

AN INTERVIEW WITH AMY BUSH HERZER

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REMEMBERING 1 OCTOBER

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV LIBRARIES

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVE

Today is November 14th, 2019. This is Barbara Tabach. I'm sitting with Amy Bush Herzer.

Amy, would you spell your name for me, please?

Sure. The whole thing, first and last?

Yes.

A-M-Y, B-U-S-H, H-E-R-Z-E-R.

No hyphen or anything?

No. We try and keep it simple.

Okay, good.

Well, a little hyphen...

We are sitting together for the Remembering One October oral history project in my office at UNLV's library. Thank you for coming in. I appreciate this. As I mentioned, let's start with what you do, what your work is here.

I have a really neat opportunity to be the head women's golf coach at UNLV. I started here in 2007 as an assistant coach, and three years later, in 2010, was promoted to the head women's coach, and I've been here ever since in the coaching capacity, so I have the opportunity to lead young women every day.

How cool is that?

It's really cool.

Where were you born and raised?

Originally I was born in Tempe, Arizona. I was actually right down the street from Arizona State University. Both mom and dad went to Arizona State. Sister went to Arizona State. I was the outcast, if you want to say that. I moved away from home and went to New Mexico State. I was in Las Cruces, New Mexico for a couple of years, and then I moved here in 2000. I moved here

to be a teaching instructor; I was teaching golf. I got into the community, and, as we all know, this is a really neat place and the golf community is even smaller, as you can tell from getting to know my team. Then I just kind of worked my way through and met the coach. She tried to hire me three times to come be her assistant. Finally on the third time I listened and never looked back.

Who was the coach then?

Missy Ringler was the coach at the time. In 2010, she ended up kind of early retirement and just wanted to go raise her family because our profession is a twenty-four-seven job. I never really stop working. I have answered calls at two a.m. to go help athletes and also been there with them early in the mornings and through ups and downs, and so I have a neat opportunity to be able to do that.

You're rather maternal with the young women?

Absolutely, yes. I have four years with them and I've had the opportunity to be at weddings and had the opportunity to do just different things, too. Unfortunately, I've been through funerals with athletes. I've been through car accidents. I've been through you ask it, you name it. I've had the chance to help them and kind of graduate through life a little bit.

That's really cool. Were you a golfer since a very young age?

I started actually old for the game. I started at eleven. My mom and dad actually don't play golf.

Neither one?

Neither one. My uncle in the Arizona area coached a boys and girls' high school golf team, won several state championships in Arizona, and introduced me to the game, and then also introduced me to the career path. I had no idea this was a career path. You can be in hospitality and teach people how to play the game, and so it's been interesting how the career has developed.

Actually, it's been fascinating. Other than my uncle, my outside life is not surrounded with golf, so I have a different life where I can go explore other things, and then when I'm at work, I'm at work and it's my time and my passion and I can develop that within myself and my athletes.

What do you do to relax?

When I have time to relax, we're actually in the process; we have therapy dogs where we're training service dogs. We have two and one of them actually helped in One October.

Really?

Yes.

How long have you done that?

We started with him, so it hasn't been very long. It was something that we wanted to get into because my husband and I opted to not have children for multiple reasons. We're one of those statistics. But I always joke with the fact that I have eight or nine student athletes every year that are my kids, so I get that fascination of having that and then handing them back. It's awesome. Yes, we actually have service dogs in training, and they're the type that aren't going to be our therapy dogs; they're the type that are going to be giving back where they go to the airports and they go to the hospitals and the veteran centers and that so that way we can help others.

What kind of dogs are they?

They're called Flat-Coated Retrievers, so they look like black Golden Retrievers. They're long-haired, little bit longer body, but the black head and the whole thing. They're really cool dogs.

How wonderful.

Yes. It's just a whole different life that you never know about people when you get to know them. Relaxation comes in spurts and then I force myself to take one vacation a year.

Where do you go?

Anywhere.

Do you go play golf?

I don't. But my mom and dad have become avid cruisers in their retirement, and so every year we like to go on what we call "The Big Trip." We will take them and explore new places with them. We've been all over Southeast Asia. We're fortunate to be able to do it. We're planning a big one next year for South America. We're going to go see South America.

That's a big continent.

Yes. We're going to go low, though. We're going to start in Argentina and end up in Chile.

Very cool.

Just little things that we like to do.

Do you look for athletes while you're doing your travels?

No. I completely shut down.

Good for you. That takes a lot of discipline.

I have to do it. Actually, my husband has learned that he needs to take me out of the country because if I have my cell phone, then the girls will contact me or recruits will contact me, and so he knows that if I'm out then the cell phone won't work and then I actually get rest.

What is the golf season like for a college coach?

Three sixty-five now, pretty close. Our competition season is around the last week of August to about Halloween, and then we're now in what we call the off season, which we still train. It's much shorter hours in the week, but we can still do some training, which we need to do. Really, our off time throughout the year is about the week before Christmas and New Year's, and then we start back up again around the start of school and we'll go to Memorial Day, so middle of January through Memorial Day. Then everybody is like, "Oh, you're like a teacher; you get the

summer off.” Oh no. No, no, no. I go and recruit. I was in Las Vegas seven days in the month of July this year. There was no leisure. It was all work.

Where do you usually recruit? I know you have international representation.

Oh yes, I have a very international team. I do one trip to Europe a year within that. A lot of the tournaments rotate, so some of the years I just hit the East Coast and I’m kind of all on the East Coast. I might be in Florida one week and then the next week I might be in Connecticut. Some years they transfer them and they come out west, and I like those years because those years are a little bit easier on my schedule. But it’s funny, when the folks at the gym see me, they view it as a red light for me and they’ll go, “You’re really in the red, Coach. Can you just stop for a few minutes?” They try and calm me down and talk about it. But, no, I have the opportunity to go see the world with this job and I get to learn about cultures. The athletes get to teach other athletes about their cultures. It’s a really interesting dynamic. I’ve had kids from really all over the world. I’ve hit Australia, New Zealand. I’ve had always a lot of success with Europe and Asia. But the thing I like to do is keep some U.S. kids and some international kids because it really makes it for a fun dynamic because you can have some really interesting conversations about cultures.

It’s fascinating what you learn that way, too.

Yes, yes, because you’ll help to teach kids. I remember one dinner conversation was teaching an athlete from Colombia about what Groundhog Day was because she had no idea. She’s like, “Wait a minute. There’s a celebration for a rodent that really comes out?” She really couldn’t wrap her arms about that. We had to have a question-and-answer on what Groundhog Day is, fascinating. It’s just very interesting.

Do some of these young women go on and become professional?

Oh yes. I've had a very successful track record here with athletes that go on and become professional golfers. I'm proud of all my kids, so I don't want to make it sound like this. But I think my proudest ones are the ones that go become the successful accountants and go become the successful businesswoman and just getting to see them progress. I had an athlete several years ago who was a bit of a challenge to coach. She was just a young person trying to find her way. She caught me in an airplane one night and actually thanked me for everything that I did in helping her development, and those are the reasons you do this. Sometimes it's really challenging when you're in the trenches, but to get to see that and see them blossom or get to go to their wedding, how cool is that? You get to go.

I've had an athlete once that I said, "Okay, if you need anything at your wedding, you just call. We'll be there. You tell me." She calls me and she goes, "I've got a job for you." And I said, "Great. I'm ready. What do you need?" She goes, "You're the only person that I know that will deliver this on time." I said, "Okay." She goes, "I need the food for my wedding. It's catered." And I said, "Okay. Tell me where and when and I'll be there." We delivered the food and got everything set up for her. "Now go get married. You're good. Go get married."

You're a jack of all trades.

Jack of all trades, and I love it. I love it. I get to experience life through young people. You don't think about it, but the music and the language and the cell phones and just different pressures that they get. Being a young person in this age has just got to be a challenge. I always tell them that I am their number-one fan. Whatever they need, I'm your number-one fan. Tell me what you need. They finally start believing that and it's kind of interesting when they see that. They're like, "She really means that she's my number-one fan." Because there is so much more to it than going to be a Division One athlete; there is so much more to it.

Were you a strong competitor yourself in college?

What's really interesting is I actually didn't play.

Really?

Yes. I'm one of the coaches that more coaches the technical teaching aspect of it. I wanted to get into college and the only thing I wanted to do was get out of college. I knew I had to get the piece of paper, so I graduated college in three years and moved here. I moved the day of graduation. I was in Phoenix for a night and I moved here the next day and started my job. I knew I wanted to do it. I knew I wanted to be in the golf business and nobody was taking that away from me. Once I found that passion and knew that and then once the passion kind of came through that I could teach young people—I come from a whole family of educators. My mom was a teacher. She started off student teaching and then made her way through and ended up being a college administrator. My grandfather ran the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Indian schools. He created Indian schools for part of his career. All my aunts and uncles were schoolteachers. Education and being part of education or public institutions was always something that was just kind of a lifeline. My sister is a college professor at Air Force Academy. I only have one other sibling and she teaches really neat classes to the kids.

What does she teach?

She teaches the history of spying.

Wow. That sounds like a novel, seriously.

It's cybersecurity for the cadets. She just accepted that position and this is her first semester teaching the cadets there for the military academy. Education is not a surprise.

I got you, so you're well-bred.

It's not a surprise that both of us have ended up where we ended up.

How did you meet your husband? What is his name?

My husband's name is Kendell Herzer and I met him online.

Technology works.

Technology works. It was funny because my sister had actually said—and I would not recommend anybody doing this at any point—but my sister had said—this was early 2008 she said, “Go on Craig’s List and answer somebody’s ad.” And I was like, “Okay.” So I was looking through the ads and his ad popped up on just “male looking for female,” and I answer his ad, of all things, and I hid my identity pretty much from him because I knew that I had these young people that I needed to protect. It was still the internet. You still want to protect people around me. I didn’t tell him what I did for a living for probably three weeks, four weeks. I just told him, “Eh, I’m in the golf business. Don’t worry about it. You don’t need to know.” Then I finally told him what I did, and, “I have this crazy schedule and I live this life of twenty-four-seven, so kind of know what you’re getting into.”

But he has been the best rock that I could have because, again, I live this crazy life that when I’m on, I’m on; I have to be on and I’m always constantly going. The brain is constantly working with, how am I going to get my team better? And, how am I going to help this athlete? What is this next recruit I’m going to get? My brain is constantly going. Then he is great about stopping me, or he’s great about... You have to have a partner that will be great at that to make you successful. Once I finally found that and he understood what I did for a living, because, again, I have never surrounded myself with golfers, once he figured that out and was supportive of it, I mean, he gets it.

Is he a golfer?

No. We've golfed. This next year will be our ten-year wedding anniversary and we've been together twelve, and we've golfed once.

He sounds like my husband.

I just don't want to go do it. If I'm being—

And he doesn't care.

He doesn't care because we have so many other activities outside of golf that he doesn't care. It's kind of interesting, too, our relationship with—my husband's a disabled vet, and so there's been years when he just hasn't been able to play because he's always had really bad feet. Now I could teach him how to adapt his swing; I'm kind of the person to do that. But we've just never really had the interest.

What service was he in?

He was Air Force. He served all four years at Nellis.

Oh, wow.

Yes. He's been here since '98. I feel like we're long-term residents at this point.

Yes, yes.

He was here in '98, and then when he exited out of service, he decided, I like it here; I'm going to stay. Then we both kind of went our own ways and met online in 2008 and then got married in 2010.

Knowing that we're going to kind of set up this—because you revealed to me before we started the different touchstones with October first. Let's talk a bit about your husband's career. Tell me how he got into this line of work and what that work is.

His career path has been really fascinating. When he was in the Air Force, we'll keep his job title simple, but he was an F-16 crew chief, which meant that he was getting the plane ready for the

pilot to come, get on, so if there were pieces that needed to be added...He's always been very technical, hands-on, wants to understand what's going on with the aircraft or cars. The man fixes everything around our house. he fixes air conditioners and—

You're so lucky.

Yes. He just doesn't care. He just goes up and he's like, "I'm going to fix it." Anyway, when he got out he got, actually, in the auto industry. He finished the service up; he served four years. He got in the auto industry and was working auto parts, became a certified mechanic, kind of took that path. Then he actually worked a couple of years up in Reno, too, where he was working for some auto parts. There was a huge after-market auto company. Then moved back down here. We met and at the time I met him, I'm like, "You are far too smart to not be an educated person. Why don't you have a college education?" I had a really hard time wrapping. And sometimes you get those people. You meet those people where you're like, "Goodness gracious, you can go be successful with whatever you do; you don't need a piece of paper."

He had started some community college in Air Force. I didn't know this. I learned this. Community College of the Air Force is a thing. These guys get credits for going through their training. He had credits kind of mixed around with different things, so we pieced that together and I already got him an AA within three months of us meeting. I pieced this all together. I'm like, "I just don't understand this." I couldn't wrap my arms around it.

Then he ended up coming here to UNLV and did an online degree in criminal justice with the GI Bill. He used his GI Bill, got his degree, criminal justice, and then he ended up starting to work for the state. What he started working with the state with was he did all the fingerprinting and background checks of the security guards that we have here in town, so that hired him.

Then he progressed into helping other veterans find jobs, so he worked for Nevada JobConnect, so another state position, and in the process of those jobs he got his master's from here in public administration. Within the first few years of us meeting, he kind of went hog wild and got two degrees, which I was really proud of him for. He was working hard and got them both done. Then we both at the same time saw the job that he's currently in, which he started in 2012, which he is a state emergency manager.

State emergency manager, what does that mean?

He works for the State of Nevada and it's actually a division which is under Public Safety, so Highway Patrol is also in this division. He helps get training prepared for anything that could happen in our state, so flooding, earthquakes, wildfires, and unfortunately we have to look at acts of terrorism. What they do, his position is to help train and prepare for these things, and then when things do occur...

I'll start with the Mount Charleston wildfire. In that position, when the wildfire started, he looked up at the mountain, sees the fire, and he goes, "All right, kid, I'm going to have to go to work soon." He already knew that they were going to be standing up a site because I don't think a lot of people realize that there are emergency managers that all sit in a room and make sure that Metro is talking to the fire department, and the fire department is talking to the power company, and the gas company, and then they're getting acreage that's been burned and how we can help get more resources in to fight the fires. Then it's his job to go ahead and tell the governor, which was Sandoval at the time, "Governor Sandoval, hey, this is how many acres have burned...This is the resources we need...Can you please order these?" Or they will also converse with the State of California and say, "Okay, California, we need three bulldozers and

we see that you guys have three bulldozers. Can you please send those to our state? We need them and we'll get them back to you as soon as we can." That's kind of the instance that I give.

He spent twelve days in Pahrump because he was on that side. There were two stations set up, and he was on the far side of it because they were worried about—they, being the state and federal government—were worried that the fire was going to come over, and there is a small community right at the base that they were concerned...handling evacuations. Again, in these tragedies or emergencies, communication becomes the most important thing, and so we have to be able to make sure that we know what's going on at these sites. If people need to be transported to hospitals, how many hospital beds do they have? If these houses get unfortunately torched, how are we going to handle it? How are we getting water into this location if the fire does come down? How many firefighters are we going to need? Communication becomes really important at that time.

Wow.

It's fascinating. I had no idea until he got into the job. You see the job description and he went in and did the interview and got hired. He started to get in. At the time, too, if you think about where Mount Charleston is with that fire, they were talking to the Nevada Test Site. They had to get the DOE involved. It's just little things that as an outsider you would never know occurs.

Amazing. And you know it's got to be happening somewhere—or you hope, I guess, it is, but we trust.

Yes. The timestamp with this, now, with being the fourteenth, you may have seen on the news, but they're actually doing a huge exercise right now. We'll call it an exercise because that's what it is. But the federal government mandates that each state does a huge exercise every, I think, two or three years. Don't quote me on that. But it's statewide. If you think about this, Elko Sheriff is

standing up right now involved in this exercise, and I know that they're doing some stuff here on our campus. They're doing stuff with the Hoover Dam. The gas line with both gasoline, fuel, and natural gas. There is just this huge training exercise that so when things do happen we have people that are prepared for it.

Wow.

Yes, yes, fascinating. Again, I never knew these existed. But I actually know the emergency manager. We have an emergency manager at UNLV, Yuri, and he worked at City of Henderson, so he was a City of Henderson Emergency Manager for many, many, many years, and then UNLV, I think, two years decided, hey, we need to have a full-time staff for this position, and so Yuri is onboard now here in training.

It's unfortunate all these natural and otherwise reasons we need that, and there's hopefully some peace of mind knowing that people are trained properly.

And well trained, yes. They just had a standup—when I say standup, it's standing up emergency command center, so it's a command center where they can disburse people and, again, decide if they need the three bulldozers for Mount Charleston. But a group of them stood up out in Pahrump because, as a state, we were very concerned about the storm to Area 51; how many people were going to be harmed, and how the community was going to be affected. Big group in Pahrump for a week to make sure that they were prepared.

It was in the news. I guess maybe that was part of what you're talking about, well, so we can be prepared for more wildfires.

Yes, yes.

We're not immune to any of those natural...

Well, flooding, people don't realize it, but in Reno you have a river that runs right through the center of downtown Reno and that flooded a couple of years ago. There was a major concern that we were going to have to evacuate people. Again, things that you don't understand, but I'm really glad that they're there because you tell me when I have to do something.

Right, exactly.

I'm very happy that you're there.

Let's segue into October first of 2017. It's hard to believe that two years has past.

It feels like yesterday.

Yes. Where were you and how did you learn about the shooting?

I'm a very early sleeper. I fall asleep normally about eight o'clock, wherever I am. I'm telling that as a preface to this story because normally I'm up early. With this job, I normally wake by four-thirty or five o'clock, so I don't make it, rarely, in the evening. But it was a Sunday night and I had fallen asleep on the couch. Kendell normally wakes me up and makes me... "Go brush your teeth and put your pajamas on, wash your face," kind of thing. He had tapped me about ten o'clock and said, "Okay, come on, we've got to go to bed." He never lets me sleep on the couch, but he always make sure that I do have a blanket on when I do fall asleep on the couch. That's a sign of another great husband, right?

Yes.

But he taps me and he's like, "Come on, it's time to go."

On the weekends, I might be a little crazy about this, but I always check social media because I just want to make sure that my athletes are okay, not making silly choices, because there have been times that I've made late-night phone calls to say, "Take that picture down; nobody needs to be seeing that." I always have a tendency to check. He wakes me up about ten

o'clock, or it might have been a little bit later than that by the time I finally laid down. I'm doing my last-minute check before I fall asleep, and I had noticed that some people had started posting stuff up on Facebook about being hidden in storage units at a site. They had been taking pictures of bullet holes on top of them. That's the first thing that I remember is that they're in just metal storage bins that they put on the back of semi-trucks. I remember seeing very vividly that there were about five bullet holes above. This is just a friend of mine that's at the event that's saying, "Oh my goodness, this is going on."

I remember saying to Kendell, "There is something going on. There is something happening at Route 91. I don't know what." He goes, "Okay." And so I start trying to figure out more information, and more and more stuff started popping up on social media.

Now, fast forward about twelve minutes or so, so about ten-thirty, he looks at me, and I'm kind of reading what's coming off of social media. I'll never forget it, he goes right to the closet, puts on his shirt that identifies him as what he does for a living, which he doesn't wear any badge; he's not a trained police officer, so he carries no weapons, but he does identify himself with a state emblem. He threw that shirt on and he walked out the door. He said, "I don't know when you'll see me again."

He knew at that point to respond. Fire Station 18, which is over here on Flamingo, kind of by campus, is the main emergency command center when things happen in Clark County. He knew to respond to that and got in his car. He said, "I don't know when you'll see me, but you know I'm eventually going to end up at Fire Station 18." He said by about twenty minutes after getting there, again, the people that had been trained in these various exercises, everybody started to appear and show up and make sure that...

No phone call is made to him. He just automatically knows that he needs to...

He got a call on the way that said, “We don’t know what’s going on, but we’re standing up the emergency command center.” He kind of just instinctively knew that something was happening and he didn’t need to wait for that call; that he just needed to report, and he did that night.

Do you remember what your thoughts were?

I was crazy because, one, I was concerned about his safety because we still had no understanding of what really was going on. We knew that there was a lot of casualties. We knew that there were a lot of injuries because just, again, from reading social media. There hadn’t actually been any actual live reports by this time.

At that time we didn’t know if it was one shooter or multiple scenes.

Yes. I made sure the moment he left that I turned on the news. I was, again, concerned for his safety because he was going to be going right by there. Fire Station 18 from our home where we live, which is by the airport, he had to go back basically behind the Strip, and so I didn’t know if he was going to get there. I didn’t know what the traffic patterns were going to be. I didn’t know if there were more people around. Yes, there is just uncertainty of what was going on. I had asked him if he got there safely to please make sure that he at least sent me a thumbs-up emoji text to let me know, and that came much later because you could tell that the moment they got boots on the ground, it was, we’re here; we need to respond to this; we need to sort out what’s going on; we need to be able to figure out what’s happening. That was kind of first response.

Then second response was at that point I needed to be a spouse because I needed to make sure that he was safe and sound. My second job was that I have athletes that I’m responsible for that their families are wanting to know that they’re okay. While I’ve got this outlier of my spouse is going to be who knows how long, who knows how many hours, weeks, months, to now I’ve got to make sure that...I have a lot of athletes that could potentially have been at the event.

Were you aware of any before that if they were there?

I wasn't aware that they were going because I don't try and...if they tell me, "Coach, I'm going there," I want to know. But just in case they were there, I needed to reach out. Again, it was late at night and we have some athletes that turn their phones off, we have some athletes that do this, so now I've got to go searching through even if they weren't there to make sure that they were safe and sound because, again, I have athletes that live here on campus, and you were getting multiple reports that there was stuff coming towards UNLV's campus; they were going to use campus as a reunite site. I needed to make sure that they were good. That last phone call for me, when I got confirmation of that wasn't until two a.m. You're now going from ten-thirty-ish at night to two a.m. until I could make sure that my athletes were accounted for and their family knew that their children were accounted for, so there was kind of a two-step process as a coach.

It's interesting, as a coach you get trained in that stuff of, okay, let's say you're in a terrible car accident. What do you do now? What do you do? What do you do? You're constantly thrown into those things. But when something actually hits you... You sit through these trainings and you're like, "Eh, I'll never need that." But in moments like that you want to make sure that you have the background and kind of knew the step process.

Then at two a.m. I could go back to being a spouse and making sure that he got there okay. I understood that the communication was going to be very limited because the community needed everybody that was there; the thirty to forty people that were in that room, they needed them at that moment in time.

How soon was it before he finally gives you a thumbs-up or whatever?

It was interesting because, again, they were worried about the multiple shooters. The only message that I got from him was, "You need to stay in the house. Don't leave. I can't tell you

more. I just need you to assure me that you're not leaving the house." I said, "Of course, I'm not leaving the house. Just be safe."

The only other thing he told me that stands out in memory for me was—his drive goes through airport connector tunnel and then along Swenson, and then he kind of goes the back way to get to the back offices of Fire Station 18. He told me that night he could drive no more than a hundred yards and was stopping for paramedics and fire because they were all responding. He was obviously pulling off to the side. He said that it was eerie because there was no traffic. The only traffic that was happening that night was all the responders going to the site. That's the only other thing that he told me about his drive from what should be a ten- to twelve-minute drive from the house turned into a much longer drive because in his guesstimation it was thirty-five paramedics had gone by him to go to the response site.

Then the next time I actually saw him was October second. Again, he went in on the first at approximately ten-thirty, and I didn't see him again until about six o'clock the next day. It was almost twenty hours. I remember him walking through the door and he made it to the couch. He hadn't slept because we were going to bed. He had been up all day October first and now all day October second. He made it to the couch in full uniform. I can't remember if he took his shoes off or I took his shoes off. He was that tired. I said, "Just tell me what time you have to report back so I can make sure that I get you there." It was four or five hours later. It was enough for him to go home, get a couple hours' rest, shower, change his clothes, and go back, and, again, to Fire Station 18.

That became kind of the command center for the responders.

Correct. It wasn't necessarily the responders. It was just kind of the command center for resources because Metro had a separate one. But this was where Clark County Fire and Clark

County School District and, again, DOE, Nellis Air Force Base, City of Henderson, City of North Las Vegas, City of Las Vegas, things that we wouldn't even necessarily think of that we needed to know.

Right. People who need to know and know what to communicate to the population.

Right. Their main job that night, too, was making sure that they understood how many beds were at hospitals and if hospitals started running out of resources, if hospitals started to need—we'll use an example—blood. Remember how many people stood on Charleston to donate blood? That's the kinds of things that they were monitoring and controlling because now you have a public safety issue with the people standing on Charleston, which out of the goodness of their hearts they wanted to do that. But now we have a public safety thing because you're in a major thoroughfare in Las Vegas where it's a forty-five-mile-an-hour speed limit.

Again, it was just huge boards—I finally got to go when things calmed down and we had more answers, it was about four or five days after, we brought our therapy pup, the one that we had at the time. Kendell, my husband, asked me to bring in our pup because everybody there hadn't seen their families, they hadn't seen their kids. They had been doing this nonstop for...again, it was three or four days after the shooting. I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "Please bring the pup." Now, when you train therapy dogs, you become a handler for that dog. For instance, you would be this dog's handler. Well, my husband was the dog's handler, but he couldn't take him at the time. I'm walking in with a therapy dog that is not necessarily one that I've trained with, so it was fascinating. But there's pictures of our dog with the emergency responders that still gets shown in meetings and stuff about how neat it was for us to be able to bring in.

When you walked in with the dog, what happened?

I had people cry. I had first responders, or if we can call them first responders, but, again, people that had been in there for four days that had this tragedy happen. Again, you get so involved in this and you're running off of adrenaline and you're trying to help the community. The moment I walked in I had people hug on him, cry. People still two years later talk about how we brought our dog in. It's something that you don't think will ever do much, make a difference.

I had actually brought our pup, the same pup, and I said, "Ah, forget about it if I'm not your handler. We'll figure it out." The morning of. Because when they opened campus here, I knew that I had athletes here, too. Again, I had a whole other job to be concerned with. That morning they had school.

The morning of the second. Because what happened on campus is a whole silo of...

I'll barely touch on it, but we had student athletes here that were wondering if they were going to class, were wondering what they're doing. Nobody slept on my team that night. Who slept, right? I looked at it and I had decided, you know what? I'm just going to bring the dog in. If I get in trouble, I'll take him home. Fortunately we have an athletic director who supports all of this stuff. We have a wonderful athletic director and she's great. I had called her that morning and I said, "I'm just telling you I'm bringing my therapy dog in, so if anybody needs him tell me."

What's the dog's name?

Apollo.

I love that name.

Yes, Apollo. He's a hoot. He is a ton of energy and will just kiss on you. He thinks he's a seventy-five-pound lap dog. I'll show you pictures of him. But they're wonderful pups.

Anyway, I brought him in and that was an interesting day, too, because normally with the therapy dogs you keep them on a leash. I just walked into my office and I said, "I don't care. Just

go roam around.” Again, people, athletic department, student athletes I had never met before were coming in to meet the dog.

In setting the scene for you walking in, did most everybody in the athletic department show up for work on the second?

Yes. Because we didn’t know what else to do.

And you need to be there for the athletes, too, so I guess that makes the best...

And Thomas and Mack was interesting because athletic department people needed to open up the building. We had another whole issue where athletic department needed to be there to open up the doors.

You interacted with the campus police?

Other folks did. I was a coach. Interacted and made sure that when it happened and they decided to make Thomas and Mack part of the unification process, then that’s when athletics got involved, too. “Of course, you can use... We’re not going to say no.” Yes, we had people that were already here all night that were helping with that process and making sure that people had the things that they needed. Again, I brought Apollo in because I kind of looked at him that morning and I said, “People are going to need you today.” I walked in with him and didn’t look back. I did that for a couple days.

Finally, on the third day I had him in the office with us because things kind of stopped, practice. From a team perspective and a coach perspective, we stopped a lot of things. We needed to reflect. We needed to make sure that people were okay on our team.

Did you bring your team together during those first couple of days afterwards?

Oh yes.

And meet with them together as a group?

Yes, to make sure that we were okay. It's a major deal whether or not you were there. Everybody on my team knew people that were there.

But none of them were actually physically there, but they had friends.

None of them were there. I had an athlete whose parents were there, which was a whole different dynamic, right, because now this kid is, "Oh, Mom and Dad, what are doing going to that concert?" Thinking it's just a country concert, going to see a great show. Yes, that was a whole different dynamic. But, yes, we brought them together and made sure everybody is okay because when you only coach eight or nine athletes, it's not like a football team where you have a hundred and five. We're very close and I hear things that I probably shouldn't be hearing, but I love it and I wouldn't change that. That's kind of why; with the closeness of the team, we wanted to make sure that we were good and that the community, when they were able to start the healing process, we were involved in that and made sure that they were okay to start the healing process and kind of move on.

I'm curious. You have international athletes and when you're a parent and your child is away that far—when they're away, period—but when they're away that far and the culture that seems to _____ our country—I mean, we're sitting here today and there is a shooting in Santa Clarita.

I know it.

They still didn't know how many people were shot. This is at a high school. It's crazy. Was there any interesting or specific story to the international students, their parents questioning what goes on in America?

I would say from a current team member at the time, I didn't have a lot of questions. They just wanted to make sure that their daughter was safe, which, okay, great, you should be; that's a

good concern. But I'd say from a recruiting standpoint it changed my recruiting year because, since I do go so international and the gun laws are so different where these athletes are from, that was a different perspective.

Oh, tell me about that. Wow. I hadn't gotten that far, okay, yes.

The parents knew at the time their athlete was safe; they knew that once we reached out and said, "Your daughter is safe." They were good with that. But trying to speak to a parent after the fact when there were so many casualties, so many injuries, and now trying to say, "Yes, don't worry about it; your daughter is going to be safe," my next year of recruiting was different because I wasn't able to get the international kids like I normally get because international kids here in Las Vegas—Las Vegas is known all over the world, right? I asked an international athlete once, "Why did you choose here? Why?" And she goes, "Great weather, great golf; the whole thing. But, in addition, I could go anywhere I want to in the world and tell people I went to university in Las Vegas, and they're going to understand what it means." She said, "If I go to a smaller place—" I'm not trying to discredit any college, but in Mississippi people in Europe don't know what Mississippi is. That changed my year of recruiting because I couldn't get the international kids that next year as I would. I actually ended up with a local student athlete, which was fine. She's a great student athlete, great kid, wonderful family.

There was pushback.

Oh yes.

There was resistance for obvious reasons.

Yes. It wasn't necessarily anything against UNLV. It wasn't against the coaching staff. It wasn't against anything. It was just there was this one outlier where we were concerned about our city.

That was the first year. Then the second year afterwards?

It was better after that because I think a lot of people that don't live here forget about it. A lot of people don't think, remember.

We're not remembered for that only.

Correct. Yes, we're still remembered for the fact that we have this gaming activity.

I'm sharing part of my story, but my son just moved to South Florida and is enrolling the high-school-aged grandchild, as we sit here, in Parkland.

Wow. Was that a tough decision for them?

He said, "I love Parkland." My son loves that area. He says he's very excited about moving there. It's considered a great school. We know that they've got great—well, their kids are well-spoken about this whole event and they didn't stop talking about it.

Right, right.

They cease to talk about it, which is good. That's part of not forgetting these kinds of episodes because then we're just...But that's too much of me talking. But the first thing I thought of was, oh my God. That's like people saying, "I'm moving to Vegas."

Yes, people don't even...I think now again it's past, and so parents aren't looking at it in that way and saying, "Okay, it's been two years. It's okay."

It sounds like you probably don't—did this impact even how you—I don't say monitored—but observe or interact with the students' activities?

It hasn't changed it.

What presence of mind does that have?

For me it hasn't changed it and I think it's because knowing how well trained are people are here from seeing it. If it happens again we've got great people that are going to make sure that we take care of it.

You're comforted by that, which is important.

Yes. I got to see them over the last couple of years through Kendell and I know them behind the scenes and I know that we're in really good hands. Now, with my current team that I have here sitting in 2019, the 2019 academic year, if the athletes ask me about One October, I'll talk about it, but I don't openly tell them about it. Obviously it's by choice. I don't want to say it's not by choice. But it's by choice because I don't want to get them nervous about it. I don't want to get them thinking about it. I don't want them to treat Las Vegas differently. I want you to go have a great time and a great experience and enjoy your four years here and be able to live it up and meet great people and enjoy the opportunities that are given to us by living in this great community. They'll ask me about it. It's definitely been a conversation and I'll talk about it.

What do they ask you?

What I did, how I responded and treated. It was interesting, I had alumni reach out to me after, basically the early morning of the second, so one and two a.m. on the second I had alumni reaching out to me making sure the team was okay. It's just a small circle.

But when the athletes ask me about it, I tell them. I'm not going to hold back. I'm going to tell them the experiences and what I remember and what they need to know, and hopefully it doesn't change it. I hope it doesn't because they're young people and they should go experience.

Yes, you can't stop living your life.

You can't.

No, no.

Because one person makes a decision. But I do get to tell them how wonderful the community is and how you forget sometimes. I use it as an example because I always tell them, "Ladies, you think I might not find out, but I'm going to find out." Then they'll go do something and I'll find

out. They're like, "Coach, how did you find out?" I said, "I warned you on day one that if you go do something that might not be the smartest decisions that you've made, I'm going to hear about it." I explain to them, too, after the shooting how this community came together. "It should be proof to you that when you go make whatever decisions you're going to make, good or bad, I'm going to hear about it." That's when they ask and I'll talk about it because I think it is neat to hear the little stories that happened. I'm sure in your project here you get to hear these great little things that you had no idea about.

Right. You've got these two different worlds, your husband, your athletes. Then you also have family and friends that aren't here or maybe are. What happened to you? Was everybody calling you?

Yes. I didn't sleep that night. I didn't sleep. People were really concerned because the other thing is, is that people that are close to us know what Kendell does for a living. Then you have curious people that are really wondering what's going on. What's the count? How many people are here? What's this? What's that? I just had to keep telling people, "I don't have that information because he was in the trenches." I didn't have it. "I can tell you what I was reading online, just like you."

From that perspective I had an athlete that was flying back, so former student athlete. She is a professional golfer. She was flying back from Australia. For various reasons, none of which was affected by the shooting here, she got diverted to Hawaii. She is calling me from Hawaii, asking me questions because she was really one of the athletes that I was super close with, just as a graduate being concerned and wondering where Kendell was and what he was doing and was he safe.

I would say if you're viewing our family as me and Kendell, from the One October I'd say it was probably three weeks for me before things finally calmed. Then for him it was months and it's still an ongoing process. They're still doing after-action reports. An after-action report is, okay, why did you respond to Fire Station 18? Explain to me why you knew to go to Fire Station 18 that night. Explain to me why you went in and put your uniform on and just didn't show up in civilian clothes. Explain to me what you felt went well that night with hospital transportation. Help me out. Figure this out. Two years later we're still doing that because they want to make sure that if a tragedy happens again, they can react better and make sure that they're in the training process.

From a family/friends standpoint it was weeks, months. I remember I asked Kendell a question after the whole thing. I said, "So, you guys do all these wonderful exercises and wonderful trainings and do your best to make sure that whatever happens whether it be a wildfire or flooding—" I mean, flooding can happen. How many people live under the Strip in tunnels? That's a whole different topic of conversation, right? I said, "So, when something like this happens, how much community support do you prepare for?" You hear stories about people pulling their truck up and asking what hospital this person needed to be transported to. "How much do you actually expect community support?"

He said, "Well, we always build in a little bit." I said, "Okay, great. You hire actors or whatever you do to make sure that you have the preparation to tell the community where they need to go?" He said, "Yes, we'll do it in spurts."

I said, "Now, going through an actual major tragedy like this, did you expect and were you prepared for the community outreach that you received?" And he said, "No way." He goes, "No way, no how did we expect the outpouring that came from the Las Vegas community."

Here's the other cool part about it, and I'm glad this is getting documented because I think people need to hear this.

I agree.

Las Vegas with the community support is being studied in other states from emergency managers with how the community was being used. Again, it was, "Hey, we need food for first responders." Boom, okay, we don't need food anymore. "Hey, we need blankets and water at Thomas and Mack." Okay, blankets, water, sleeping bags showed up. They didn't expect to get this mass number of supplies, I guess you could say. They didn't expect to get the cases of water that they received.

I remember weeks after when they had moved the response area from Fire Station 18, and they started responding weeks after the event to the convention center. He would call me and he'd be like, "I'm sitting next to what is probably a thousand cases of water." And I said, "What? What do you need a thousand cases of water for?" And he said, "It was just the community."

To be used as a case study, not that I never want anything like what happened to happen, but if we can help educate others in the process and how to use the community properly, it's only going to help for the next time when this happens because unfortunately...It's on recording.

Yes, yes. We have to have a plan in the event, yes. Really good question, too, to ask about how much of that was planned for the need that we felt. It also puts us as a community in a different light. Do you have any feelings about how you felt about Las Vegas before and after?

Oh, of course. I think that's a great question. I have the opportunity in my job to travel all over the world. I go everywhere, everywhere. Every time I'm on the road I feel fortunate that this is my home. I come back and I stand in McCarran Airport and I know that I'm the luckiest person

to live in a community where we have such neat people. We have the support. Whatever you need, it's here. I've had the opportunity—and this can go on tape because everybody knows—I've had the opportunity to go to work for PAC 12 schools, Big 12 schools, and be their golf coach. I go and I show up for the interview and I don't take the job. My outlook on the community hasn't changed from before or after because I think I have a much different look at the community because I get the golf community, and the Las Vegas golf community is second to none. I could pick up the phone right now and get whatever I need from the Las Vegas golf community, so I knew that. But now for others to be able to see what we have here just makes it so much neater for me.

I've looked at, where do I want to move to in retirement? Nowhere. Where am I going to go? Where am I going to go that I'm going to be as happy with the community base? That's here. Again, I get to come home. It sounds silly, but every time I get to step foot in McCarran Airport I'm happy to be home.

With your husband's work, and I know you know one of the other people I've interviewed, Zoe, did you guys talk about this immediately afterwards, or...?

Yes. Zoe, with her being with the American Red Cross, Zoe knew what my husband did for a living, and they've actually crossed paths a few times because the American Red Cross has to stand up, too. I mean, they had people at Fire Station 18 that night to make sure that we had the supplies that were needed and all the wonderful things that American Red Cross does. Zoe wasn't there that night at Fire Station 18, but they've crossed paths.

Then when we would see each other and have conversation, I was asking her, "Okay, how many days a week are you now working?" She was doing a different role when they moved to the convention center. She was making sure that the people that were ushers that night were

getting the proper—they were doing different payments and a variety of things. They were making sure that everybody was in the right area and that if they needed grief counseling, the people that were working that night got the grief counseling. She and I were conversing in that way of, “Hey, where’s your husband today?” Or, “Hey, Zoe, what are you doing this week? Where are you going to be? Where were you that night?” That was our weeks and months of conversation after because everybody was still stood up from an emergency response area for months. It was just the way it was.

Have you gone to the Healing Garden yet?

I have. I’ve done that and I made sure to go see the crosses. Every time the crosses are up I go. I just want to go.

Now they’re trying to figure out what they’re actually going to do with the site, which will be interesting. That’s always a dilemma. I’m glad they’re taking time with that.

Yes. Part of me hopes that it’s actually going to turn into part of what they’re saying where it’s the SWAT training because I like the direction that’s going. If you’re going to turn it into a training site—I guess maybe that’s just my educator hat that went on—if it’s going to make us a better community because you turned that into a training site, go do it. Go turn that and make sure that our first responders know what to do, although they did. They did.

Yes, you have to be constantly training new folks to do this.

Right, right. That’s why they’re constantly changing... The training right now is a three-day exercise. I can’t even call it a training. It’s an actual exercise. They are using statewide resources to make sure from an emergency manager/first responder opportunity that everybody knows what to do, and then they go back and they do reports on it where it’s all constructive criticism.

“Hey, in this area you took five minutes to answer this phone. It can’t be that way. You’ve got to make sure that...”

They have financial people. This is something that you never think of. In this room with this exercise there are the people that handle the finances. From a business office, if you need five hundred thousand dollars to buy sand—let’s just use this as an example. Let’s say we get a freak snowstorm here again, which, as we all know, shut down town in 2008. We need this money to go buy sand. Here’s what we’re going to use the sand for. They actually have financial business office people that are working for the state or working for the county that release that money as fast as possible to make sure that the resources can be delivered in a timely fashion. It might be where, hey, you didn’t answer this email fast enough; it took you thirty minutes to respond to this. Why? We needed this fifteen minutes faster and here’s the reasons why.

That’s what was all with this exercise now. It’s a collective effort to make sure that—and I say this—that UNLV campuses, UNR campus, sheriff’s departments, Department of Public Safety, so roads, NDOT, transportation, all of these people are in this exercise to make sure that for a community we can make sure that if something happens—again, I hope we never have this conversation again—but if it does, we’re going to have the people best prepared, and it’s comforting.

One last area to ask you about, and we ask everyone this. Before the shooting and after the shooting, did your opinion about guns change?

Yes.

Can you explain that to me?

Sure. I was raised in a house where we had hunting rifles and handguns. The handguns were for personal safety. My training around weapons was: This is a gun. This is what it’s used for. I will

let you fire this gun. We'll go to an area where it's safe. If you're curious and you want to touch this gun, I will make sure it's safe for you. But don't touch it. I was raised with: This is what it is. I will educate you on what it is. But don't touch it. And this is what it does.

I was never really against it. I got it. It was a public safety thing. Maybe it was me being raised out west, wild, wild west.

You are from the Phoenix area, right?

I am from the Phoenix area. I mean, you never know what's going to happen there. Then also being with a husband who kind of had the same outlook on it of handguns for personal safety and hunting rifles, okay, cool. It's not something that I necessarily want to have a hobby of, but I understand it and I understand that people have that hobby, awesome.

But I'd say after, assault rifles, I don't even understand them. I have a very hard time with them. Just how easy it is to attain frightens me and it just frightens me for culture. I think people still have the right to have personal.

To protect themselves.

Correct. If you want that that's your choice. That's not my choice. I choose to not do that. Most of the people that have those have a respect for it. They respect their weapon and they understand what their weapon is going to do. I just think in this case we just have to do better. Why it's still even option? Living here and seeing it and being involved in it, when it happens to you, you look at it differently. I will say that I'm hearing things and I hope they come true, but I'm hearing things that our governor might actually be making moves to make things like this in our state different. Just from reading things I'm hopeful, especially because our now governor was very involved down here in One October, and so he was very involved. I remember his press

conferences that night. I think that if he has—I'm hopeful that at least from a state perspective we can make the change. Federal probably will never happen.

But if we can do it one state at a time, make it more sane...

Yes. Again, seeing the bullet holes and a person hiding in a storage unit, what are we doing with it? Nobody needs to be firing off...And don't tell me it's for hunting. Don't tell me. Like, what are you doing?

Anything else you'd like to share?

No. I just thank you for letting me share it.

I really appreciate you coming in, Amy. This was really great.

It's a different story.

Yes, it is. That's really this project is every single person's story is so unique, so unique.

Still actually in my office, this is the only memorabilia that I keep from One October, but I remember seeing a Las Vegas Weekly with the first responder stories on the front cover. Do you know which one I'm talking about?

Yes.

I keep that one on display in my office.

Why?

I don't know. I just haven't wanted to toss it yet or put it away. I would never toss it because I think there are great stories in there. But I think that if I ever get a student athlete that's curious, really curious, I want to make sure to have that there for them to say, this is what it was. Here is a paramedic. Here is a doctor. Here is a police officer. Here is what you should know.

I think it's another way of saying that we shouldn't forget. We shouldn't let this memory fade away to meaninglessness.

I'm excited to see the license plates, though. They came out with license plates for One October.

I haven't seen them yet.

I read an article about it. Then all the money is going to the remembrance.

The Healing Garden? Great. The book sales, the profits go to them to help sustain it.

I think that's fantastic.

It's a beautiful thing.

I thank you for allowing me to share my story. Nobody asked me yet.

If you know anyone else, let me know. But thank you very, very much.

[End of recorded interview]