UNLV; comparing athletics at UNR to those at UNLV; fundraising for Athletic Academic Complex; mention of John Gallagher, director of UNLV Foundation; further comments on Carol Harter as strong supporter of funding for athletic programs.....	28-34

## Preface

Dr. Brad Rothermel gives a brief introduction to his childhood days in Monroe Center, Illinois. He was born into a family of educators, so it was natural that he completed a Bachelor's, a Master's, and finally a doctorate. He attended Northern Illinois University in De Kalb for his undergraduate degree and the University of Illinois for his Master's and PhD.

Dr. Rothermel's work history before arriving at UNLV in 1981 includes coaching in the Chicago Cubs organization and stints at Kansas State and West Virginia University as athletic director and business manager. He describes how he came to apply at UNLV and comments at length on the responsibilities of an athletic director.

Brad goes into minute detail discussing the history of the athletic programs at UNLV. His memories of coaches, players, and memorable wins are as compelling as his descriptions of fundraising, an average day as athletic director, and outstanding figures in the UNLV sports scene.

After retiring in 1990, Brad's association with UNLV sports did not end, but rather evolved into consulting, developing, and fundraising. He and his wife Suzanne continue to enjoy and appreciate their involvement with community, the university, and their children and grandchildren.

**This is Claytee White. And I'm with Brad Rothermel. It is July 31st, 2006. And we are in the Thomas & Mack Center in the athletic department portion.**

**So tell me how you're doing today.**

I'm doing well, Claytee. Good to see you. And I look forward to the interview.

**Well, great. Great. We're just going to start out -- I'm going to let you tell me where you grew up and what that place was like.**

Okay. I was born in Monroe Center, Illinois, which is Northern Illinois about 30 miles south of the Wisconsin border in the middle street west of Chicago about, oh, 90 miles from downtown Chicago.

**So cold?**

Cold certainly in the wintertime. No question about that. We get a lot of winter there.

I was born into an educator's family. My father was a high school and grade school coach and principal and superintendent at different times. So I've been around education in one form or another almost all of my life.

I had one older sister. We were educated in the Monroe Center School District and both went on to school.

I did my undergraduate work at Northern Illinois University in De Kalb and graduated from there in 1960. I had a brief stay in professional baseball as a participant. Then I coached for two years in the Chicago Cub organization. Simultaneously with that, I had gone to the University of Illinois to work on my master's degree, which I completed in 1961, and my doctorate in February of 1965.

**So I'm speaking with Doctor Brad Rothermel.**

Brad does just fine, you know.

**This is wonderful.**

And I spent almost all of my life, other than a brief period of time in professional athletics, in higher education in one particular position or another, mostly associated with intercollegiate athletics across the country.

From Illinois, we moved to Kansas. And I was assistant athletic director at Kansas State University and business manager for the athletic department. From there, we moved to West

Virginia University where I was an associate athletic director and business manager. Then January 1st of 1981, I came to UNLV as the athletic director.

**Okay. Now, tell me what a business manager is.**

Essentially, you oversee or monitor the expenditures of the athletic program and make certain that you're at least reasonably close to what your budgeted expenses were for the year. And, of course, you can make some adjustments in that, depending upon your sources of income, as the year goes by. But it's an extraordinarily important position in the athletic department. I feel it's the best preparation to become an athletic director. So I'm glad I had that background.

But, again, I had grown up -- I had spent a lot of time in different businesses in any career. And so I was not unfamiliar with the role of the business manager generally, specifically in athletics. I had quite a bit of experience in that area.

**How big is your town that you grew up in?**

Well, it's 300 people. In fact, Claytee, in a little over a week, I'm going back to my 50th high school class reunion. Sixteen students in my high school graduating class.

**That is wonderful.**

And many of them I haven't seen for 50 years. So I'm really looking forward to it.

**So do you think everybody will be coming back, all 16?**

Well, no, because some of them have passed now. So I think of those who are still alive -- I think the last time I talked to the chairman of the committee or chairperson of the committee, she said there were probably eight of us. So half the class will be back, four girls and four boys.

**Oh, this is exciting.**

Yeah. Oh, yeah, absolutely. It's been since the tenth reunion, so it's been 40 years, since I've seen any of them. And, as I said, I haven't seen some of them for 50 years. So looking forward to going back and seeing how everybody's doing.

**That's great. Tell me what kind of work your sister does.**

Well, my sister passed away two years ago. She was a housewife. They lived on a farm outside of Monroe Center. Her husband worked as a foreman in a factory in Rockford, Illinois.

**I grew up on a farm. I grew up in a small town in North Carolina. So this sounds so familiar to me.**

Not probably this small.

**No. When you said 300, I'm shocked because my town is 5,000 and I thought that was tiny. Sure.**

**Okay. So now 1981, you are here in Las Vegas. How did you hear about this job? How did you go about applying for it?**

Well, I had wanted to be an athletic director -- in 1965 when I completed my doctorate, I made a decision in my life that what I wanted to be was an NCAA Division I athletic director. So I always stayed very close to the literature to see what positions were available.

I had visited Las Vegas to come to a national convention one time and had driven out to the campus, which, of course, is now much, much larger than it was 25, 26 years ago. But I always saw -- UNLV's position as athletic director I thought had a lot of potential. One of the reasons, there's a lot of money here. And the question is: Can you kind of attach your program to the community?

And we were able to do that very successfully during my period here, principally because of the great success of men's basketball under Jerry Tarkanian. I mean they literally became internationally famous in the basketball program. And, of course, we had phenomenal support from the community during that period of time.

Of course, one of my challenges now as I came back with Athletic Director Mike Hamrick is to see what we could do to move it back in the direction of where we were now 15, 16 years ago when Coach Tarkanian was separated from the institution.

**Right. Tell me about your Ph.D. studies. Which field?**

My doctorate is in exercise physiology from the College of Applied Human Life Sciences at the University of Illinois. For my study, I administered a battery of 128 fitness tests to 38 major league baseball players. It was a wonderful study because it was closely associated with my background and I really enjoyed doing it. So it was a great experience. I was in spring training with the Chicago Cubs for two years, 1963 and 1964.

**Wow. So now, tell me about what it means to be an athletic director. Most of us don't know. We know what coaches are.**

Yeah. Actually, the main responsible of the athletic director is to hire and hopefully not fire, but



that's also one of the responsibilities, the coaching staff, as well as the support staff. When I was the athletic director here, we had about 70 full-time employees, including the coaches and the coaching staff and the support people. And the support people I'm talking about are the individuals like the business manager, who helps monitor the expenditures and development people who help create the revenues for you, and then, of course, a large training staff, a large staff of athletic academic advisors, who spend time advising the student athletes in your program.

Our student athletic base now is a little larger. We're about 450 now. When I was the athletic director, we had about 350 student athletes in our program, both males and females. We had 14 programs at that point, seven for men and seven for women.

**How many programs do we have today?**

Seventeen. We've added three on the women's side since I left. But we were very competitive nationally in virtually all those programs during my tenure here. And one of the reasons was that basketball was doing such a terrific job of generating excess revenues that I could move those revenues in support of the other programs.

**Oh, that's good.**

So we became very, very competitive. See, we were number one in the nation at different times in men's basketball, in soccer, men's soccer, and in golf, men's golf. And we were as high as two in women's basketball. So, nationally, our programs -- in fact, we were top-20 rated in all of our programs at one time or another save one.

**Wow. That's astounding to me. We heard a little about golf and we knew about basketball, but we don't know about the other -- tell me what the other sports are that we're involved in here at UNLV.**

Okay. On the men's side, it was baseball, basketball, football, golf, soccer, swimming and tennis. And on the women's side, it was indoor and outdoor track and cross-country, basketball, softball, tennis, golf and volleyball.

**So we don't have track for men?**

We did have track for men when I came. But we were about three-quarters of a million dollars in debt in the athletic program when I arrived, which goes back to the question you asked about how I found out about UNLV. UNLV had four athletic directors in a total of 13 months. Well, when

you're aware of that and you see that, you know that there are obviously some challenges that aren't being met there.

And that's one of the things that attracted me. I wanted to go to a place that wasn't necessarily already well established athletically because I thought if I came in and creatively was able to do a good job, then we had an opportunity to do something that had never been done here previously.

And, as I said, it worked out well for us. It was a grand era. And I think if you ask most people in this community what they remember best about UNLV, they'll say the men's athletic program, the women's athletics program and, specifically of course, men's basketball during the late 70s, 80s and early 90s.

**Even today when I tell people that I work at UNLV, the first thing they say if I'm in another city, if I'm in Baltimore, wherever I am, they say, "The Runnin' Rebels."**

Yeah, Runnin' Rebels. Yeah, it was a famous time. And I think probably if you look at it as a social phenomenon, Claytee, I think the success of men's basketball during that period of time united this community in a way it had never been previously and, quite honestly, has not been since.

**That's right. Explain to me what the NCAA is, what it does, what it means to just the general person.**

Okay. The National Collegiate Athletic Association, which is now housed in Indianapolis, Indiana, was previously for years in Kansas City, Kansas, but now about ten years ago moved to Indianapolis. Essentially, it's a collection of the member institutions; that is, principally now about 1200 institutions of higher learning in the country, and essentially monitors -- creates the policies and procedures for the administration of athletic programs in institutions of higher learning and then monitors carefully whether or not schools are adhering rigorously to the rules.

**Okay. So now, no matter what size my school is, I'm a part of this if I have an athletic program?**

Well, you can be. It's a volunteer organization. So there are some other options available to you. But for the most part, all of the major universities in the country belong to the NCAA. There are some smaller institutions and some church-affiliated institutions that have their own organization. But for the most part, most of the institutions of higher learning are associated with the NCAA.

**Okay. 1981, tell me what UNLV looked like.**

Well, obviously, we were a much smaller campus than we are now. There was certainly a lot of green on the campus then available for buildings, which almost all of which the green now has disappeared. In fact, for the most part, we're kind of land-locked now as an institution.

The year I arrived, Claytee, I think there were 7800 students at UNLV and now it's approaching 30,000. So there's been extraordinary growth on campus. We were still kind of in the throes -- although technically we had separated from University of Nevada Reno in 1968, we were then known as Nevada Southern. Prior to that, we had been the Southern Regional Branch of the University of Nevada. So we were still kind of moving in the direction of our own autonomy, totally our own autonomy, which we are now with the exception of the fact that we're governed by the same board of regents, the northern school, the southern school, plus all the other community colleges and now Henderson State -- or maybe that's Nevada State of Henderson.

Anyway, so we were much smaller. Certainly not the same size overall university budget as we have now. The same thing is true in athletics, our budget for intercollegiate athletics. The year I arrived here, it was two and three-quarters million and it's about 23 million this year. So we're essentially ten times the size in terms of our athletic budget as we were then.

**So where does all of that money come from? It sounds like a lot of money to me.**

Well, it is a lot of money. That's also changed over the years. When I arrived, about 10 percent of our budget was provided by the university and we were responsible for creating 90 percent, which we created either in the form of contributions from interested patrons or gate receipts. And, of course, gate receipts were a big part of what we were able to do then. And, again, it was the success of basketball that helped give us the kinds of resources that were necessary to be competitive nationally. Now that's about 80 percent from the state and 20 percent self-generated.

**That's not bad.**

No, no. 80/20. If I had had that kind of model when I came here, as I've told people, we would really have put it over the top. But we were highly, highly dependent upon men's basketball success because each year when you went to the NCAA basketball tournament for men, you would receive 250,000 per game that you played. And during that ten-year period that I was with Coach Tarkanian here, the last eight years we went to the NCAA tournament and played at least

one game. In most cases, we played three, four or five games. So we were creating another million and a half to two million dollars a year through our participation in the NCAA tournament.

That model has now changed significantly. But the institution itself has become much more engaged financially in the support of the athletic program, which I find to be very healthy as opposed to the other way where you're spending most of your time trying to get into the community, although we were so successful that getting into the community to raise funds was not a major challenge. There were a lot of people who wanted to relate to UNLV in some way.

We were very small in terms of our graduates. I think we had fewer than 5,000 graduates when I came here. And I don't know what it is now, but it's significantly higher than that. And generally speaking when you raise funds, your alumni group tends to be the strongest boosters of our program. We had strong alumni, but we didn't have any alumni. So they were people that we called adopted alumni, who lived in the community, many of whom had gone to other institutions of higher learning and then moved here but were very supportive of the kinds of things that we were trying to do here athletically.

**Is there anybody in that group that you think would be a great person to interview as part of our history of UNLV? I had not thought about interviewing some boosters. Is there anybody that comes to mind?**

Well, you should. I would say somebody like Brian Greenspun. They've always been very, very supportive of our program. John Woodrum, who just recently sold the Klondike hotel. John was very, very instrumental.

**We just interviewed him.**

Did you really?

**Because the Klondike was closing.**

That's right. That's exactly right.

**So that's a part of history. So we did interview him. But that's great.**

Sure. I mean people of that ilk. And the industry, the gaming industry has shifted some. Most of the gaming industry, the major properties were owned by people who lived here locally. Now it's much more corporate in terms of who owns them.

Another group that's been intricately involved in our program are the Boyds, Sam Boyd, Bill's

father. Bill's now the president, of course, of Boyd Gaming. His father, Sam, who's passed way now, but the football stadium is named after Sam because of a major contribution that he made to the program. And, of course, they've been in town.

The Gaughn family, the Herbst family. Those families have been very, very supportive historically of what we tried to do at UNLV, as well as many other families. But those are just a few.

**Right. I appreciate that.**

You're welcome.

**Now, the president at the time that you came was Goodall.**

Yep, Leonard "Pat" Goodall.

**Yes. What was your relationship like with him?**

**And when you're interviewing for an athletic director, who's on your search committee?**

Well, I had kind of an unusually sized search committee. There were 19 individuals on the selection committee when I was selected here, consisting of university academic, university staff, community patrons and coaches. Normally, selection committees are not that large for any position simply because, for those of us who served as chair, it's very difficult to be able to get a group of 19, regardless of what they're doing, together at any one particular time. But the key coaches on the selection committee were Jerry Tarkanian and Tony Knap, who was at that time our head football coach and later retired from that position, Irwin Molasky and a gentleman by the name of Bill "Wildcat" Morris, who was famous for his support of athletics over the years. Bill's now passed away.

**I like that name.**

Bill "Wildcat" Morris. Our practice football field is named after bill. And those were four key people on the committee. And, of course, at that time John Unrue, who's still on campus, I think at that time he was acting what we now call provost. I think then we called him the vice president for academic affairs or something of that nature. So there were academics. A representative from the board of regents was on the selection committee. So kind of a broad-based group of individuals...

And, of course, they study your background. My advantage in having an opportunity to get

this position, there were a couple -- Pat Goodall happened to be pursuing his doctorate at Illinois the same time I was. I didn't know him. Pat's Ph.D. is in political science. And one of my close friends was taking a doctorate in political science at Illinois at the same time. So I had somebody who knew Pat. That helped me.

Richard Harp, who is a professor of English and still here, his father had been the head basketball coach at University of Kansas when Wilt Chamberlain played there. And he and one of my close friends in intercollegiate athletics, Fred "Tex" Winter, and Dick Harp's dad were very close personal friends.

So I had ways to, you know, get my name in and have people kind of seriously look at what my resume was, which I had hoped because I was prepared in my own mind to be the athletic director. Of course, you encounter some challenges here that you wouldn't necessarily get prepared to do unless you were here to meet those challenges.

We had some disruption in our program. But for the most part, the ten years, one of the reasons that I believe we were successful was we were able to keep continuity in our program. Most of the major university officials in our athletic department were the same when I left as they were when I came. So we didn't constantly have to kind of reinvent the wheel. You know what I mean? The business manager, the ticket manager, for the most part all of the head coaches with the exception of the football coach and most of the major what some people call junior level, although I don't necessarily like to call them that, but nevertheless, they remained for the most part intact, which meant that every year, as I said, we didn't have to go back and reinvent the wheel.

**Good. Before you arrived there was already some controversy with the basketball coach. How did that play into your interviews?**

Well, of course, I knew of Jerry Tarkanian's success. Like many people, I had heard of UNLV because of Jerry Tarkanian and the men's basketball program. And that was actually when I was associate athletic director at West Virginia. UNLV was recognizing its first national success in basketball. UNLV played in the men's NCAA basketball tournament Final Four in 1977.

So I was aware of Coach Tarkanian. I was also aware of some of the conflict that he'd been having with the NCAA. But his number one assistant, Tim Grigurich, who later became the head coach here, was the head coach at University of Pittsburgh when I was at West Virginia

University. And, of course, they were our archrivals and I knew Tim through that process. Tim had moved out here six months before I did to become Jerry Tarkanian's number-one assistant, and it was Tim who introduced me to Coach Tarkanian.

I knew Coach was having some problems with the NCAA. Curiously enough though, Coach continued to have some problems with the NCAA, but our institution really didn't. He just happened to be here. But for the most part, our institution had a very good relationship with the NCAA.

**Okay. It's a great thing that it's a small world, isn't it?**

It sure is.

**Because just listening to all the connections and people you knew and how they knew each other...**

Sure.

**That's wonderful.**

Yeah, it's a small fraternity, the intercollegiate athletics. And if you spend very much time in it like I did and a lot of other people, over the years you just get to know a lot of people. And you either know them directly or you know somebody who knows them. So...

**The next president of the university, of course, was Maxson, '84 to '94. So ten years.**

Right.

**Well known, well liked in the community, especially in the beginning. How was his relationship with the athletic department?**

Well, it would depend upon with whom you deal. In my particular case, it wasn't a warm relationship because I felt he had one agenda item with respect to the intercollegiate athletic program and that was to see what he could do to separate Jerry Tarkanian from the institution. One of my objectives was to see what I could do to keep Jerry Tarkanian as the head of basketball. So we were at loggerheads really from the very beginning when he arrived.

And, again, I think it's fair to say for the most part he was really non-supportive of what we were attempting to do athletically. We related all right personally, but professionally we were clearly at odds as to what his interest was in the athletic program and what mine was.

**The last question about the controversy and we'll talk about other parts of Tarkanian's**

**life -- there was a court order that he was not to be suspended. The NCAA wanted him to be suspended. The courts said no. So there was an impasse there for a long time. Why did the courts get involved? How did the courts get involved? And how valid was their opinion, their ruling?**

Well, again, all of that principally took place before I arrived. But nevertheless, of course, I studied it and read it. And it really was never finalized probably technically until well after I was the athletic director. In fact, the university served sanctions for the original NCAA concerns that occurred in the mid 70s. The final stage of that sanction was for the 1991-92 men's basketball team to not be able to participate in the NCAA tournament, which they did not. And that was the year that we were 27 and 2. So we probably would have had -- and we had been -- of course, we had won the championship in '90. We had finished in the semifinals; lost to Duke in '91. So our '91-92 team may not have been quite as strong as those two immediately preceding but still were good enough that everyone on that team at one time or another played in the NBA, had some stay in the NBA. So we were going to be a very good team in '91-92, but we served out the sanction by missing the tournament.

**Whose decision was it that you miss the tournament that year?**

Well, we had to. The NCAA had declared we would miss it in '90-91, but we were defending champions. So the institution appealed to delay that for one year and that essentially kind of concluded UNLV's challenges with the NCAA regarding that issue.

Now, Coach Tarkanian went on for some time with some additional concerns with the NCAA. **Probably one of the worst decisions of the Carter Administration is that he didn't let our athletes go to the Olympics because of a problem that we were having internationally. And I think that was probably one of the many things that caused his downfall. So we sometimes forget how important sports really are.**

Well, in our society, in American society -- and, in fact, I think it's fair to say we're kind of a microcosm here of American society -- there isn't, if you look at the community collectively even today, a single thing that is as important as the success of our men's basketball and maybe to a little lesser extent -- well, certainly to a lesser extent -- men's football. I mean people still see UNLV and kind of measure UNLV's success based on the success of those two programs, which



for those who have been around an institution recognize there are a lot of ways to judge the success of the institution. But for the average person on the street, that's what they hear and see and discuss.

**Right. I know that we're coming close to being a Research One institution. We're getting lots of federal grants now. But you're right; for the person on the street, that's what's important.**

**Tell me about what you see right now will happen in our basketball this season. What kind of team do we have shaping up?**

We'll be improved. Over the last two years, we've been 17 and 14 and 17 and 13. And I believe we'll return to the NCAA tournament, postseason tournament, which consists of 65 teams, and I believe we'll be one of the 65 this year. I don't think that's undue pressure on Coach Kruger and his team. I just think we have advanced to the place where we're capable of doing that now. And I think, quite honestly, it's something that maybe the community demands or certainly the community expects us to do this year.

**That's right. Tell me what kind of coach Tark was, why he was so successful, why people just enjoyed him so much.**

Well, my assessment of him -- I've been asked this question a lot of times -- I think what his great strength was in some ways was also his weakness, which isn't untrue of other people. I mean he was totally myopic in his relationship to basketball as the center of his life. And I think that's the one reason he was as successful as he was, but it's also one of the reasons why not many other things made much of a difference to him in his life. And it was some of those other things that he got caught up in and ultimately he was separated from the institution.

But to give you an example and support my story, I many times, of course, was with Coach Tarkanian, and still am. We're good friends and we still talk on a regular basis. But when you'd go through an airport with Coach Tarkanian, the first thing he would do when he went to the newsstands was pick up a newspaper. The first thing he did after that was throw away every section except for the sports section. And then if there weren't basketball articles in the sports section, he'd throw the sports section away. I mean that's how committed he was to basketball in his life, literally.

I think if you talk to any members of his family, the family's activities were focused around Jerry's job as an intercollegiate basketball coach and all it entailed. Of course, I think that was one of the reasons why he was very successful at what he did. He had very few distractions. He just wouldn't permit any.

**There are probably, I would say, two other coaches -- the coach who used to be at Georgetown and the one who used to be in Kansas -- that got the kind of publicity that Tark got. Tell me some stories about him. Tell me why people loved him. I mean what is it about him that the players loved, the community loved? What are some of the stories that you tell people?**

Well, he would tell these same stories. He was born in Euclid, Ohio. His father died when he was quite young in life. And his mother moved the family to Pasadena, California, because she could get a job. Coach Tarkanian came from very humble beginnings. He called himself kind of a "white ghetto" person. He grew up in a tough area, tough neighborhood, even though it was in Pasadena. He was a street kid. He said many times if it hadn't been for athletics, he has no idea what would have happened to him because he himself was an athlete and he ran with athletes and went to college on a scholarship at Fresno State.

But I think that one of the things that I always appreciated about him is he really always had a fundamental understanding of the value of a dollar. I mean he did in his own personal life. He did in the way he managed his budget when it came to his athletic budget.

And I think one of the things he also did quite well is that he penetrated the black community. He had a lot of great black friends and a lot of great black players because he played black players long before most other people were playing them. I mean Jerry's junior college teams were regularly principally black in the 60s. And then, of course, in the 70s when he came here, we had a lot of great talent, especially a lot of great black talent. So he was always very well known in the black community.

And, of course, his success as a basketball coach kind of paralleled the involvement of black athletes, especially black ghetto athletes, in the success of basketball in our country. So he always had a very close and warm relationship. In fact, he was a leader in basketball over the years because he was a terrific player. Bill Walton once said that during Jerry's regime here we might

not be able to create or to effectively entice the white athletes to come to UNLV, although we had some very good white athletes at UNLV in basketball, but literally every black high school player who was a very good player wanted to know what he could do to come to UNLV to play. So he had this warm relationship with the black community and the black players.

In addition to that, he always had a feeling for individuals who may need a second chance. He was very good at giving a second chance to student athletes that may have gone somewhere else and had a problem of some nature. So, in fact, people have dubbed him the "Father Flanagan of NCAA Basketball" because he looked for that opportunity. As he said, if it hadn't broken a little differently for him in his life, he would have needed some of those second chances, you know.

**Tell me about some of your other coaches. Golf was well known, surprisingly so, here on this campus, but it doesn't get the publicity of basketball even when the basketball team is not winning. What is it like to be a coach on other teams here on campus?**

Well, of course, I never coached on campus, but I spent a lot of time with the coaches on campus. To give you a brief history of our program, Michael "Chub" Drakulich, who unfortunately passed away a couple of years ago, in 1958 was our first men's basketball coach. He was our first baseball coach. He was our first golf coach. And he was our first athletic director. Plus, under his administration as athletic director, the Olympic sports and the women's athletic activities really began to emerge. But "Chub" was our first and only golf coach until after I was here in 1987 when he told me he'd like to step down as the golf coach and I said, "Only if you chair the committee to find your replacement," which he did.

And Coach Knight is our second golf coach and still is here. He will have been here 20 years after next year. And we won the National Championship I think in 1998. Coach Knight is our golf coach.

So I think generally speaking, though, the popularity of collegiate golf on most campuses, even with quality programs, isn't the same as it is in either football or men's basketball simply because it doesn't command the same kind of interest in the community on a broad base, although we've had some terrific male golfers here. We have had many playing on the tour, very successfully.

And, of course, Coach Knight has a lot to do with that. He was a successful golfer on the tour himself. He's done a remarkable job here as the head golf coach.

**Tell me about football over your tenure.**

Well, we had the most success over my tenure as football coach at the Division I level. Our most notable players, of course, were Randall Cunningham and "Ickey" Woods. We had many other fine players.

We have never been as competitive nationally in men's football as we were in basketball. And one of the reasons is that we've never been able to fund it at the same level. Our funding for men's basketball has been and continues to be at really the upper echelon of the NCAA schools. And we've been about midrange and maybe even a little lower than that in terms of the financial support for football. It's much more expensive to operate a football program than it is a men's basketball program. And that's part of the reason why we've had less success, in my judgment.

**That's right, because you've got more equipment and you have just more of everything in football.**

More players, more scholarship costs, more recruiting costs, more operational expenses. Yeah, more everything.

The men's basketball budget this year is about two and a half million, and football's about three times that much. It's about seven and a half million, which, again, by Tennessee or Michigan or SC standards is not very competitive.

**But still...**

But still it's significantly greater than it is -- yeah, and just because of the massive numbers of individuals, including coaches and personnel that you need to manage the team.

**So a football team needs how many coaches?**

Well, I think the NCAA probably has a total of about 12 now, plus the head coach, if you include individuals like video coaches. I mean there's a broad base of -- and, of course, we have one full-time, maybe two full-time academic advisors for football as opposed to one in basketball.

**So how does that work, to have the person who does, what, tutoring?**

Yeah, essentially kind of establishing what their academic schedules are or assist the academic community in establishing them and then making sure that you monitor the fact that student athletes are attending classes and are doing their work in a timely manner and doing at least well enough to maintain eligibility.

**Sometimes I teach a history class here on campus. And it's amazing to me the amount of time it takes to be an athlete. I mean it's just astounding. How can they possibly keep up with the work? And do you have tutors or someone traveling with the teams?**

We do. Every one of our student athletes has what we consider an athletic academic advisor, not individually, but collectively, not only in football, but in all of our other programs. Yeah, I think, generally speaking, probably as an athlete during the course of the competitive season, they spend five hours a day maybe as an athlete. And, of course, that diminishes some during the off-season. But now there's hardly any off-season. I mean they go right from competition to getting prepared for spring football. And then spring football is over and then they get ready for their summer programs. And they do their summer programs and go back right into fall practice. So it's...

**Now, what is a summer program? What does that mean?**

Well, basically we call it -- you know, it's non-supervised conditioning, which means that, of course, the coaches can't be there to supervise, but strength coaches can be.

**So is that an NCAA rule?**

Yeah, coaches can't be involved during the summer period. But the athletes know that, in order to be competitive both individually and collectively, they need to be here to do what's required.

**So they actually have to be on campus almost year-round?**

Yep. And one of the things we have done is we've tried to incorporate some summer schoolwork academically into the program. So that aids them towards requirements they need for graduation.

**Good. How do they live? I guess most of them are on scholarships. So the scholarship goes year-round?**

And that takes care of really -- no. Well, there are some that get scholarships in the summertime. But also many of them will get jobs, part-time jobs, in the summertime because, again, the demand of their activity is not quite as it is during the course of the regular season. But, you know, it's a full-time post.

**It really is.**

There's no doubt about that.

**Ooh. You worked in baseball at one point and that was your love at one time. And this is as American as apple pie. So tell me about baseball here.**

Well, we've had some success in our program generally over the years, probably a little less successfully the last few years, although we've still been competitive in it. We've had many players who came out of our program and played in the big leagues. And I would say, if you look at the success of our program, baseball has probably been the third most successful program we've had behind men's basketball and now golf.

Again, we've had excellent facilities. We have one advantage here over most of the country in that we have very good weather for baseball. I mean our winters really aren't. We can play baseball outside year-round here, which obviously is an advantage over the schools in the North and the Northeast. If you look in the history, although this year Oregon State won the men's baseball championship, generally speaking, most of the champions have come from either the southern tier or the Southwest or the western sector of the United States. Again, that's a major factor -- the weather.

**Tell me about the personality of Coach "Chub." And the reason I'm asking is because I interviewed a person who was given a second chance by him, a very, very successful businessperson here in Las Vegas, probably because of that coach.**

Well, "Chub" was here at a time -- I mean we started the program literally on a shoestring. Early on most of our student athletes were on no financial aid of any kind. So you just basically had to borrow from a lot of different people the equipment that was necessary to operate the program.

"Chub" was a wonderful person. I had nothing but a warm relationship with him. As I said, he was many things to our program. Last year we honored him by having a mosaic of him on the third level of this facility, on the concourse of the basketball facility. It's a big picture of him and his successes here.

He had been a very good athlete himself. He had a really good feel for the importance of a coach understanding his athletes. He was a second-chance person, again. He was an individual who believed that maybe some things had gone wrong in your past, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it had to adversely affect your future. I think if you talked to most people about "Chub" Drakulich who remember him being around here, they would remember him as a wonderful person.

**We've talked about the men's teams. Tell me about some of the women's sports. And I want**

**to talk about track, also. I always see that as an exciting sport to me. And I want to start with women's basketball and the current coach of women's basketball. So tell me about that program and what our women's teams -- what kind of expectations you have.**

Okay. Women's basketball began here -- of course, Title IX, the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, generated a lot of women's programs across the country. And our first successful program here, a very successful national program, was in men's and women's basketball. In the late 70s, we were significantly competitive nationally throughout the 80s and into the early 90s. And then women's basketball kind of fell on hard times here. But we're now moving it back into a level where I think we'll get some recognition now nationally, not quite to the same extent as we had in the late 70s or the 80s.

I think Regina Miller, the coach, has done a nice job. And I didn't hire Regina. Regina came after I was the athletic director here, after I had retired from the athletic directorship. But I know her well and I've worked with her. And she's doing a very fine job in that program. And I think we have an opportunity to return it to the same success nationally as we did.

You had mentioned track. We had, and maybe still do have, more all-Americans in the sport of women's track than we do in any of our other programs, including men's basketball. We had terrific track teams in the late 70s and throughout the 80s and early 90s when Coach Al McDaniels, who now is retired, was our head track coach. We had very, very quality -- one of our first national individual championships in track came in 1984. But we had competitive teams throughout the 80s.

**(End side 1, tape 1.)**

**So people in high school that know track, women, would think "UNLV"?**

Well, it's been some time. We're talking now 15 years, 14 years since Al was that track coach. But certainly in the late 70s and throughout the 80s, especially individual... Al McDaniels was himself a sprinter in college. And we had terrific success with our sport-distance people, our sprinters and hurdlers in track. I think anybody who was looking for a place to go where you were having success with your sprinters, certainly UNLV would have been considered at or near the top of the list.

**Now you're retired. Tell me how long you were the athletic director and why you decided to**

**retire.**

Well, I was the athletic director technically from January 1st of 1981 to December 31st of 1990 to the day, ten years. And the reason that I decided to retire was I no longer wanted to be involved in a conflict situation between the president and the basketball coach. I knew for sure that that was not a conflict I could win and because I had been in an academic environment previous to this, I had tenure. So I could move from my athletic position to a position on the academic side of campus, and I spent ten more years at that.

**And tell me about that. What did you do?**

Well, I specifically came back to create a program at the master's degree level in athletic administration. So, basically, I was involved in teaching athletic administration courses in the College of Education in educational leadership. I am involved still in some ways academically. I speak almost every year to courses that are athletic-administration related and enjoy that. But nevertheless, I was asked to kind of create a master's degree program in that area. And the name of that has changed and some of the philosophy behind it has changed over the last six years since I retired. But nevertheless, it was still basically that program when I left.

**So then you were here until 2000?**

Actually, yeah. December 31st of 1999.

**Wow. You do these things to the tee, don't you?**

Right.

**Okay. So you retired from that. So you had 20 years at UNLV. And now we're interviewing you here in the Thomas & Mack. So how did that happen? How did you get back?**

Well, one of the first individuals I hired when I came here was an individual who was finishing his master's degree in athletic administration at Ohio University. And I had known his father when I was at West Virginia University. His name is Mike Hamrick. He's now our athletic director. And I asked Mike to come out here and join our staff, which he did, in 1981.

And then I followed Mike's career after he left here. And when he came back as the athletic director, now three years ago, he invited me to come back and see what I could do to get kind of what I'll call the "Tarkanian Group," the boosters that were here during the Tarkanian era, many of



whom had dropped out of the program for one reason or another, see what I could do to encourage some of them to come back and then help him with special fundraising projects. And I'm doing that as a special consultant to him on a part-time basis.

**Okay, great. Now, who was the athletic director between you and Hamrick?**

Well, we had several. To articulate them, Dennis Finfrock replaced me. After Dennis resigned, we had Fred Albrecht, who is still involved in the university in the Alumni Association as an interim AD. And then Jim Weaver replaced Fred. And then Fred again became the interim between Jim Weaver and Charlie Cavagnaro. And then after Charlie Cavagnaro, there was John Robinson and then Mike Hamrick. So quite a few...

**Wow. Okay. As the athletic director, what do you consider to be the most memorable -- some of the most memorable moments?**

Well, you'd have to say that the National Championship on April 2nd of 1990 was the single most memorable moment, although, you know, I remember many things. I mean I remember the successes of some of our other less visible programs, for instance, men's soccer, which was pretty much an intramural program when I arrived. We went to number one in the nation in 1984, examples like that. Of course, the first ever Division I bowl championship, California Bowl, in 19 --

**What kind of championship?**

California Bowl.

**Bowl? Oh, yes, okay.**

Yeah, we won a bowl game. That's when Randall Cunningham was a senior. And, of course, that was a highlight and probably in some ways still may be considered one of the highlights.

BYU, which traditionally had a very strong program in football -- our win over BYU in 1981. They were number eight in the country and won 33 straight games. And we went to BYU and beat them, which was probably Coach Knap's finest hour as a head football coach. That was a very big win for us.

Winning championships both in men's and women's basketball in the conference tournament for the first time ever. No other school had ever done that. I don't think any school has yet done it again. And to win it in both men's and women's the same evening...

And we went to the Final Eight in women's softball for the first time, College World Series, under my administration.

**So you have lots and lots and lots.**

Oh, it's terrific. We have had really outstanding successes, if not for individuals, at least also team successes, in every one of our programs during that period.

**Did you ever travel with the team?**

I always did. I always travel. You know it's difficult simultaneously to travel with more than one. But, yeah, I would travel with our teams always to championships. But I tried to be at as many events as I could. If there was a local event, I would rarely miss it when I was here regardless of what the activity.

**So then for an athletic director, your time is never your own. I mean you are working night and day.**

My average workweek was a little over a hundred hours a week for ten years.

**What does that do to your family?**

Well, my wife's father was a professional baseball player. So she was a bit familiar. We have two daughters. I think if you'd ask them, almost every memory that they have of growing up centered around some kind of UNLV athletic event.

**Are they athletes, your two daughters?**

Both were in high school; neither is now. Our older daughter, Beth, who is 38 now, works as a billing director in Las Vegas Skin & Cancer. And our younger daughter, Christine, is a pediatrician. She works in the pediatric emergency area at University Medical Center. And she's married to a doctor. And a year and one week ago today, they presented us our first grandson. So Luke is the center of a lot of things that are going on now.

**Oh, I can imagine.**

Sure.

**So do you want him to be a basketball player or a football player?**

Well, I'd like him to be healthy. And then if he'd like to compete, certainly -- David's father, my son-in-law's father -- he's actually fifth in a line of doctors; so they've always had a lot of doctors in their background -- and not necessarily competitive athletically, but competitive in other ways.

And I'd like for whatever Luke decides to do that he would be competitive at it.

**That's great. Right now you're doing some fundraising again and some other things for the athletic programs here. Do you ever use any of the former athletes to help in those areas?**

We do.

**Now, someone told me that Randall Cunningham still lives here.**

Randall lives here.

**Is he still active?**

Very active, very actively involved with our football program. Randall's been very successful. Obviously, he was a very successful athlete and has been very successful as a businessperson in the community. I don't see Randall much during the summertime. But he attends almost all of our home football games and has done very well and has been very supportive of the athletic program, as well as the football program.

**I think I have asked some of my major questions.**

**What is it like to be back now after being the athletic director and now you're back sort of in a voluntary -- not really -- part-time position? What is that like? Is it still good to be around sports?**

Well, absolutely. I mean I've been associated with it in some way nearly my whole life. So I think it's almost a need I have to be associated with it.

My responsibilities are different now. I principally am involved on the development side. I don't have to be concerned really about monitoring budgets and things of that nature. So I'm very much less involved on a day-to-day basis in the operation, which is fine for me because I had many years of that. So I don't need that.

I certainly rely, in terms of my fundraising, on many individuals in the community who were intricately involved when I was the athletic director and some to a lesser degree now. But we've been very successful with our interaction with people in the community. As I said, many people, some of who are alums and many of whom are what I consider adopted alums, they have been the backbone, really, of the success financially of our athletic program over the years.

**So are you finding that you're having success in bringing some of those donors back that were here at one point?**

Absolutely. And a lot of that is because many of them would like to see it return to the levels where we once were and we're all hopeful that we can do that. But, yeah, UNLV is an important organization in this community. It has been for years and continues to be.

**What do you see as the role of a university like this in a town like Las Vegas? I mean Las Vegas is different from any other place.**

I think that's fair to say. It's unique. Yeah, I mean there is nowhere like Las Vegas. One of the nice features about being from here is you have to deal occasionally with what people's images are of Las Vegas. By the same token, nowhere do you go when you say that you're from Las Vegas and people not have some kind of feel, at least in their own mind, of what that means.

**That's right.**

But, again, in some senses we've kind of grown up here with the community. Many people have done very, very well here financially and have been very strong supporters of the university, even though as I said many of them did not attend the university. But they see it as an integral part of what the community is here.

**What does gaming mean to a university like this and specifically to an athletic program like this?**

Well, I don't think anybody would disagree that certainly in the state it's the single biggest entity, gaming and hotel. And, of course, most of our revenues are generated, even if they're public revenues, from the success of gaming and hotel here. So without that industry, there really wouldn't be a Las Vegas.

I mean we've had the success we've had because of the successes -- I think it's difficult for most people to believe that you could be kind of a one-industry state, which we're not that, but historically we've been kind of viewed as that, that with one industry such as gaming, you could be successful in being able to manage an entire state financially. Sometimes we catch criticism for that. But if you're here, you recognize that without it there wouldn't be a Las Vegas, for the most part, and there might not be much of a Nevada.

**That's right.**

So you live with it. You know, the Mafia I think probably was considered in the late 70s more of an impact organization than it is now. But my position always was, you know, if individuals are

prepared to give you money, I'm going to be very reluctant not to accept that money for our programs because of how they generated it.

But it's a wonderful community. It's a wonderful institution. There's no question about the fact that Las Vegas itself is unique. And I think from that standpoint in some senses UNLV is unique. **Yes. I really appreciate this. These are the kinds of things I wanted to learn about the athletic department. I come back tomorrow to interview another person here, in athletics. And you've given me a lot of material.**

Well, we've had a wonderful 25 years here, Claytee. It's been terrific. Oh, we've had our challenges. But, you know, it's like life anywhere. You have your challenges, you know. But for the most part, I have found the people here to be giving people, wonderful people.

Most people wouldn't believe that there is the community of Las Vegas outside of the Strip. Of course, most of our people are involved in gaming. Many of them work in the hotels and casinos and not necessarily the highly visible people, just a lot of people go in there every day and work like the people in West Virginia did in the mines or the people in Kansas did in the fields. I mean this is just where they work.

**Did your wife work?**

She was a teacher. Retired after 44 years last year. Twenty-five years here as a primary schoolteacher. Yeah, she continued to work, as well as help raise the family, as well as getting involved in outside activities, as well as being very actively involved when I was the -- more than any other wife I think of an athletic director, she was involved in kind of the day-to-day things, not necessarily in terms of the decision making, but in terms of keeping the women's spirits up.

**Really? How did she go about that, helping with that?**

Well, we would regularly have social events at our house that involved just the women, the spouses, not necessarily the men coaches. And I think many of the women in the community in this department still look as those days as some of the best they ever had.

**So she was like the "First Lady of the Athletic Department."**

Yeah, she was. And she enjoyed that role. Again, as I said earlier, we had continuity because we had people that were stable in our program. Our program was stable. So many years, she would usually have at least two and sometimes three and four luncheons at our house. Many of the

women still look at those as the finest time. They would be there and talk women things and families. It was a very strong unifying force in our program.

We had very, very few internal conflicts. I mean we normally could work through those things before they became major issues. And a lot of that was because the families were strong families.

The Reitz family -- in fact, Jim Reitz is our swimming coach. He's been here since 1980 was his first year. My first decision when I came here in terms of a staff was I had to make a decision a week after I came whether we retained him or terminated him. And I moved to retain him. I said, "I want to make the judgment, but I've got to have more time." Of course, the rest is history. He's been a very successful coach here in swimming, men's and women's.

I just talked to Jim. We're going to need to build a new facility here for swimming. And Jim's wife is recognized internationally as a great teacher of small children for swimming. She's a very good swimmer.

**Oh, really? I need to meet her. I don't know how to swim.**

Don't you?

No.

Oh, you should talk to her. Nina Reitz is recognized. R-e-i-t-z, Nina Reitz is her name. Our girls both learned to swim when they were between one and two years of age. And we're going to take Lucas over and have him start lessons with Nina now because she's as good as there is at the business.

So the Reitz are strong family friends. We watched their family grow up. They've watched our kids grow up. And most of the coaches I had -- I mean Barry Bartoe just resigned last year.

**Now, what is his last name again?**

Bartoe, B-a-r-t-o-e. He was a soccer coach. I hired Barry in '82. I hired Dwaine Knight, our golf coach, in '88. So now there aren't nearly as many left. But over the years we had coaches who were here literally for years. Jerry, of course, was the head basketball coach for 20 years. Freddie Dallimore was the head baseball coach for 25 or 26 years. So we had great coaches with great longevity who had very strong successes in the program.

**So the coaches today, do you see them as getting close and being a cohesive team, as well?**

I think in my judgment there's less of that now than there was because we -- well, financially

because of basketball's success, we were really able to help every program to a level where the budget wasn't such a central issue. So much of the time you don't have the money to do it. Well, we had the money to do it then. And our lacks of successes athletically were not due to the fact that we didn't have the financing to do it. And, of course, as a coach, if you have the freedom to know that whatever you need to have in your program you can get as opposed to feeling all the time that you're just way under budgeted -- I mean I think that's true regardless of whether you're a coach or anything else. If you always feel like you're short on finances, it's difficult to do the kind of job you'd like to do. I don't know how it is in your area, but my guess is you could -- pardon?

**Always.**

Always, you're always looking for funds. I mean you're always -- and we always were looking for funds here, as we were then. The difference was, because of men's basketball success, we were creating the funds. So I mean everybody recognized kind of a symbiotic relationship with men's basketball. We were totally dependent, or almost, upon its success, but we were being successful. So...

**I like the idea of your wife's role. That's wonderful. And I'm so glad you included that.**

**Where did the family live over the years? When you first moved here in '81, what area?**

Well, actually, Suzanne and I are both from the same area in Illinois. We met in high school. She was a cheerleader for our archrivals, a team that I enjoyed beating more than almost any other one. And her dad was just finishing his baseball career when I was starting mine as an adult. And so I knew him. He was a very good player. And I knew him as a player. And then Suzanne and I began dating in 1958 and were married in '63.

Our girls -- the first one was born in Urbana, Illinois, when we were at the University of Illinois. And our second was born in Elmhurst, Illinois, when we were -- actually, she was a month old when we moved to Kansas. So they grew up in a number of different schools and a number of different locations. Beth, our oldest, went to Kansas State, graduated from Kansas State. She has an MBA now from Boise State. But she lives here. And Christy has her work at UCLA and graduated from there and is from there in medical school and lives here.

So they all stay here. And this is where Lucas arrived. This is where our grandchildren will be. So this is where we'll be. But I've lived here, Claytee -- we've lived here longer than I've ever

lived anywhere else.

**That's right.**

Over 26 years now.

**So tell me about your role in the community. Now, when you were athletic director, you probably didn't have a whole lot of time for anything else in the community.**

But I had speaking engagements if not every day, especially when we were really clicking, you know, I would do two or three Rotary Clubs or Kiwanis Clubs or something because there was such an intense interest. You know what I mean? People wanted to feel like they kind of had the inside dope, you know, on what it was.

My average day at UNLV when I was the athletic director -- I had to be here by 6:00 in the morning and do some work. Especially here you could always call East because, you know, schools there were open three hours ahead of us. So you could do work with the people in the East. Our conference offices were in the West in Irvine, California, Southern California.

So I'd get here early. I wanted to be here when the staff started to arrive. And I tried to get around to the clerical staff people. They would usually be here by quarter to eight or eight o'clock. So I'd take a tour of the facilities and just kind of see how things were going for them. If they had any challenges or any problems, we tried to deal with them. And the coaches typically started coming in around nine. So I'd spend time with them, usually until about 11. And then I'd usually go someplace for a speaking engagement and be back -- or with the boosters, you know, to try and generate revenue -- try to get back by 1:00 or 1:30.

And every day if I could I'd try to get to some team's practice at about three and do that from three to four or 4:30 and then come back and, again, check in with the staff and see how things were going. And then the coaches would come back to practice normally about five. So I'd have a chance to visit with them after their practices.

Then I would run the concourse of this building. I'd try to go up by about six and get a run in and shower and get home by around seven, 7:30, unless there was an event. If we had a home event, then I would go to that and the family would normally come and join me for that.

**Good. That's great.**

So that was just kind of the way it went for me. I tried to be hands-on. I tried to be available. I



think it's critical when you're administering any program that you be available to your staff regardless of what it is. I mean people have to know that you're in it with them, you know.

**Yes, right. Now, when you used the word "conference," explain that to me. Explain what it means about the conference we're in.**

Well, at that time when I came, we were an independent. We weren't affiliated with a conference. But there's a lot of problem in scheduling unless you're conference-affiliated. So that was one of my first thrusts, when I became the athletic director, was to get us into a conference. We joined what was then called the Pacific Coast Athletic Association. It was a group of ten schools, most all from California. The only non-California schools were UNLV, Utah State and New Mexico State. The other seven were all California schools; some University of California schools, some Cal State schools.

Basically, it's a group of individuals who have essentially the same kind of commitment to the athletic programs. None of us would have been considered big-time because none of us had what you would consider dominant football programs. Basketball was clearly the focal point of the conference, men's basketball. But we were always one of the conferences, really, that took a lead in women's activities. We were very, very competitive in our programs nationally on the women's side.

**So when you're in a conference, all of the teams are in that conference?**

That's it; all seven. All ten institutions had their athletics programs administered --

**The entire program.**

-- which in the conference is kind of a step from between the NCAA and a member institution. You're all kind of organized around a focal point, which for us was geographical. But it was also kind of in terms of the financial commitment. Most schools were similarly committed to what they expected. And we all had an idea that we weren't ever going to be great schools in football. I mean we just didn't have the resources to do it. We had some terrific individual players. But none of those schools -- in fact, most of are now out of the sport of football and don't participate in football like California Irvine, California Santa Barbara, Cal State Fullerton, Cal State Long Beach and Cal State Northridge. They're all out of football.

**It's just too expensive.**

Too expensive, yeah. Can't afford to do it. Too many expenses related to the revenue that you could generate.

But spring sports were terrific basically because we had terrific weather in all the schools, in our women's track and softball programs, volley programs. And we regularly competed for the National Championships in those sports, in women's track and --

**Now, we changed conferences, right?**

Well, we changed conferences from the PC-2A -- the same conference changed its name to the Big West. We were actually the Big West conference when we won the National Championship, but it was the same schools. We changed to Big West because we have an opportunity to be the featured game on Monday night ESPN. ESPN will do a nine o'clock ESPN game, which was 12 in the East. But it was the Big West.

That's how we gained even more notoriety because we won the conference every year we were in it when I was here in the Coach Tarkanian basketball program. But it was changed after that when UNLV moved once again to the Western Athletic Conference, in which it was located for three years. And then that conference had 16 teams, and they dissolved into what now is the Mountain West. I'd say we've been seven years now in the Mountain West or something like that.

**Okay. That was a change that Dr. Harter made?**

Yes.

**Uh-huh, under her.**

And, again, more organized around a football model than a basketball or any other model. This is considered to be kind of a football league, although for me we'll never be an SC, we'll never be a PAC-10. We just don't have the resources to do it. And I don't see that we ever will, Claytee. And for people in this community, we will probably forever be considered a basketball school.

**Right. So now, is this the best conference for us?**

Well, some people would argue that it is. I wouldn't argue that. But some people would argue that it is. I would say that we would have had -- now the Big West Conference no longer has a football component. So if we were going to continue to play football, which we are I think, we'd have to stay where we are. We don't have another option at this point.

**Do you see us staying in football for a long time?**

Yes.

**Okay, good.**

I think that decision was probably made about 20 years ago, that we would try to make a go in football. But, again, we need to be very cautious in how we're scheduling football. I mean there's no reason for us to play the University of Michigan in football, because I can tell you before we go that they're better. And we can't do anything about that.

We have pretty much done -- there are 12 scheduled football games now. We have nine member institutions. So you play eight games in football in the conference and you have four non-conference games. We're required to play UNR every year by regent mandate. So that leaves us three non-conference games. And what we try to do is schedule down a little bit, at least two of those. Like this year our non-conference games are against Idaho State as our opener. And there's some conversation about the fact that we shouldn't be playing Idaho State because generally they're not strong enough.

**I see. But we need that for our self-esteem, right?**

Yeah, absolutely. You need to win occasionally.

**That's right.**

And then we play at Iowa State, which would be considered certainly an upgrade. And then we play at Hawaii, which traditionally has been a very good opponent for us because their program has been comparable to ours. We play them also in men's basketball, both home and away. But for a while they were in our league.

**Okay. Still with the Big West?**

Pardon? They were in the Big West. They were in the Big West in their women's program. They were one of the initial members of the Big West Conference.

**Okay. So do we play in Hawaii?**

We do in football this year and men's basketball. We also play them here in men's basketball.

**How do you get to be a person that goes with the team to chaperon the girls?**

Well, there would be a lot of people that might want to do that.

**That's right.**

You know, we'll take boosters on a trip, individuals who regularly contribute the most money to

the program in one form or another. And we always have some room for guests on our trips. Again, it's kind of the big-hitters who get those tickets.

**Tell me about the cannon.**

Cannon? Okay. Cannon is named the Fremont Cannon after John Fremont, who was a frontiersman in Nevada. He was also the first Republican candidate for President of the United States in 1856. The cannon bears his name and it's been something that's been passed back and forth between the winner of the UNR and UNLV football game.

And right now UNR has the cannon. And then when they have it, they paint it blue. When we have it, we paint it red. And it's kind of added to the spice and rivalry, which by and large has been more -- I think the people in the north have much more of a dislike for the people in the south of Nevada than the people in the south of Nevada have for the people in the north. And it's probably historical because most of the early leaders in the southern part of the state came from the north. They see us as kind of carpetbaggers or people that abandoned the north and came down south. In some sense, it's still pretty bitter for the people in the north. It's never been the same for us.

**We don't have time.**

Well, historically, athletically, when I was here, we dominated the north in everything. They never beat us. For instance, in our women's basketball, they never beat us. They never beat us in most of our programs. When I was here, we played them 22 times in men's basketball and they beat us twice. In fact, one year we were number one in the nation, and they came down here and beat us like the fourth game of the year.

**It's because we probably didn't take them seriously.**

No. We did take them seriously. They were good. But we just didn't play our "A" game that night. In fact, their coach, Sonny Allen said, "They may be number one in the nation, but they're number two in Nevada."

**That was good for him.**

Yeah, that was good for him. But then we went back up. We used to play them twice a year in basketball. We went back up there and just spanked them at their place. Yeah, but that's leveled off now, that competition, well, especially in football and men's basketball. They still aren't even

close to us in -- most of their women's programs have historically not been as strong as ours have been because historically -- and it would be when I became the athletic director -- we began to put a lot of emphasis on our women's programs. And we became very, very competitive not only statewide but nationally in those programs.

**That's wonderful.**

Yeah. If you walk the halls here, you'll see a lot of pictures of our female athletes. We had terrific female athletes in all of our programs.

**That's great. The last question -- last couple of questions. Nevada has what is called a Millennium Scholarship. Is that enough? Should we be doing more for -- not just athletes -- but for all the students?**

Well, certainly we should. The question is where is the funding base, you know? One of the difficulties is -- at any institution of higher learning -- there are so many things you could be doing, so many quality things you could be doing, but where do you find the resources to do them?

Although we've gotten much more engaged over the last 25 years, the only academic person I used to see on the streets or in the community was Jerry Vallen. He was the dean of hotel and still lives here I think, but he's no longer affiliated directly with the institution. But other than that, I never saw any fundraisers from UNLV when I was out raising money. I think every department now in the foundation is certainly much more actively involved in fundraising than it was 25 years ago, which it has to be.

**Yes. Now, how do your fundraising activities tie into the challenge we have going? What is it? The 500-million-dollar --**

Ours is a part of it.

**Okay, I see.**

For instance, our Athletic Academic Complex, which is now a 21-million-dollar building that we're trying to build, that will be considered a part of the university's fundraising. In fact, this position right here is a member of John Gallagher's staff. And there are certain people that we don't deal with. For instance, the Greenspuns historically have been very actively involved on the academic side of the community. And we know the Greenspuns well. But for the most part, we

don't approach them about contributions to athletics. So they have kind of a protected list and we honor that. We know who they are and we don't approach them -- not that people might not give, but just that we honor their wishes.

**That's right. Now, you just used the name John Gallagher. Tell me who that person is.**

John Gallagher is the director of the university foundation, UNLV Foundation, essentially the fundraising arm of the institution.

**Good. Carol Harter is now going to be in charge of the 500-million-dollar campaign. How did the athletic department get along with Carol Harter during her administration?**

Well, again, my judgment of that -- I was the academic side when she first came. Okay? And now I'm on the athletic side. I've told President Harter this. I think she was bad-wrapped. I think early on she didn't have a very good sense of athletics at this level. And she shouldn't have because she was never affiliated with an athletic program of this kind anyplace she had been. But I think over the years she gained a pretty strong fundamental understanding. And I've said this to her and this is absolutely true in terms of the support from the presidential office. Financially, she was by far the strongest contributor to the athletic program, by far. It's not even close.

But I think she learned over the years that for the people in this community it was important to do that. And so she did. And I'm not sure the people in this community really appreciated that very much or understood it very well because I think, generally speaking, the image was probably contrary to that.

But I know because I've studied our budgets since the beginning. I've looked at the history of our budgets for 50 years here. And as a president no one even came close to the commitment that she made financially.

**That's fantastic.**

Yeah, it was great. And, you know, she was a regular attendee at men's basketball, women's basketball and football. Student athletes I know appreciate when they see the athletic director. They appreciate when they see university officials. Many of the regents attend our games on a regular basis. Most of them are fans. They love to us see do well. It's easier to explain it to the community when you're winning than when you're losing.

**Great. I really appreciate this.**

Claytee, my pleasure. I'm glad you're here.

How long have you been here now, Claytee?

**In this position three years. We just started the Oral History Research Center three years ago. So I'm the first director. So it's been fun. I've learned so much.**

**This has just been wonderful.**

Well, what's really nice I think is that you can still communicate with a lot of people in this community who remember prior to UNLV, prior to even Nevada Southern. A lot of people around here still remember when UNLV didn't even exist.

**That's right. So that's what makes it good. And next year UNLV will be 50. So this is a critical --**

Perfect time to do it.

**Yes.**

Yeah, good.

**So thank you so much.**

Thank you.

**(End side 2, tape 1.)**