

UFA 6

Interviewee: Otis Boggs

Interviewer: Julian Pleasants

Date: September 9, 1997; November 4, 1997

P: It is September 9, 1997. I am at the home of Otis Boggs. This is tape number one for Otis Boggs. Otis, tell me when and where you were born?

B: I was born in a college town, Clemson, South Carolina, on February 16, 1920. I was wrapped up in bundling clothes and do not remember too much about the temperature, but they tell me it was a pretty cold day.

P: How long did you live in Clemson?

B: My dad was a railroad man. He initially worked for the Southern Railroad, but the Depression came and he was not high on the seniority role, so he started working as a ticket agent and telegraph operator for a new railroad that had opened up in Florida called the Seaboard Airline. So I alternated between Clemson and the state of Florida. One time my dad got a job at a place called Indian Town, which is not too far from Lake Okeechobee, and there were no residencies down there. I think the only people around were Indians (now Indian Town is a full-grown community with a library and all the fast food places). Dad could not find a place for us to stay down there, so my mother and I moved back from Florida to South Carolina, and we spent three years there before he could get a job at a place where we could get a house.

P: What years were these?

B: We moved back [to South Carolina] in 1928 and stayed there until 1930. In 1930, we moved back to Okeechobee, Florida, and I spent one year in Okeechobee. Railroad people were like traveling salesmen, they moved a lot. My dad moved up to Polk County, and I finished up my high school education there at Auburndale.

P: Were you ever a Clemson fan?

B: Definitely, absolutely. When I was a young boy living in Clemson between 1928 and 1930, a neighbor took me over to see Clemson play a school that you are probably familiar with called Davidson [Davidson College, Davidson, NC], the Davidson Wildcats. That was my very first football game. To this day I can even remember the score [of that game]: Clemson won six to nothing. Davidson was a scrappy team. In those days if you scored a touchdown, it was a pretty big deal. Of course today you have to get about forty points to impress people. I became a real Clemson fan because I got a chance to be the batboy for the Clemson baseball team, which at that time was coached by a full-blooded Chippewa Indian. This fellow's name was Joe Guyon, and he was very famous

because he had been a blocking back for Jim Thorpe [famous athlete, gold medal winner in the 1912 Olympics, 1888-1953] at Haskell [Indian School, Lawrence, Kansas]. In those days eligibility did not concern people too much, so when he got through playing at Haskell, he moved to the South and became a football player at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. His coach there was very famous. One day after a baseball game, he offered to take me home. Before we left, we stopped by his office, and I saw this rather unusual picture there of a guy wearing a turtle-neck sweater and glasses. He looked like a Shakespearian actor rather than an athlete. I said, Coach Joe, who in the world is this guy? He said, I am going to tell you O. That is the most famous football coach and probably the best coach to ever come down the pipe. I said, what is his name? He said his name is John Heisman [famous football player and coach, 1869-1936], and that is the man for whom the Heisman Trophy [award given to college football's player of the year] is named. Joe Guyon and his wife were wonderful people. Their son, little Joe, was in my grade at Daniel School in Clemson. The two Guyons used to bring Indian artifacts to our school and talk about Indian lore which was quite interesting. I learned a whole lot about Indians from those two full-blooded Chippewas, Mr. and Mrs. Guyon.

- P: On the subject of Clemson, if I can bring you a little closer to the present, what are your memories of Coach Frank Howard [Clemson football coach]?
- B: I got to know him after I got into broadcasting. At a couple of sportscaster conventions, I had a chance to chat with him, and he had a great sense of humor. He and **"Peahead" Walker** used to carry on a running feud, somewhat like Walter Winchell [hosted gossip radio program from 1930-1950] and Jack Benny [comedian] did in radio. Their feud had a lot of good humor in it. One year Coach Howard was selected to go down to play LSU in the Sugar Bowl, and it was back in the day when LSU had a very fine football team (they had the "Chinese Bandits"). Clemson fans were quite worried that their team was not going to do too well against LSU, so they had a quarterback meeting up in Charlotte and the speaker was "Peahead" Walker. Of course, "Peahead" had been a fantastic coach at Wake Forest, and he got up there and talked about the upcoming games, but he did not say how Clemson was going to do [against LSU]. So after "Peahead" finished his speech, some of the Clemson alumni collared him and said, hey coach, how is Howard's Tigers going to do against those LSU Tigers? "Peahead" said, you do not have a thing to worry about. And they said, well, why didn't you say that? He said, hey, your Clemson Tigers have had lots of experience. You are worried about those Chinese Bandits, the White Team, and the offensive team. You have nothing to worry about, and I will tell you why. Your team has been coached by a Mongolian idiot all year, so there is nothing to worry about. "Peahead" and Howard had a wonderful sense of humor. I had occasion to chat with Howard many times about football at Clemson. He loved the school. He was a graduate of Alabama, but he really

loved Clemson. He had one son, Jimmy, who played football for Clemson. One night about four of us were riding to a sportscasters banquet being held up in Salsbury, North Carolina, and two or three of the guys said, Coach Howard, we want to ask you something. Bobby Dodd [football coach at Georgia Tech] sent his son down to Florida, rather than have him go to Georgia Tech, so he would not have to coach him. The Oklahoma coach sent his son to Duke to play football. Most coaches do not like having their sons playing on their team. However, I noticed that you, Coach Howard, have got Jimmy playing at Clemson (at that time, Jimmy had just finished his sophomore year there). Why in the world did you do that? Coach Howard did not bat an eye and said, because I wanted Jimmy to have the benefit of playing under the best coaching in the United States, that is why.

P: There is a story that I think is about Frank Howard. People were criticizing the importance of football and the fact that Clemson had all of these people in their stadium watching this game. And Frank Howard said, well, I do not see anybody paying \$15 to see professors grade exams. [laughter]

B: There is something to that. He really had a basic sense of humor. But he did not bat an eye, he told those people that he wanted his son to have the benefit of playing under the best coaching in the United States, and he figured he could give it to him.

P: Did you get to see many of the old, traditional big Thursday games?

B: I never did get to see one as a youngster. The only games that I could see at Clemson were the ones that were played at home. The big Thursday game was something else. It was kind of a law in South Carolina that South Carolina and Clemson had to play in Columbia on the Thursday of state fair week. It was always a home game for the [South Carolina] Gamecocks. I think that over a period of time Clemson felt that they needed to have a home-and-home relationship because they were always the visiting team. That game produced a tremendous rivalry between those two schools, which is still very strong today. I would say that rivalry ranks with almost any rivalry in the country.

P: In what sports did you participate in high school?

B: I participated in basketball and baseball. I was All-Ridge Conference in both. I would have gone out for football, but my dad said he wanted me to be a whole piece of human being when I got to college, if I ever got to college. [My parents] were definitely afraid of football. In fact, I think he had a close friend who got killed in a football game, so he did not want me to play football. But I love football. To me football is probably the most exciting sport of all, but I never did get to play. I did love basketball, and I did play quite a bit of baseball.

- P: So you played for the Auburndale Bloodhounds?
- B: Bloodhounds, how did you know that? Yes, the Bloodhounds. They started hunkering down before the Georgia Bulldogs did, I can tell you that.
- P: How did they get that name?
- B: I really do not know. That was a tag that they had when I started school there, and for the life of me I do not know how they got the name, but it was always a strong basketball school. Our team won the Ridge Conference the two years that I was there. We never could get to the state because back in those days every school was in the same category [for sports]. Now they have got classified situations where your bigger schools are in one group, the next biggest in another, and so on. But in those days, hey, a little school like Auburndale was right in there with Miami Senior High or Robert E. Lee in Jacksonville. Back then, the playing field was not quite level.
- P: When you were in high school did you have ambitions to be a broadcaster?
- B: To a degree I did, yes. I had a very fortunate arrangement. Mr. Canova, of the Canova family in Auburndale, was the agent there, and he was a dear friend of my dad. The Canova name was a name that was outstanding in radio from the early days. In fact, when I was just a youngster, about five years old, my dad was working in a little village named Highland which is up just north of Starke. The ticket agent there, **Mr. Wimberly**, had one of the old radio sets that did not have a speaker, so you had to plug in earphones to listen to it. And he invited us over one day in the early evening to hear a radio program. I do not think that either my mother or my father had heard radio. The radio was tuned to the city station in Jacksonville, WJAX, which no longer exists as such. And a young family named Canova was on that evening. There was a brother, Zeke, and two sisters, Judy and Annie. They had all gone to Juliard [school for the arts in New York City], but they were doing hillbilly and country music and had a very popular show in Jacksonville. That was the first time I heard radio. Later on, I was to meet their first cousin, Mr. Julian Canova, who was an excellent piano player. His two boys played piano and so did his wife who was also an excellent player. It was just a musical family. Quite frequently I would stay overnight at their place when we were on a basketball trip. Keep in mind that I did not live in Auburndale; I lived in Polk City. So if we were playing on the road, I had to go down and stay overnight. So my dad made arrangements with the Canovas so that I could stay there. I got to meet a lot of musicians, and I got interested in radio at that time. The oldest Canova boy was doing a broadcast out of Charlotte for the Lance Company. His name was Nolan. He won a broadcast award for his singing. So at an early age in high school, I got an in for broadcasting.

P: Why did you decide on the University of Florida?

B: That is a pretty good story too because originally I was going to go to Clemson. My basketball coach at Auburndale was a gentleman named Ed Cruise, and Ed did not figure I was going to make it to the NBA overnight. He taught me chemistry, and he figured I was more adept at balancing equations than I was at shooting three-pointers. He said, Otis, why don't you think about going to summer school between your junior and senior year in high school and take some college chemistry. So I gave it a thought and said, hey, that is a good idea because I had an aunt and uncle living in Clemson, and I had a lot of relatives up there. So I went up and stayed with my aunt and uncle and got in two semesters of college chemistry when I was a junior in high school. It was a very interesting experience to study chemistry at that early age, and I actually had planned to be a chemist. I was going to go back to Clemson after I got my degree at Auburndale and stay with my uncle and aunt who lived there. I was going to be a daytime student. As things worked out, my uncle and aunt moved to Birmingham. My dad and I were up at Clemson, and my dad said, let's go back down to Gainesville. You already have passed all the entrance tests, and you can go to school at the University of Florida. And that was OK with me because I knew that the University of Florida had a radio station, WRUF, which was operated primarily by students. My dad used to like to listen to a fellow named Red Barber. Most folks know Red Barber as a sportscaster, and he was one of the great ones to come down the pipe. And he grew up wanting to be a singing minstrel. So when he got to WRUF, he found out that they had a hillbilly show named the Orange Grove String Band. He moved heaven and earth to get to be the emcee of that show, and they let him sing. He sang "When the Work is All Done This fall," "That Silverhead Daddy of Mine," "Red River Valley," and all of those traditional folk songs. When I found out that I had a chance to go down to Florida and maybe get a job at WRUF as a student, I said, hey, I will take that. So I came back [to Gainesville]. And I have never regretted going to the University of Florida because it is a wonderful school. I actually got a radio opportunity here at Florida that I never would have gotten at Clemson which did not have its own radio station. So it was a real break for me.

P: Tell me a little bit about your student life at the University of Florida. Where did you live?

B: I got here too late to get into the dorms, and my mother had a cousin who had lived in Gainesville for quite awhile, a gentleman named Dan Tucker. He had a friend, **Mrs. Ballantine**, who had a great big house, and she rented rooms out. He said that it would be a real good place for me to stay. I would be able to study, and I would have a room of my own. So we went around and met Mrs. Ballantine, and she said she would be delighted to have me, but I would have to wait until the second week of September because at the time she was renting

rooms out to baseball players. Gainesville had an excellent baseball team, and they were in the \_\_\_\_\_ playoffs. I said I would be glad to bunk in there and share a room with somebody, and she let me do that. So it was a very fortunate relationship because for my whole school career I just rented from her, and I later married her sister. From the word "go," I had a great place to stay, a good place to study, and some nice people to live with, so I have always been very fortunate to have had that. In school, I started out in chemistry and was going to get a degree in chemistry, but in my sophomore year, I took an audition down at WRUF and passed the audition. So once I got into radio, I could not reconcile the radio work that I was doing, and I was paying part of my way through school, with the long lab hours in chemistry, although I like chemistry very much. In organic chemistry some of the projects run eighteen hours, and if you goof up your lab work in say, the sixteenth hour, you cannot erase it and start from there.

You have got to go all the way back to the first hour and go through one of those distillations. I just decided that I would get a group major in German, chemistry, and history, which you probably cannot do today. While I was in the history department, I had a chance to meet a gentleman who later became head of that department, Dr. Sam Proctor [Professor Emeritus of History, 1944-1953]. He and I took history together for about two years. We logged some time together.

P: What year did you get the job with the radio station?

B: I started working at WRUF in March of 1939. After I passed the audition, I met with the sports announcer who was a gentleman named **Dan Riss**. Dan was doing play-by-play, but he was contemplating making a move. He had a great voice and later became a fine actor in Hollywood. He played in a number of Jimmy Stewart [famous actor] movies, and he also played the part of Admiral [Chester William] Nimitz [commander of the Pacific fleet, 1941-1945] in a Hollywood production. After my audition was over, he said, if you are really interested in sports, we are having spring football practice (as the Gators usually do in March). Come on out to the field, and we will let you do some mock play-by-play. There were two other guys who were also interested in doing that. So for a whole week we went out, watched the Gators play, and did a simulated play-by-play. Dan told me, tomorrow the state high school basketball tournament starts, and we would like for you to come over and maybe do color on one of the games. In those days WRUF broadcasted every single state high school tournament game. They would bring thirty-two teams in here. The teams would play all week, and then Saturday night they had the finals. So I went over there on Monday, and a young fellow out of St. Petersburg named Jimmy Walton, who later became a top announcer for WHAS in Louisville, said Otis, just hold tight on the color. He said, I am going to do the color. We may need you in another capacity. Now the second game was between Green Cove Springs and Mulberry. I was familiar with Mulberry, which was a little town in Polk County, but I did not know too much about Green Cove Springs. The guy

who was supposed to do the play-by-play of that game did not show up, so Jimmy comes up to me and says, Otis, I have got to go to a music class, so you will just have to do the play-by-play for this game and this other fellow here will do color. I had never done play-by-play for a basketball game or football game. I had never even been on the radio. So there I was doing a basketball game. I knew that I did not do a good job, at least I certainly did not think that I did a good job, but I did the best I could and I knew basketball pretty well. I was just disappointed that I had been shuttled in under fire like that. After about three days, I ran into Dave Russell, who was one of the sportsmen that they were taking on (he had already been at the station for about two years), and he said to me, Otis, where have you been? They have been looking for you down at the station. I said, man, there is no way they are looking for me after that basketball game I did, because I know the people that heard that figured that WRUF had about hit the bottom. He said, no, as a matter of fact, they want you to get started running the board, learning how to run records, and do some things. You had better go down there this afternoon. So I did that, and low and behold they put me to work starting in March of 1939. I got a great break because Dan Riss moved on to WLW in Cincinnati, that was before he went to the west coast to become an actor. Dave Russell, the man who told me I had better get down there and check out the board, became the play-by-play announcer. When it came time to select a color announcer for 1939, the station chose this little unknown kid from Auburndale who, in his first year of broadcasting, would be the color announcer. Some really interesting things happened to me in that first year I worked color with Dave.

P: What color did you do? Football?

B: Yes. I did the half time, the pre-game, and the wrap up at the end. Now they have a whole bunch of satellite shows and different features that precede a broadcast. In those days, we would have fifteen minutes before the kick-off and then maybe five or ten minutes at the end of the game. Of course, we had the half-time show, in which we tried to interview two or three people and pick up as much band music as we could.

P: You were still a student at this point?

B: Oh, yes. I was a student the whole time I worked at WRUF before I went in the service.

P: What did you get paid?

B: When I first started, you are not going to believe this, I got \$15 a month, but that was big money back in 1939. Later on, I got booted up to \$30. They doubled my salary, which was pretty good progress. I did not get anything extra for the

games that first year, but later on when I did play-by-play, I got extra money for the games. But \$30 was not bad. At that time, a dollar went a long way.

P: In the late 1930s you were probably lucky to have a job at all.

B: Oh, yes. That is true because the bad times were still there, and there were not that many jobs. I was very thankful that I was able to help pay a part of my expenses for school. I think before I went into the service in 1943, I was up to \$75 a month. So I was very fortunate, and there were some fringe benefits. You would get free chow at the ball games and that was not bad.

P: When did you finish at UF?

B: I finished in 1943, despite the fact that I started in 1937. [It took me longer to graduate] because I cut down on my class-load, and I did a lot more broadcasting. In those days we did not have a Journalism School; WRUF was operated separately. Major Garland Powell was the director of the station, and he answered to the President, Dr. John Tigert [University of Florida president, 1928-1947]. I believe he and Dr. Tigert were first cousins. So he ran the radio station and had an unbelievable knack for picking talent. Most of the people he picked later became either station directors or top broadcasters. He was the one who thought Red Barber was going to be a great sportscaster. He just sensed that he had that talent and ability, and he picked him. I do not think that anybody else would have picked Red. But the Major had a great belief in him, and he put him on.

P: Who would you say trained you as an announcer, or did you just learn it as you went?

B: We had some good training because we worked with guys who had been there for two or three years. Dan Riss was an excellent teacher, and another gentleman who helped me a great deal was Al Flanagan. Al was not a great announcer, but he was a terrific producer of shows and later became Bing Crosby's top man. He ran the Bing Crosby TV and radio network. I went out to visit him in California and had a very wonderful time. Al took me around and showed me the operation. At that time, he was the general manager of Channel 13 TV, which was a big independent television station. Later on he became the director of programming for ABC, and finally in his last days, Al Flanagan was the head man for **Gannett Newspapers** \_\_\_\_\_. Al is now living in Atlanta. He gave over \$6 million to the journalism school here [at the University of Florida]. In fact, a whole wing of the journalism building was built with Al Flanagan's money.

P: How often did you work there when you were a student?

B: We would work six days a week (we got one day off a week). I did not work

Sundays too often, but I worked Monday through Saturday. Sometimes I would do a special program on Sunday. I remember **James Milton** came back to do a broadcast from the University of Florida, [his alma mater]. He was a great singer and had sung at the Metropolitan. They had a special deal when they dedicated the Steven Foster Memorial, just north of Gainesville, and he came down with his pianist and did a show from our auditorium. I had a chance to announce that over the mutual network.

P: So you did music and news broadcasts as well. What other responsibilities did you have at the station?

B: That is a good story within itself because WRUF gave us a chance to do everything.. You did writing, you did announcing, you did production, you could do sales if you wanted to, but I was not interested in sales, I was interested in production work. One of the first things I was assigned to do was to write a classical program, so I wrote a show called "The Hour of the Masters." I really learned something about music from doing that classical program. Later on when I got out to Dallas and worked at WFAA, which is was a 50,000 watt station owned by the Dallas Morning News, I got to know a fabulous Hungarian conductor named Antal Dorati, who at that time conducted the Dallas Symphony. He has also conducted the Concert \_\_\_\_ Orchestra in Amsterdam and the Minneapolis Symphony. He no longer lives in this country; he is over in Europe now. I got to know him quite well, and I did a program called "Opera, Once Over Lightly" and did some shows with him. He was a tough task-master, most good directors are, and he knew that I was a country boy -- I was from back in the sticks. He once asked me, how did a country boy like you learn about Strauss [Johann Strauss, Viennese composer, 1804-1849] and all of those famous classical composers. So I had to tell him that I had written a show in my early college days called "The Hour of the Masters." At WRUF they let everybody try everything. You could do news, you could do special events, and if you wanted to do sports, which I wanted to do, you could do sports. Then everybody seemed to fall into the particular niche that fitted them. [For example], I did not consider Flanagan a great announcer -- he was not bad, but there were others who were better -- but he was a master at producing shows. Riss was a great actor, he was outstanding with the Florida Players, he did some tremendous dramatic shows, and, as I said, he later went out to Hollywood and became an outstanding actor out there.

P: When you did your own programs, did you write them up, produce them and announce them? Did you do everything yourself?

B: WRUF operated a little differently than we do today. Back then, we had a chance to do certain shows. There was one show that everybody wanted to do called "The Variety Music Parade" in which you got all the new popular records

and ran them from 1:00 pm until 2:00 pm, but no one person did that show, we alternated, so everybody got a shot at doing it. Everybody got a chance to do the news. There was a show that they stuck me with that I did not particularly like. They had the forum hour there, and I just did not want to be a forum hour announcer so I went in griping one day, and the Major said, just remember this, if you can make a show sound better, that is a feather in your cap. It shows that you have a real talent as an announcer. So from that day on I said, well, I am going to make the forum hour sound pretty good, which was the attitude I took. In those early days, I think everybody at WRUF did that. It does not work that way today. I am not sure that it would work out as well as it did in those days, but everybody that went there had an idea that they wanted to get into radio. They were not sure just where they were going to fall in, but they gave you a chance to fall into the one niche that best suited you, and they had a remarkable record of turning out people. They had announcers all over the country. They had announcers in New York, they had network people. One of the young fellows who worked with me during those pre-war years named **Park Simmons** went back to his home in Washington, and when **John Daily** left CBS to go over to London to do the war coverage, Park Simmons became the presidential announcer and introduced F.D.R. on CBS every time F.D.R. gave a fireside chat. Those are the kinds of people that were turned out at WRUF.

P: When you started out was sportscasting easy for you or was it difficult?

B: I would say that I was more interested in sportscasting than I was anything else. I do not think that sportscasting is the easiest thing to do well. There are people who are sportscasters who do not do it well, but I think that you have got to do a lot of homework to be a good sportscaster. You have got to have a God-given talent to be able to see; vision is very important as is the ability to form good pictures. Nowadays the TV man does not have to worry about those pictures because he has the picture there on the screen, but in the early days of radio, if you could not give a good word picture, you were lost in doing sports events. I think TV has been a real boom for a lot of people, but it is sort of a crutch. If you take a TV man and put him on the radio, you sometimes find that he does not cover all the things you want to here.

P: Let me follow that up. I understand that on some occasions on away games you would have to get the wire information from Western Union, and then you would have to verbally reconstruct the game?

B: Yes. That is what is called a re-creation broadcast. In fact, that first year I worked Gator football games in 1939 there were times when Dave Russell and I did not have that much money, and back then there was no network. So if we happened to play a game say in Boston, we played Boston College that year, we could not go. Since we were not there, we would get the Western Union to

supply the very bare information about who carried the ball, where he was tackled, and you had to ad lib and make-up a picture. That was called a re-created broadcast, and we did several of those. Sound effects were put in, and I guess some people were artful at re-creating broadcasts because they did it so often. I never did like to do that because I felt like I was lying to myself and lying to the people listening in. There used to be a fine old baseball announcer named \_\_\_\_ out in Dallas, and he started doing the baseball game of the day before they ever broadcasted live, and he did that same thing. He was a master at it. If the wire broke down, he would have the guy foul off nineteen pitches until they got the Western Union hooked back together. I did some recreation, but I did not like it too well.

P: Ronald Reagan did some of that.

B: Yes, he did. As a matter of fact, I believe he was affiliated with the Chicago Cubs. He got discovered when he went out for Spring Training one year and did a screen test.

P: When you broadcasted the games, did you use sound effects like crowd noise and all of that?

B: Oh, yes. We had crowd noise and band music. We tried to put the whole schmeer on. I do not know how well we succeeded. [laughter] I remember one night we were doing a game in Philadelphia, and the Western Union operator said that Florida was getting ready to kick a field goal and the wire went dead. We did not know whether the guy had hit the field goal. The next thing we know is that it is half-time, and the teams are getting ready to have the next kick-off. So we had to get to our operator to say, what about that field goal? And he came back and said, no, they missed it. So doing something like that leaves you hanging sometimes.

P: When did you start going to away games?

B: I would say that the first away game that Dave and I went to that year was the final game against the Auburn Tigers over in Auburn, Alabama in 1939. We did that game live, and it wound up in a seven-seven tie. They played [that game] at Jordan-Hare Stadium, and **Charlie Tate**, who later became the head coach at [the University of] Miami, was a full-back that day and scored a touchdown. The Auburn Tigers scored late and tied it up seven-seven. My goodness, we did not win a game at that stadium until **Tug Dickey** came here mid-way through his career and took a team over there and won twelve to eight. **Don Gafney** was the quarterback. That was a long time: from 1937 to, I believe it was, 1978 that they finally won. I would have to check that year out.

P: At a certain point, you would do all the away games?

B: Yes. We started doing most of the away games within the next couple of years. After Dave left, people got fired up about Florida football. The university had brought in a coach that had been at Notre Dame, Tom Lieb [Florida football coach, 1940-1945], and Lieb beat a fabulous Georgia team that had **Trippey** on it. The interest in the games increased so much that we started doing the away games. In fact, in 1941, the year the bombing at Pearl Harbor occurred, the final game of the year was scheduled with the U.C.L.A. Bruins. Florida had played U.C.L.A. a number of times in the past, so a relationship between the two teams had already existed. That year U.C.L.A. had a great football team. There was some doubt as to whether the game would be played because the war had already started. That game was scheduled to be played up at Jacksonville; it was not going to be played in Gainesville. They did play the game, so I got a chance to do the play-by-play for that game from Jacksonville over the coast-to-coast Network of Mutual. Those first two or three years were a traumatic time for me. I got to do a play-by-play on a network, and, as I have said, I was very fortunate particularly in my first year of broadcasting because some very interesting things happened to me that year. Perhaps the most interesting thing that happened to me that year (in 1939) was the day that Georgia Tech came down to play against Florida in their homecoming game. They were going to be Florida's homecoming foe. Now you normally would not pick Georgia Tech to be a homecoming foe because in those years and later on in the 1950s they were perennially bowl-bound because they had some powerhouse teams. This particular team had a great quarterback named **Johnny Bosch** and an outstanding end in **Howard Ekter**, and they were bound for the Orange Bowl to play Missouri. This was going to be the next to the last game for them. They would wind up the season with Georgia at Grant Field, and then go down to Miami and play Missouri in the Orange Bowl. The N.W. Air Company was doing a lot of broadcasting down here, and they had the Atlantic Refining Company which that year sponsored some of the games on University of Florida network. I guess we picked up N.W. Air and Atlantic towards the end of the season. Georgia Tech also had the Atlantic Refining Company and the N.W. Air advertising agency. So the agency decided that they would just combine the two networks, the Georgia Tech network and the Florida network, and let the Georgia Tech announcer do the play-by-play and let the Florida announcer, which in this case was me, do the color (at the time Dave Russell was doing the play-by-play and I was doing the color). The man who was doing play-by-play for the Georgia Tech network was a very fine radio broadcaster named Marcus Bartlett, who was an outstanding graduate of Emory University [Atlanta, Georgia] (he had many academic awards) and, at that time, the general manager of WSB. in Atlanta. So he came down to do the play-by-play, and he

and I met on the Friday before the game. It was Florida's homecoming game, and back then Florida's homecoming games were always big affairs, as they are today. That year (1939) we did not have a team that really should have been on the same field with Georgia Tech. But I was going to get the chance to be on two networks at one time in my first year in broadcasting, and I said, hey, this is a good deal. I have got to do a good job. As people who follow sports would remember, Marcus turned out some good people at WSB. I know Doug Edwards later went from WSB to become the top newsman in radio and television for CBS. He preceded Walter Cronkite [anchored the CBS Evening News from 1962-1981]. Another fellow that gained quite a bit of popularity and fame who came out of WSB and had been a Marcus Bartlett trainee was a gentleman named Ernie Harwell, who for years and years was the voice of the Detroit Tigers. Ernie was a great broadcaster. So I felt quite honored to be sharing the booth with a gentleman like that, and I was all excited about doing this game although I did not think Florida had a chance. It turned out that they played a great first half. The game wound up seven-seven at half-time, but just before that first half ended, something happened that completely dashed my half-time show; in fact, wiped it out completely. A young student, who I understand had just gotten a Dear John letter that weekend from his girl that said she was ditching him, decided that he could not take it anymore, and he had gotten access to some pot or as we called it in those days "reefer." He had smoked about three or four of those marijuana cigarettes and was on an all-time high. In those days the Florida Field did not have the capacity it has now -- it would only seat a little over 22,000 -- and all the light standards were right up at the top of the bowl. There were three big towers on the east side, which is the student side, and three over on the west side. Just before half-time, this particular student decided he was going to go up and put on a show for the crowd. So he climbed the tower in the northeast corner of the stadium and got up all the way before somebody noticed him. There was a little platform up there with a railing that went around, and he was doing hand-stands and skin-the-cats and was hanging up there by one hand. All of a sudden, the people in the stands got notice of this. Women were fainting and screaming, and they thought that he was surely going to fall. Those towers were up about seventy or eighty feet above the top of the stadium. So Marcus mentioned this, and he said, now I am going to turn you over to Otis Boggs for the half-time. Well, I was hoping to have an interview and have the Fighting Gator Band, but nobody was really interested in those things; everybody was watching the guy at the top of the stadium. Finally they decided they had to get this kid down or else they could not start the second half, so they sent one fellow up to get him. The kid kicked at that one guy, so they said the only way to get him down is to do a two-pronged attack on him. They then sent two fellows up there. With women fainting all over the place, they finally subdued him on top of the tower, tied him down up there, and he stayed up there all during the second half. My half-time show was gone, but as I looked back, I said, hey, that was more exciting than the band

or any interview that I could have had. So I got a break in that respect, but the University of Florida did get some bad publicity because in those days the **Journal and Constitution** covered the game very well, and they did not neglect the student that climbed the tower. They wrote a \_\_\_\_\_ section, which was kind of a brown glossy section, that had two pages of shots of people fainting in the stands and the student being tied down up there. The paparazzi had a heyday that day.

P: Who finally won the game?

B: That is a good question. Georgia Tech came back and put fourteen points on the board and Bosch and Ekter were outstanding. They beat the Gators twenty-one to seven. But I thought Florida played a marvelous game. The only thing was that the kid who was skinning-the-cat on that tower stole the show.

P: Let me ask you a little bit about doing color and play-by-play. Which is harder?

B: Doing the play-by-play is more difficult. When you are doing color, you are what they call a "filler man." There is an art to doing good color and making the game interesting. I think color broadcasting has improved. Now they bring in people who actually played football. To be honest with you, the old-style color was kind of dull. I think they dress it up a whole lot today, which makes it more interesting. But doing the play-by-play is a tough job.

P: What makes doing play-by-play so difficult?

B: I think the most difficult thing is concentrating on the twenty-two players on the field, the four to six officials, both benches, the coaching staff, the yard markers, the downs, the crowd. You have a myriad of things to think about, and when you neglect one, you are going to get trapped. You have got to concentrate on the ball and everything that contributes to the game. Today, they have marvelous scoreboards. In the old days scoreboards were not all that good, but today the scoreboards give you yardage, first downs, and a whole lot of stats that you can fill-in with that we did not have in the old days. I marvel at the scoreboards now. Today, you could probably sit at Florida Field and almost do your own play-by-play by just watching the scoreboard.

P: Did you keep your own stats?

B: No, I did not. I had a statistician who is still doing stats for the network, a fellow named **Dick Freize**. He was a very good man. He kept very good numbers on first downs, pertinent yardage, passes completed, all the things that a fan wants to know. At an early time, we decided that you needed a good statistician and that was one of the things that we had. I still think that it added a lot to the broadcast.

P: I understand you had an interesting way of keeping up with the numbers and the substitutions?

B: I did. Back when they went to two \_\_\_\_\_, in other words we went to the specialization where you had one group of players that did nothing but play offense and the other group played nothing but defense. That was back in the days when **Paul Dietz** had the Chinese Bandits that I mentioned earlier and the three different teams at L.S.U. Every college team went through the same thing. If a player does not go both ways, he is coming out of there, if he plays offense, as soon as his team loses the ball. So I had an engineer who was a good electronics man named **Laddie** \_\_\_\_\_, and Laddie said, Otis, I believe we could put together a board that would help you out. I said, well, I think it would be great if we could just have a light by each player that is in the game. If Florida lost the ball, you pull a switch and all of the lights of the offensive players go out and the lights by the defensive players go on, and then on the other side of the board, the lights of the other team's offensive players come on. So we rigged up a spotting board and it worked very well. There were a few flaws in it, but during those early days of specialization, it was a real good thing to have. It worked out fine for me, but it was big and cumbersome, and we ultimately got back to the simplest thing which was having pins by the names and having a board that you could turn over with the offense on one side and defense on the other side. But for the time that we used the spotting board, it was a fun thing to do.

P: Did you have a spotter?

B: Yes, I did. I tried to use two spotters; I know some people today use just one, but I tried to get a spotter for the visiting team and I always had one for the Gator team. I had some rather interesting people as spotters. One of my earliest spotters was a young fellow from Jacksonville named Don Davidson. Don had been a great track athlete at Robert E. Lee High School, and Don later became one of the top Ford dealers in the state, Don Davidson Ford. He was just a remarkable young man. He made a lot of the out-of-state trips, and one of trips that he made was when we played over in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Don was a very popular young man, and he told me when we got in Friday that he had a date with a very famous young lady and I asked him who she was. And he said, well, it is Johnny Mack Brown's daughter. Johnny Mack Brown had been an All-American and later on became a top Hollywood actor as a double. He was very famous in the Hollywood scene. And Don was just truly a fine young man. I often told people, if I ever have a son, I would like for him to be like Don Davidson. Later on after Don moved to Jacksonville, he came down with a dreaded thing called the Lou Gehrig Disease which cost him his life. I believe his son Mike is now running the agency. Another fine spotter that I had was also from Jacksonville. He was a young football player who came down and got injured, and his wife worked for us at WRUF as a traffic operator. His name was

**John Santora**, and John later became an outstanding judge in Jacksonville. He passed away a number of years ago, but he was an excellent spotter.

P: How do you divide up the comments between the play-by-play and the color person? Do you have that set ahead of time?

B: Not necessarily set ahead of time. It is the sort of thing where you wing it. Actually, when **Fred Abbott** and I started working together, I would call the play-by-play and he would come in and kind of diagnose what had happened with brief comments, which is what most color analysts do today. If two people work together, they get used to each other so there is no override where one is talking and the other comes on top of him. That never really presented a problem for Fred and I or for **Lee McGriff**. Lee worked with me as a color man, and it worked out very well.

P: Is there sometimes too much commentary by either the play-by-play or the color man?

B: I think that depends on the individual. Like anything, there are good sportscasters and there are bad ones. Some people try to give you too many statistics. It is very difficult to please everybody at one time, but I think there is a tendency to add a little bit too much commentary sometimes.

P: How often did you give the score?

B: Not frequently enough. You get so wound up in doing the play-by-play that you forget to give the score. Red Barber had a wonderful idea. He got a little timer, one of these little glass deals, that would run out of sand in a minute and a half, and then he would flip that over and whenever all the sand went down, he would give the score. That was a great system. I adopted that later on. Red gave me a lot of great ideas and was a real dear friend. Getting back to spotters. I had one fellow who came to me and worked in radio after World War II and did some excellent spotting, and he is now living in Gainesville. His name is **Bob Altman**. Bob Altman was in the Air Force when the war broke out, and he left Hawaii and then moved over to \_\_\_\_ in the Philippines. He was a young fellow out of Sanford, Florida, and happened to be the radio operator on a B-17. His pilot was a young man named **Colin Kelley** who was from Monticello, Florida. They were attacked by the Japanese three days after Pearl Harbor on the fourth day of December, and Colin Kelley and his co-pilot tried to keep the plane up. The plane caught on fire, and two of his crew members were killed but five of them got out, and Bob Altman, the radio operator, was one of those who got out. He said that he owed his life to Colin Kelley because he kept the plane up. Just a few seconds after Bob bailed out, the plane exploded and Colin was lost. Bob Altman went on down in his parachute and was later captured and spent the

remainder of the war, forty months, in a Japanese prison camp and came out alive. He was one of the best spotters I have ever had. He did not like to eat rice too much because he had survived on rice and dried fish, but he still maintained his sense of humor and is one of the more remarkable human beings I have ever met. He is still a good friend.

P: Talk about the equipment you used in the early years?

B: In the early years we had a microphone that looked like a salt shaker that was very good for play-by-play. In fact, I had one mounted on a plate strapped around my shoulder and that was one of the best play-by-play mikes because it stayed with you all the time. If you got up, it was right there. For band pick-ups we had what you call a machine gun microphone. Actually it looked like a Gatlin gun, but there were little pipes coming out all the way around, and you would point that down at the field and just pick the band up and follow them from one end-zone to the other. The equipment was not bad. I think it has improved somewhat today. The technology used in pick-ups is good, but I think during our period of time we had sturdy equipment. It had to be sturdy because it took a beating on those road trips.

P: Before you broadcasted a game how much time would you spend researching the opposing players, the opposing team's statistics, their coaches?

B: If you wanted to do a decent job, you had to spend quite a bit of time researching those things because you did not want your broadcast to be one-sided. If you were doing an SEC game, for example, there would probably be a number of fans of the opposing team listening in to your broadcast, so you did not want to do a one-sided job; you wanted it to be as accurate as possible. I would say I spent a minimum of ten hours a week researching the opposing team. If you are broadcasting the Florida games, after you have done three you feel fairly comfortable with the personnel which does not change that much from game to game. But you are playing a different team each week and that is where you had to concentrate, and I would spend ten hours doing that. The sports information director can help you out a lot. He can give you a three deep line-up or four-deep line-up, the special teams players, the receivers who are down deep on kick-offs, and the people who are likely to do specialist jobs. You may have one guy who is just going to do kick-offs, one who is just going to do points-after, one guy who does the punting, and you need to get all of that information and get it right at your fingertips or in the old cranium, because when you go up in that booth and the pressure of the game is on you, you need to have that. It is a horrible thing to look up and see a number out there that you do not have and the guy has just made a big play. That is terrible. That is bad [laughter].

P: How nervous were you before games?

- B: A little bit. I think if you are not nervous, it is a bad sign. If I got a little nervous before a game, I felt like I was going to do a pretty good broadcast. When I was too cool, calm and collected, I was not motivated enough. I felt better if I was a little nervous, and I did not put that down too much.
- P: How many games did you miss during your career?
- B: I know I missed one down in Tampa when I got a bad case of laryngitis. I may have missed two in that time, but I must have done, gosh, 400.
- P: That is a pretty good record. When you did your broadcast, I presume you had your own binoculars so that you could pick up where the ball and the down-marker were because, as you said earlier, you can look at the scoreboard now, but back then you did not have that benefit.
- B: Right. I would use binoculars sometimes on a play that was down near the goal line, but I used them as a back-up more than anything else. Back in those days, I had pretty good vision, I had better than twenty-twenty, and you are going to concentrate on the ball anyhow. But yes, I used binoculars from time to time.
- P: But you were closer to the field then?
- B: Much closer to the field, right. You remember Florida Field in those days, twenty-two rows up and boy, you were at the top of the stadium.
- P: Did you consider yourself objective in announcing the Florida games?
- B: Let me put it this way. I knew that I was broadcasting for the University of Florida and that I was a Florida grad and anybody listening in would know that I was a Gator fan, but I never believed in saying "my Gators" or "our Gators." I never used that. I never believed in putting down the other team. If the other team did something good, I would let the people know that it was good.
- P: You would not say something like, it is our ball?
- B: No. I never did that. None of this "our, mine, we" stuff. I did not do that, but I think that most anyone who listened to Otis Boggs broadcast a football game, certainly would tell you that he was pro-Florida. Maybe I got a little more enthusiastic sometimes when Florida came from behind. I think that would be very true.
- P: How would you decide on your half-time show?
- B: It depended on who was there. If we had an interesting scout from another team that we were going to play, we would pick that person and ask him to come

over and talk. I had a young announcer one time who did color for the games for just one year; he was inexperienced. The Auburn scout came over, and it happened to be **Joel Eaves** who later became the athletic director at the University of Georgia. Joel was a real dear friend of mine. I said to this young guy doing the color, why don't we just get Joel to come over and talk about next week's game. He can tell you what is happening with the Auburn Tigers, and maybe if they have had any injuries, how they are healing and who will be ready.

So he said this is a great idea. Joel came over and sat down, and this young announcer said, well, Coach Eaves it is good to have you. He said, by the way, what has been happening at Auburn this week, anything exciting? If you have ever been to Auburn, Alabama, it is just a town and that school and that is it. It is like Clemson. Joel says, well, I will tell you. They had several haircuts down at the \_\_\_\_ Barber Shop and two trains were on time. But outside of that, nothing very exciting happened [laughter]. So you have to make your questions a little more incisive than.

P: When you did your after game show, what would you do? Would you sum up the game with comments about why Florida won or why they lost?

B: Right. What were the weak points and what were the strong points. That basically was what we did, and we might also select the turning point of the ball game. Usually you can peg a ballgame to a particular play that makes the whole thing revolve and turn over. We would discuss who was outstanding on defense and offense. It was a summation of the game.

P: Would you usually pick a player of the game?

B: We did not in those days. Now they do; it is a very popular thing to pick the player of the game. Back in my days, we did not do that. But maybe doing that enhanced the program, I do not know. We picked outstanding players, but we did not necessarily say one or two or three players were the players of the game.

P: How long would you be on the air for a typical game during your career?

B: That would depend on whether you had two passing teams or two running teams. If you have got two running teams, they are going to kill a lot of clock, but with those passing teams, man, the game could go on and on. I used to figure I would be through in about three hours and forty-five minutes, now some of these games go on past the four-hour mark and then they have got the locker room show and everything. A guy puts in almost an eight hour day out there. I listen to the announcers, and I say, man, they should get overtime for the amount of work they put in. But we did not drag it out too much.

P: Did you get tired towards the end of the game? Your mental facilities are bound

to be tested by the pressure of say, a four hour game.

B: Oh, yes, you would. But sometimes basketball games where you have got a lot of action -- full court presses, the players are constantly moving up and down the floor -- used to tire me out a little bit more than a football game. There are periods in a football game where you could kind of relax a little bit and get your second wind, but there are days up in that booth when you have an exciting game. I think one of the most exciting games that I did was a game at Vanderbilt where the Gators came from behind and beat Vanderbilt who was undefeated. Florida won it something like thirty-four to twenty-seven. The ball was up and down the field, and I felt like I had done a hard day's labor out chopping cotton. I was just worn out, soaking through with perspiration.

P: Did you sit or stand?

B: I sat. A lot of guys today will stand, but I preferred to sit down.

P: Let me get back to your relationship with Red Barber. You talked about him and how he influenced your life. Explain how you met him and then how he influenced you, particularly your broadcast career.

B: One year the University of Florida had a sportscaster seminar, and they had the idea of having some of the outstanding sportscasters in the nation come down. They would invite, or open the door, to sportscasters in the South. You could come in, get a room, and spend about four or five days hearing these outstanding people speak, and one of the guys who came down happened to be Red Barber.

P: By this time, Red had already left Florida?

B: Oh, yes. I believe Red left in 1933 or 1934 and went to Cincinnati. When I met Red, he was closing out his career with the Yankees at that time. He was still doing Yankee broadcasts, but most of his career was spent with the Dodgers when they were in Brooklyn. **Rosie Roswell**, who was one of the great re-creators, was also at this seminar. He did the Pittsburgh Pirate games and most all of his [broadcasts] were recreations; he was a master at recreating a baseball game. **Big Al Helfer**, who was Mutual's broadcaster on the game of the day, was there. We had **George Walsh** who was the Philadelphia A's announcer and also the Kentucky Wildcat basketball broadcaster. We had Vince Scully who Red Barber had started out. Then we had some baseball people. **Burt Shotten** was going to speak because Red had asked him to come down, and he had been the manager of the Dodgers in 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke the color line. And then, of course, there was Red himself. Red gave a speech, and he talked about how to approach a ballgame. He said

that you should devote yourself to the game itself -- the action, the play. You should not be the manager, you should not put yourself in the role of the umpire, you should not second-guess the umpire or the personnel director by asking why a particular player is still on that team. You should not criticize the pitcher too much, because you do not know if that guy has been up all night with a sick baby walking the floor. You are broadcasting a game, so you should cover the game.

He said that he was influenced by the Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who was the iron-handed commissioner of baseball back when the Black Sox scandal came out [in 1921 the Judge banned eight White Sox players involved in the bribery scandal from baseball for life]. And he called all the broadcasters together before the World Series started, and it was Red's first year up there. In that day they had the series open to about three different networks. Red was there representing Mutual, **Bob Eltson** was there representing one network, and **Stern** was there representing another. The judge called him and told him how he wanted the game done. He said, I do not want you to editorialize. The important thing is to broadcast the ballgame. Keep your eye on what is happening on the field. By broadcasting a game and not editorializing, here is what I mean: if in the heat of the battle this afternoon, some player who is chewing tobacco gets all excited and mad, picks up a dipper of water, puts the water in his mouth, walks over to my box, and spits tobacco, water, and everything right in my face, I want you to tell about it. If you can, tell how many steps he took to get over there, what angle he approached, whether the wind was in his back or his face, and whether I took it standing up or sitting down. But I do not want you to editorialize on why he did it. Just tell what happened. As long as you do that, you are on familiar ground and your audience will stick with you. The minute you start being the manager, the umpire, the personnel director, you are out of your league. I think that is still good advice today. Red told me that, and I have never forgotten it. He and I used to reminisce too about our days. I never made as much money or became as famous as Red, but we were dear friends. His dad had been an engineer on the Atlantic Coastline, and my dad was a ticket agent and telegraph operator on the Seaboard, so we kind of had parallel lives.

P: When did he come back to Gainesville?

B: He never moved back to Gainesville. If I remember correctly, this particular seminar was held in the 1950s. The extension division had a sportsman, and I forget his name now, who was really interesting, and he organized the whole thing. It was a wonderful idea. Now at the time of the seminar I was familiar with Red's broadcast work, and as I said Burt Shotten was one of the guys there giving a speech. Burt was a Floridian, at least he made his home down in Bartow in Polk County where I was from. So I had a chance to talk to Burt one day after Red had left, and I asked him, Burt, I called him Mr. Shotten because I was youngster then, what kind of a guy is Red Barber? I know he has been

covering your ball games; he was there in 1947. And he said, well, I will tell you, Otis, my summation of Red. Not only is he a great broadcaster, but if, by some quirk of fate, I had to turn my ball club over to some person out of the Dodger organization who was not a manager to run it, of all the people I know in this world I would entrust the ball club to Red because he knows more about the players, he knows more about the operation of the club itself, he knows more about the opposition in the National League. That is the kind of a guy I think Red Barber is. Burt said that he would turn his ball club over to Red, and I thought that was one of the greatest commendations I had ever heard.

P: Did Red not do some commentary on WRUF right before he died?

B: I think **Norm** was the guy who discovered that they [the athletic association] had never really done anything for Red, and he thought they ought to have him down. So they invited him to come down to the Tennessee game. Norm asked me if I would fly up to get him. He said, we will get the university plane to go up and get him Saturday morning and bring him down. We will have a luncheon, and you can have lunch with him. And I said that I wanted to do a tape. So we did the luncheon at the University Centre Hotel, and Red and Lolla were there. Lolla went up to the room, and Red and I did a tape. And it was a marvelous interview because Red is one of those people who you just ask a question to, and he could ad lib a whole book for you and he had written several books. They have a copy of that tape up at the Sports Hall of Fame. Norm also has a tape of it. I think I asked you about that because it really is oral history.

P: What made him a great announcer?

B: Being able to put himself in the shoes of a ball player, understanding the feelings of an umpire. I think you have to take yourself off a high and mighty plane and kind of get down on the level with the people you are talking about. I know for sure that he was a great humanitarian. I think he just had a natural love for the game of baseball. Red is the best baseball announcer I have ever heard. He knew the game.

P: In reference to some of the other announcers you mentioned, people, for instance, talk about Vince Scully as being a great announcer.

B: Yes. He was a protégé of Red. Vince came over to see Red one day wanting to know how to get into broadcasting, and Red liked him. He took Vince, trained him from the very beginning, and made a major league broadcaster out of him, and a real good one. Yeah, Red started him from the word go.

P: Let me get back to your World War II experiences. When did you join the service and where did you serve?

B: I joined in June of 1943. It was a rather interesting evening. I will never forget this because we have that tremendous rivalry going with the F.S.U. Seminoles, you know the Gators and the Noles. Our graduation speaker was Dr. Doak Campbell for whom the F.S.U. stadium was named. So I got my diploma on one end of the auditorium stadium there at the stage, and I walked down about thirty paces and there is the good old army and they give me my orders to Fort Hood, Texas, which was in Camp Hood. So I, along with about fourteen other Florida boys, went over to the tank destroyer school.

P: Did you volunteer?

B: I was in ROTC, and the ironic thing is that because the war was going on, they had canceled the junior camp. It is normal for an ROTC student to go away for six weeks and go to Fort Benning if you were infantry, or to the artillery fort if you were artillery and do that for six weeks. But with the war going on, they canceled those six weeks of training. They said, since you did not go to the camp, we are going to have to send you through a special school. We had to go through and get our commission just like a service man would, so they sent us out to Hood, which was an eleven week course. When we got out there, they said, no, we are going to increase that baby to seventeen. I got in there in time to get seventeen weeks. So I figured every move I made was just a little longer, but I actually enjoyed going to Hood. It was the place where Jackie Robinson had gone to officer's candidate school, and I was in the fiftieth class out there. There was a lot of good people there. We had guys from Harvard, Ole Miss, Georgia, the Citadel. In fact, one of the top candidates was a young fellow named **Jimmy Outlaw**, and his people had started Morrison's; we all hear of Morrison's Cafeteria. The Outlaw family was one of the big stockholders, and I believe still are, in the Morrison Cafeteria chain. When Jimmy got out of the service, I think he appointed three of his buddies as managers -- one was in Tampa and one was in Orlando. But I got a chance to meet some interesting people.

P: Where did you go from Fort Hood?

B: I stayed at Fort Hood after I got my commission. There were two camps at Hood. There was a north camp and a south camp. The officers candidate school was the south camp, and at the north camp they had regular battalions. I went up to the battalion and did instruction up there. At about that time, they were deciding whether or not they were going to use the tank destroyers that much in combat because they had quite a few \_\_\_\_\_. So they sent me to Fort Meade, Maryland, and I trained there in a cadre. From Fort Meade, I used to be able to get into Washington to see the Senators play and also see the Redskins play, which was a good deal. I stayed there for about a year and a half, and I liked that post very much. At about that time the war ended in Germany, so they

said, we are going to ship you guys over to the west coast. So we went to Camp \_\_\_\_\_, Oregon, and at that time we were preparing to go and attack Japan. Then the Japanese war ended two days before we were going to ship out, and they said, we are not going to send you to Japan; we need some more troops to relieve the guys in Germany. So we all came back to the east coast and went overseas from Camp Miles Standish. That kind of tells you where my military career went. We crisscrossed the United States two or three times.

P: So you ended up finally going to Germany?

B: Oh, yes. I went to Germany and served in General Patton's third army. He was no longer a commanding general, but I was in the headquarter's third army all of the time I was overseas.

P: When did that end?

B: That ended for me just before the start of the 1946 season. I came back in August of 1946 in time to do the 1946 football season at Florida.

P: You stayed in Florida from 1946 to 1947, and then in 1947 you moved to Dallas.

B: Yes.

P: Why did you do that?

B: As I recall, a gentleman named **Ralph Nimmons** and his wife, who was from down in \_\_\_\_\_, had in-law relations with the **Peppers** who owned *The Gainesville Sun*. I believe Bill Pepper's wife was a sister to Ralph Nimmons' wife, and so there was that family connection between them. Ralph had heard me do broadcast, and he asked me if I would like to go to Dallas. Having been in Texas in the service, I knew that WFAE was one of the top stations. I said that I would really consider it. I knew the job there would pay more money. So I went out to Texas to do sports. At that time in Texas, individual stations did not do college games. The Southwest Conference schools leased out their broadcast rights to the \_\_\_\_\_ Oil Company, which had a group of announcers. Dave Russell, with whom I had worked, with was one of those announcers and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were others. There was not any chance of me cracking into that job right away, but Mr. Nimmons wanted me to come out and do high school football on their brand new FM station in Dallas, which I did. Sometimes I would do as many as three games a week. I would do a Thursday night game, a Friday night game, and sometimes even on Saturday they would have high school games out there because high school football in Texas, at that time, was number one. So that job was a good break. I also got to meet Antal Dorati, and I did some shows that I would not have otherwise gotten to do. I used to work at the Baker Hotel doing dance \_\_\_\_\_ from the mural room of the Baker, I did the state fair

shows, I did any number of radio shows, and I did commercials on newscasts. It was just a wonderful experience, but I did not get to do college football. I had a chance to come back to Gainesville. I talked to Major Powell, and I said I was thinking about moving to Meridian, Mississippi, and he said, do not do that. We need to up our network here; we are going to get Coca-Cola. So I missed all of the 1947 season, but then I came back to Gainesville in 1948, and I was here in Gainesville from 1948 until I retired from the network in 1981.

P: In 1947 they began the Florida Gator Football Network which was sponsored by Coke, is that right?

B: Yes.

P: Whose idea was that?

B: There were a number of people involved. I think **Mr. Frank King** over at **WMBR** in Jacksonville and Major Garland Powell were the two motivating gentlemen to get it started.

P: How many stations did you have?

B: When I came back, we had about forty stations, but it grew. When I left the network, we had as many as sixty-five. We had two or three outside the state.

P: Did it take you a while to establish the Gator Football Network in terms of having people listen to it and accept it?

B: Oh, no. It was accepted because there are there are Gator fans all over. There would be Gator fans in Timbuktu if they could tune in the game. Gator fans are the greatest. They are loyal.

P: In effect you worked for the University of Florida Athletic Association? They hired you to be the announcer?

B: Yes. The university athletic association would pay me for doing the game.

P: Not the radio station?

B: Not the radio station.

P: You were an employee of the radio station, but you worked, in effect, for the University of Florida Athletic Association?

B: Yes.

P: So that was extra pay?

B: Yes.

P: Who chose the announcers? Did the athletic association?

B: Yes, the athletic association had the final say.

P: You started out in 1948 working with who was your color man?

B: No. Bob did not come in until, I want to say, 1963, but I am not sure. I know Bob came back to Gainesville in the 1960s from Key West where he had been station director.

P: Had he been with WRUF earlier?

B: Oh, yes. In fact, I gave him his audition; I started him out in radio.

P: And when you started him out, what did you hire him as?

B: He was hired as a disc jockey. He did a morning show called the "Clock Watcher."

P: Let me talk a little bit more about this Gator Network. When you were working with the Football Network was it just football or did you do other sports?

B: After Norm Sloan got here we organized a basketball network. It used to be that we just did the home games and sometimes we would take a feed from the other network if there was a game at Tennessee, for instance. But when Norm came here, he said, hey, we want our own basketball network. And he was the man who promoted that and was very eager to get the network. Norm believed in the broadcast because it kept the fans happy.

P: In 1948, though, all you did was football?

B: No. I did basketball, but I did not do all the road games.

P: You were at the station literally from 1948 to 1981. How many changes have you seen over the years, particularly in terms of technology?

B: When I started out, we did not have a tape recorder or a wire recorder. So if you want to record a football game, you had to use a giant disk that had sort of an acetate cover on it, and the needle would go around and you would get fifteen minutes on one side and then you would turn it over and get fifteen minutes on the other side. Normally they would have two cutters and go from one to the other. For one play they would be OK, but then they would become very scratchy, the quality was not good. If you wanted to go out and get an interview

with some person in the field, you would have to get a telephone line and wire it back to the station where they had the recording equipment. But when they came up with a wire recorder, the quality was not good, but you had mobility. You could go out in the field and do things. Today of course, we have the great facility of tape recording which is just beautiful. You get good quality, and I think that is the biggest technical change. Also, by being able to use satellite now, you can improve the quality of your broadcast when it is from a remote point, say from Atlanta to Gainesville. I would say those are the big changes that have been made.

P: How much did the format change from 1948 to 1981?

B: Since we were interested in making money, I think more shows were put in. For instance, in 1948, when we did a football broadcast, we would start fifteen minutes before kick-off time. Now, most any network in the Southeast Conference starts at least an hour and a half before the game, sometimes they even start a full two hours before the game. Those shows are all sold because the revenue has become vitally important to radio stations and also TV stations.

P: How would you guess your audience changed from 1948 to 1981?

B: From 1948 up until mid-way through the 1960s, the Gator Radio Network was locked in on the audience because you could not get that much TV. Sure, if the Gators got into a bowl, they would get on TV, but they did not get that much TV exposure. But now there are so many TV broadcasts. You have Jefferson Pilot, you have ESPN, you have all of the major networks -- CBS, ABC, and NBC. With the good teams the Gators have had, they get TV coverage on almost every game, and that splits up the audience. I would say it cut it in half anyway.

P: As you know, there are some people who watch television with the sound turned off and listen to the Gator broadcast?

B: That is true, and I think that does happen to a great degree with your loyal Gator fan who says, I am going to listen to Mick [Hubert] and [Steve] Babick and Scott Brantley do the ballgame because they know the Gators. They are going to give the Gator viewpoint. I think that happens, so maybe 50 percent is a bad figure to give you. I would guess that TV has cut down the radio audience to maybe about 25 percent.

P: How did you feel in 1981 when you were asked to step down as announcer?

B: It was kind of a surprise to me because I thought I had one of my best years, and the first year after that was kind of tough. Actually, though, I have learned that there is a life after broadcasting. As Red told me, there is a time for everything.

There is a time to leave the broadcast booth, and as I look back now, I do not feel badly about it at all.

P: So you have no bitterness or anything?

B: No, not at all.

P: Why do you think they made the change to **David Steele**?

B: I think there were a number of reasons. Number one, I had passed the age of sixty; I was sixty-one. Number two, instead of having somebody from outside the athletic association family do the games, and remember this was true in most all of the Southeastern Conference, now they have what I call an in-house man. In other words, he is responsible to the athletic director and to the University of Florida coaching staff, and he is their man -- lock, stock, and barrel. I was outside that ring, and I think the athletic association feels more comfortable with an in-house man, and that is not just at Florida but all over the SEC. I think they thought that just having an in-house man was better. Plus, in my case, I was not doing TV. They wanted somebody who could do the TV and who could do the radio. Actually, they have a speaking tour that the play-by-play man does now. The guy who works it now is a busy man. I am not sure I could have done all of the work that Mick and David did.

P: Did you ever do the TV shows after the game, like the Ray Graves [Florida football coach, 1962-1969] Show?

B: No, I never did those. I did a show for Ray though. After he got out of coaching, he became athletic director and decided he would like to have a TV show. So I would go around and do interview bits and then **Dick Stratton** did some, and we packaged a thirty minute show that ran once a week. As far as doing the football highlights show, no, I did not do that.

P: Do you miss broadcasting football games?

B: As I said, I did for about a year. Saturday afternoons would roll around, and I would say, gee, I ought to be doing something, but I do not think that now. I still follow the Gators, I love to watch them play, and I get as big a bang as anybody else out of seeing them win.

P: Do you listen to the current broadcast?

B: Oh, yes. I know Mick real well, and I know Babick and everyone over there.

P: How would you evaluate David Steele and Mick Hubert as announcers?

- B: I think they have two different styles. David is a little more laid back, and I think Mick really gets into the excitement of the ball game. They are both very confident. David has a good voice, and so does Mick. I lean more towards the enthusiasm side, so I guess I would be more like a Mick Hubert, but David is doing a real good job now with the Orlando Magic. It depends on what your individual tastes are. I think both of the guys cover their sport real well.
- P: Do you think sometimes announcers go over the top and get a little too excited?
- B: Oh, yes. That is going to happen. In fact, that is one of the dangers of being too exuberant because when you do that, you lose your audience. You are not getting through to them, and they lose contact with you.
- P: I think I know the answer to this, but do you regret never having the opportunity to broadcast a Florida SEC championship game?
- B: Yes. I said, Mick, there is only one thing I regret. I wish I could have had one of those SEC championships that you have got to do, and he just laughed. He has had some great games to do. He has had five SEC championships and a national championship, and he has done real well; I think the coverage is good. All in all, the coverage on Gator football is excellent.
- P: How much have you had to do with the athletic association since you left?
- B: Very little. I do a thing on tape called "Great Games Of The Past" or "Florida Flashback" for about a minute or a minute and a half on each game I do. And it is on tape; I am not up there in the booth. I was very fortunate the day the Gators won their first SEC title. It was the final game against Kentucky, and Norm, Mick, and \_\_\_\_ invited me over there to be in the booth. So I had a chance to go over there at the end of the game and talk about all the Gators who were not there who would have liked to have been there. There were literally thousands of Gators who would have relished that moment when they won that first SEC, and I know many of them have passed on and never even lived to see it. I am glad I lived to see it. I did not think I would ever make it if you want to know the truth [laughter].
- P: Do they give you tickets to the games?
- B: Yes, it is a very wonderful thing. I get tickets to the basketball games and the football games, and it is a very rewarding thing to have happen to you.
- P: When you were broadcasting, what would people most criticize you for?
- B: I had a tendency that if I made a mistake I corrected it. Somehow somebody got the idea that I said "end-over-end spirals," and I do not know where they got that

idea. As a matter of fact, I was a pretty good kicker when I was a kid. I once entertained the idea of becoming a kicking specialist when I was in high school. And I know that when you kick a spiral that ball is going like that. When it hits the ground, though, it goes end-over-end. I think one day I was describing a punt that was a high spiral and then when it hit the ground it went end-over-end out of bounds, and somebody got the idea that I said end-over-end spirals. I also know that one time I was talking to my dentist and sometimes we talk about a kick going end-over-end through the uprights or going end-over-end down to the end zone. Actually, that is a very incorrect statement. The official impetus of the ball is end-under-end, but I said, you know, if I came out and said that, they would say, that old Otis has done flipped his lid again. It is end-under-end, but all sportscasters say end-over-end, and it really does not happen that way.

[End of first interview session]

P: It is the fourth of November and I am Julian Pleasants speaking with Otis Boggs in his home. This is the second interview. Otis, you did a lot of basketball announcing. Explain why basketball has always been in second place in the athletic hierarchy at the University of Florida?

B: I think one of the problems with Florida, basketball was somewhat similar to that of football. The state of Florida, in its early infancy, did not produce that many great basketball players. To recruit a successful basketball program, Florida has always had to go outside the state to get talent. They were competing against basketball powers like Oklahoma A&M, Kentucky and schools of that caliber. It was very difficult to find players. When I used to go to Kentucky, I made it a habit to visit Coach Rupp [Adolf F. Rupp, Kentucky basketball coach]. Even if I were going up to broadcast a football game, I would stop in to see [him]. After World War II, I stopped in to see him. We were playing Kentucky in football, and I asked him how things were going and he said great. He asked, when are you guys going to start recruiting some of those great Florida basketball players? I said I did not know that we had any. He said, well I got commitments from two of them today. I said, who would they be? He said one, is **Skip Whitaker** from Sarasota and another one is a young man named **C.M. Newton** from Ft. Lauderdale. C.M. Newton later on went on to become an outstanding player at Kentucky. Then he got into coaching and was a successful coach at Alabama, at Vanderbilt and now he is back at his alma mater as the athletic director of Kentucky. We have great basketball players in Florida now. It is a little easier to recruit now, but back in the early days of Florida basketball, there were not that many good basketball players.

P: But isn't basketball still a secondary sport here?

B: I do not think secondary might be the right word because a lot of progress has

been made. When I was at the University of Florida as a student, the basketball coach was a gentleman named Sam McAllister [Samuel Joseph McAllister, University of Florida head basketball coach, 1937-1952] and it was a secondary sport because they just did not put the money into it that they did to football. It did not bring in too much revenue and as a result, your basketball coach was not a basketball coach exclusively. Sam McAllister coached football in the winter and then, late in November just as the football season ended, he would get his basketball team together and they would start scrimmaging. He would be ready for the start of the season in mid-December. Then, after he got done with basketball, he was the head baseball coach. So you could see that the situation was very different. Today, you have a basketball coach and that is all he does.

He recruits basketball and he has a staff of people who coach nothing but basketball. So we have made strides in that direction. We have also made strides in the facility. When I came to Florida, they played basketball in an old wooden gym which would hold about 4,000 people. You had to crowd them in. The fire marshall might get after you if you got over 4,000 in there. The facility was not good, you did not have as many good basketball players in the state, and not as much emphasis was put on basketball at Florida.

P: Where was the first gym?

B: The first gym was the old wooden gym. The music department took it over. You know where the outdoor swimming pool is at Florida?

P: Yes.

B: It was just east of that. Then, later on, Dutch Stanley [Dennis Keith Stanley, University of Florida, Dean of the College of Physical Education, 1931-1939, 1946-1976] came back. He had been the head football coach at Florida and Dutch got fired and he caught on with a staff up at Duke. I believe he worked for **Wallace Wade** and was top assistant for the Duke Blue Devils. He came back as the Dean of the College of Health and Physical Education. Dutch decided we really needed a new gym and so he pushed to get a new gym. A brick gym was built and he copied it somewhat after the one at Durham that the Blue Devils had used for many years. The seating facility was not that big, but it was certainly better than the old wooden gym. I believe we could get about 7,000 people in there under high-pressed conditions.

P: Was this Alligator Alley?

B: Yes, that was Alligator Alley. It was the one that Rupp wanted to burn down. He did not like to play there.

P: Describe what it was like broadcasting a game in Alligator Alley?

B: Alligator Alley had tremendous noise. Some of the cheers are still probably circulating around that place because the noise was deafening. We started to work on the sideline which is the ideal place to broadcast from. However, the noise was so deafening in there that we had trouble keeping the noise out of the pick-up mike. People had difficulty hearing the play-by-play man or the color man do the broadcast. Ultimately, we moved into a little platform at the north end of the gym which probably was one of the worst places from the viewer's standpoint to see a game. They would either be coming at you and be right under you when you called it, or they would be going away from you. So all the time that we were in Alligator Alley, I was broadcasting from that little balcony, so to speak. While it was bad from a standpoint of viewing, we were able to control the noise in there to a greater degree.

P: Who did the color with you?

B: Various people. I could go back and say **Dick Kraigle** worked color. **Bob Leach** worked at color for many years. **Ted Covington** worked color. I could list any number of people who worked in color from time to time.

P: What is different about calling a basketball game from a football game?

B: I think the pace is a great deal different. The tempo of a basketball game is go, go, go and drive, drive, drive. You do not have that much time. You can kind of relax sometimes in a football game or a baseball game, but if you are [following] a basketball game it is zip, zip, zip and you have got to be right on top of it. Another thing that causes a little trouble with basketball is you do not have points of reference like you do in baseball or football. In football, you have got yard lines and in baseball, you have got left field, right field, center field, short stop, second base and so forth to locate where the ball is. In basketball, you have got the top of the key, the two wings and the base line. Those are about the main points of reference for locating where the ball is. From that standpoint, I think basketball is more difficult to broadcast. It is easier from a standpoint of learning the personnel. You can get five players in your mind from both teams; that is not too tough, but the tempo and the pace and the repetitiveness of the game, keeps you on your toes.

P: How much preparation would you do for basketball as compared to football?

B: Not nearly as much. In football you had two teams and you had twenty-two players for a first string offense and first string defense. Basketball, while easier to do mechanically, tires you out. I think that is the one thing that I would say. I was much more tired after doing a basketball game. If you got into one that went into triple overtime, which I did a couple of times, you were really wrung out for a couple of days.

P: What were the advantages and disadvantages of playing in Alligator Alley?

B: The advantages were that the team coming in was intimidated by the tremendous noise and the fans were real close. I mean, if they hurled some epithets out there, you were going to hear them. Rupp did not like to play in Alligator Alley. He said he would be glad to take a can of gasoline and burn it down. Of course it is a brick building and it is still standing. People did not like to play there because the home team had the advantage of that closed-in crowd and the noise. Florida won a lot of close ball games in Alligator Alley because of that fact. It was a definite home advantage. I do not think I have ever been to a place that had a better home advantage than Alligator Alley had.

P: What were the disadvantages?

B: The disadvantages were that you did not have the facilities to accommodate the crowds. Now, You can get 12,000 or 13,000 people in the O'Connell Center. We have not been getting them recently, but I wish we could. You just could not accommodate the crowds in Alligator Alley. Many students could not get in to see the games. We just did not have the facilities to accommodate those people.

P: Did it hurt recruiting?

B: Oh, yes. I am glad you brought that up. A basketball player likes to play to a big crowd. If you go into Rupp Arena or you go into some of the big new coliseums, like the one in Tennessee, that is an advantage for recruiting. That is another thing that held Florida down in those early years. They just did not have a facility that would attracted top-notch basketball players.

P: One of the things you mentioned earlier when we talked about Tommy Bartlett [Florida basketball coach, 1967-1973] [is that] when he was [basketball] coach, he was also the tennis coach.

B: Yes.

P: I assume that is a real problem. If you are going to have a big-time basketball program, you really do not have time to be doing two sports.

B: Actually, I cannot remember how much Tommy coached tennis, but I do know he was an avid player. In fact, he entered a lot of tournaments and was a great athlete. He played basketball at Tennessee and he also played tennis at Tennessee. He never gave up his love for the game of tennis. He participated in a lot of senior tournaments. In your records do you have him listed as having coached at Florida? I do not remember that.

- P: I think he did. He may have been an interim coach, but I think he was the first full-time coach at Florida.
- B: No, your first full-time basketball coach was Norm Sloan [Norman Leslie Sloan, University of Florida, Head Basketball coach, 1960-1967]. Norm Sloan came to Florida in 1960 and basketball was all that Norm did. He brought a whole new venue to Florida from their standpoint. We had not broadcast the road games. Sometimes if it was an important game, we would take a feed from say, the Georgia network or wherever. We just did the home games. Norm had been at North Carolina State where basketball was rampant. He said, I want to have a network covering the road games as well as the home games. Norm was the first full-time basketball coach only that we had. All of those that preceded him had to do other duties such as, for example, Sam McAllister, and Johnny Mauer [John W. Mauer, University of Florida, basketball coach and assistant football coach 1951-1960]. Johnny Mauer was a great basketball coach but he also had to coach football. He was the one that preceded Norm. I think he was the last of what we called "double-time" coaches who had to do double-duty.
- P: Why was it that Norm Sloan had, in his first year here, an 85-63 record? Why was he successful?
- B: Norm was a very aggressive recruiter. First of all, he had a great knowledge of basketball. He knew where talent was and, I would say that he probably did as good a recruiting job as any coach we had up to that time. He went out and got players from other areas where previous coaches did not have the time. Your football coach did not really have time to recruit; he would just take whatever came his way. Maybe a couple of alumni would say, hey we have got a kid down here in Ft.Lauderdale, we ought to try to get him. The recruiting was not nearly as efficient under that old system as it was under Norm. Norm had the whole year to work on recruiting and he had two or three assistants to help him. That is where the difference came. He was able to get out-of-state people and he got some of the good in-state people too.
- P: Talk about a couple of the players that he recruited such as **Neal Walk**.
- B: Neal Walk was an outstanding player. He was one of the all-time greats in Florida. Neal came from Miami Beach, I believe, and was a great center, a great pivot man. I would think that if I had to name one pivot man in the SEC that Florida had supplied, I would name him. There have been some other good ones, but Neal was a great scorer. He played on the team that went to the NIT. Unfortunately, Norm did not get to coach him all through his career. Norm went back to N.C. State. He was one of those who [Norm] recruited. Norm had a knack for getting players who were not happy at other places. [He recruited] a young player named **Tom Baxley** from Florida who went up to Maryland and did

not like it but was a great basketball player. He got a young fellow named **Brooks Henderson** and brought him here. He would find players that were not too happy at other places and transfer them in. He also had a good line on the junior college players that were available. Recruiting is the name of the game in basketball. You must have good players to do the job and you have got to get them early. Norm believed in checking ahead. He had a good recruiting program going and that is the reason he was very successful. Plus, he was a good basketball man. He played for **Everett Case** up in N.C. State. I guess Everett Case and Rupp were two of the all-time greats in basketball until **John Wooden** came along out of UCLA.

P: What about another recruit named **Andy Owens**?

B: Andy Owens was one of the great basketball players that Norm got in the state of Florida. Andy came out of Hillsborough High in Tampa. He was a good student and Andy could, as they say in basketball, "fill the net up." He was an excellent shot, he was about 6'7" and played forward. He was a good muscle man. I would list him along with Walk as two of the outstanding scorers that Norm recruited. Also, I will tell the story about Andy Owens one night over at Auburn. They were playing a game and they had a rule then that you could not slam-dunk in the game, but all big players liked to go in and slam-dunk the ball. Well, Andy knew that the rules said that you could not do it during the pregame warm-ups or during the game itself; it was outlawed. So when the teams went in for the intermission and they were in the dressing room, as soon as Norm got through with his little spiel, Andy sneaks back out. They had this gym that was like a Quonset hut. Their gym was one of the next noisiest places to Alligator Alley that I had ever been in. So Andy sneaks out while the crowd is sitting all around and he goes over to the ball rack and picks up a ball. He dribbles it down and everybody is watching him because nobody knew another player [was] in the gym since it was half-time. He goes in and slam dunks that baby and all the Florida players back in the dressing room heard this tremendous ovation. Andy had told them what he was going to do and they said, oh, Andy slam dunked it. He got a tremendous ovation for that.

P: What do you make of the volatility of Norm Sloan? **Bill Koss**, in his book, Pond Birds, says that he brow-beat and humiliated and denigrated the players.

B: Well, Norm did not use Sunday school language when he was speaking to players. In fact, one of the problems that he had in Alligator Alley, was that the fans were close by and they could hear all of that stuff. He used profanity, there is no doubt about that. He was one of those guys who liked to win. I guess he had grown up and profanity was just part of his lingo and he used it. Four-letter words would just come out of his mouth. There was a time, I think during the Ray Graves tenure as athletic director and Dr. Reitz [J. Wayne Reitz, University

of Florida President, 1955-1967] as president, that they wanted to get rid of him because of the foul language that he used. That was one of the bad points against Norm but he was a good coach; no doubt about that. I often said to people that I enjoyed broadcasting his games, but I am not sure that I would want a son of mine to play for him.

P: Several players left the program and, I think, Bill Koss said that, in many ways, that hurt team morale.

B: It did.

P: Yet he was still the most successful Florida coach up to that time?

B: Up to that time, yes.

P: Why do you think he left in 1966?

B: He got fired as a matter of fact. He went in 1966 and, I think Bill Koss said it in his book, he got an offer from N.C. State to go back but he did not really want to leave Florida. He liked it here and his family liked Gainesville. He went in to see Ray Graves and he demanded a raise. Ray said, no, as a matter of fact, we are considering letting you go and Norm cut loose with some profanity. One of Ray's problems is that he had an ear that was bad and he could not hear well and, I think, Norm called him a tin-eared S.O.B. Graves said, I am not firing you Norm and he slammed his fist down and broke the glass on his desk and said, you just fired yourself. That is the way it ended.

P: Do you think he regretted hiring Sloan?

B: I think it was a relationship that was touch-and-go at best. Keep in mind that Coach Graves had been a very successful football player at Tennessee; he had played with the Eagles. Football had been his life and he coached under Bobby Dodd [Robert Lee Dodd, American football coach, 1908-?]. I do not think he ever had a problem in which a basketball coach came up and confronted him and accused him of treating his sport as a step child. Norm fought for his sport. You have got to give him credit for that, but I do not think Ray and Norm ever hit it off perfectly.

P: Let us talk about a couple of games you mentioned earlier in which Rupp did not like to come to Alligator Alley. In 1964 on of his more famous teams, Rupp's Runts, one of his players was Pat Riley [Current coach of the Miami Heat]. They came and they were defeated by 84-69. Do you recall some of the details of that game?

B: I do not. I was trying to think of that because Riley was a kid out of New York

and he came down to Lexington and was a great performer for them. I do not remember the eighty- four to sixty-nine. Was that in 1964?

P: Yes.

B: Well, that would have been in Sloan's tenure, I believe. Right?

P: Yes, it would.

B: Florida did not beat Kentucky too many times. I was with Norm a couple of times when we went up there and came close. He did win a game at Kentucky before he left, but I do not remember that particular game at all.

P: What was your view of Rupp as a coach?

B: I think [he was] probably one of the great coaches. He was like General Patton [George Smith Patton, Jr., American Army general, 1885-1945] in many ways. He was in command of the situation at all times. He had grown up as a basketball player out in Kansas. When he came to Kentucky, he loved Lexington and he had a great big farm out there. He loved to farm. He had a knack at attracting the very best basketball players. Once you got to know the old man, you kind of loved him. He was a unique individual. Like I said at the beginning of the interview, I used to go in and see him because I figured I was going to get some news or learn something everyday I went in. One day I went in and he said he had just acquired Mary Todd Lincoln's [First Lady, wife of Abraham Lincoln, 1818-1882] bible and it was one of his prize possessions. He was into history very much too, as a matter of fact. I think, probably, if I had to name the most unique basketball coach that I ever knew, it would have to be Adolf Rupp. Of course, when you talk about Norm Sloan and his particular battle with Coach Ray Graves, that was nothing to compare to the battle between Adolf Rupp and Paul "Bear" Bryant [Paul William Bryant, University of Alabama head football coach, 1913-1983] when Bryant came to Lexington. There are stories about that that I could tell that go on and on. As a matter of fact, I might tell you this story about Rupp and "Bear" Bryant. They were so antagonistic toward each other, that the president of the University called them in and he said, you two gentlemen may hate each other's guts but out in public, from now on, you are going to be the best of friends. He said, next year, I want this carried out: "Bear" when you have a big football game, a road trip, I want you to take Adolf along. Let him go along and sit with the official party and make sure that he enjoys himself. By the same token, Adolf, whenever your basketball season opens up, I want you to take Coach Bryant to one of your big games and they both agreed. Next year, "Bear" carried out his part of the bargain. Kentucky had a big game with Villanova in Philadelphia on Friday night and he took "Bear" along and they had a nice time. They won the ball game and then Saturday, they

came down to Washington and did some sightseeing. They went to the Smithsonian and the Washington Monument and wherever the places of interest were and then met the Kentucky [Congressional] delegation. Then on Sunday, they had seats at the Redskins game. Then they flew home to Lexington. It was a big three-day event and Adolf was there and he was shaking hands and meeting all the people and he went back to Lexington. So the basketball season comes along and it comes time for him to pay back the debt and he is going to take "Bear" Bryant on a basketball trip. He had a trip to the west coast which he skipped over and he said, I will fix the "Bear" up. So one weekend, they had a Friday night game in Cincinnati, which is ninety miles up the road, and they travelled by bus. He asked "Bear" to go up with him to Cincinnati and make the trip ninety miles and back the same night. That is the way he played the game. He was tough.

P: Let me ask you about a 1964 Florida game. There was a big fight with Tennessee. **John Ward**, who was the Tennessee announcer, got knocked out in that game. Do you happen to remember that game?

B: I think somebody threw a basketball over there and hit him or something. I am not sure just how. I do not even remember that incident at all.

P: How many years did you broadcast basketball?

B: I broadcast basketball all the time I was here, but I did not do the road games. I started doing the road games in 1960. That meant I would have done road games from 1960 to 1981. I have done twenty-one years.

P: Why do you think they hired Tommy Bartlett? At one point, the job apparently was offered to **Bobby Knight**.

B: It was and he accepted. Then he went back to the Point and the cadet corps and the coaching staff and some of the administrative people there said that they wanted him to stay. Bobby Knight had only been there one year. So he called back and said he could not come to Florida because he still owed time to the military academy. He had only been there for one year and his commitment should be longer than that. So he stayed on at the Point and did not come down.

P: A couple of other contenders were Chuck Daley and **Hugh Durham**. Why do you think they ended up with Tommy Bartlett?

B: I am not sure why Daley turned it down. Durham, of course, was a great ball player at FSU and I had broadcast the games that he played in. I have no idea why those two turned it down. Bartlett was anxious to be a head coach and he had been a very good assistant coach and was an active athlete. Like I said, he

participated in many tennis tournaments. He saw an opportunity to be a head SEC coach and jumped on it and did a very good job. He had an excellent staff. He brought **Dick Davis** down from Tennessee and those two worked very well. They had **Neal Walk** and some of the other great players that Norm had recruited. They were very successful and then gradually they got into the problem recruiting which they could not handle too well. Recruiting has been a big battle at Florida; getting talent to come here. I think now, with more basketball players in Florida, it has kind of equalled out a little bit. It is not quite as strenuous to get recruits to come here. I think Tommy, as far as knowing the game of basketball, was a great defensive coach. He had worked with Ray Mears [University of Tennessee basketball coach] and they developed a 1-3-1 zone that was very good and they polished it up and added some perfection to it. He made defensive and offensive weapons, so to speak, in basketball.

P: There were some statements from various news sources, like Bill Koss and others, that there were illegal payments from other schools. One reason that Florida lost some of their recruits is that other schools were paying them by giving them automobiles. Do you know anything about that?

B: I heard all the rumors. Off the top of my head, I do not know any solid facts about that but I am sure that there were recruiting violations. In some schools basketball was a big money game; it was at Kentucky and it was at Temple for many years. **Josh Cody** left here as a football coach and he had amazing success as a basketball man at Temple. In fact, he was one of the few people to have an edge over Rupp in inter-league play and in the win-and-loss column. I would think that those accusations may be true but I have no proof of that so I will not say yea or nay.

P: Bill Koss also mentioned that there was an attempt by **Selig Golden**, who was an attorney here in town, to try to get a "slush" fund to recruit a player named **Walker**. Do you know anything about that?

B: Only what I read in Bill's book. I was not privy to that much information about what was going on in the recruiting deal.

P: Let us talk about the hiring of John Lotz [John C. Lotz, University of Florida, head basketball coach, 1974-1980] in 1974. Why do you think they hired Lotz?

B: Graves had a chance to get the head coach at Minnesota. I cannot remember his name now, but he was a tough task master, somewhat cut in the mold of Norm Sloan. It narrowed down to this fellow and John Lotz; they were the two men left. One afternoon, Ray said to me, I think tonight I am going to call up John Lotz and close the deal. I said any reason for doing that and he says, well, he is cut in the mold of the coach I like. He is going to be easy to work with, he has

been with Dean Smith at North Carolina, he has got a good background, he knows the game and I think he will make a great head coach. I think just the personality of the man won the job for him.

P: Why do you think that Lotz was not more successful?

B: That is hard to say because he certainly had a good background. Sometimes you take a job and you think you are going to be a whirlwind and be very successful, and it does not work out that way. I knew John and I got along with him very well. He did not have an over-powering personality. He was a little bit laid-back. He liked to dress. I used to say boy, he is a real clothes horse. I cannot really say why he was not successful. He had a rough tenure here, as a matter of fact, and yet had a major success too. He won some very big games. I remember going up to Providence with John. He took a team up there that won the Providence tournament. In fact, they beat the Providence Friars in the final of that tournament. That is a pretty good pre-season tournament that they hold each year up there. It is hard to pin down why he did not [succeed]. I really cannot tell you that.

P: His record was 83 wins and 88 losses. Then, to some people rather surprisingly, Bill Carr [William C. Carr, University of Florida, Athletic Director, 1972-1986] fired Lotz. Why do you think he fired Lotz?

B: I think he had gotten a lot of pressure from the alumni to do that. I just feel that there were the basketball alumni who felt that was the right move to make. Lotz had been on a losing streak and these things happen. Within an athletic family, sometimes you never learn the real reason. A lot of it comes out later on. I think Bill figured that he had to make a move so he made the move.

P: Should Norm Sloan have been hired the second time?

B: Well, there are a lot of people who say yes and a lot of people who say no. Those who disliked Norm from the beginning said, no, but a lot of the old-timers who had been around the program, a number of folks from around Ocala and all good friends of mine, wanted Norm back. They knew him, they liked him, and they figured he was the guy to straighten up the basketball program and get it going again. So, at the last minute, they started putting some pressure on and I think the pressure got to Carr because he figured these are the money people, these are the guys who contribute to Gator Boosters and we need to make a move. Norm is familiar with the state of Florida, he is familiar with the program, and [he is] a coach who had won a national title at N.C. State. I mean we are not bringing in a chopped liver coach here, we are bringing in one who won a national title. I think he figured that, of all the coaches that were available, he was the best one.

P: Apparently **Mike Shushefsky** and Bobby Cremins were also interested.

B: Yes, they were two who were interested. I forget where Cremins was at the time.

P: He was at Appalachian State.

B: Right. Of course, Mike Shushefsky had played for Bobby Knight at West Point. So you get all these ties coming in. I guess, Shushefsky did not have good credentials. He was a good coach, but he did not have the background that Norm had. When you are picking a job assignment, sometimes it is what you did yesterday that counts, not what you might do tomorrow.

P: The O'Dome [O'Connell Center] opened December 30, 1980. How did this impact Florida basketball?

B: Well, I think with a bigger facility and bigger crowds, if you have a finer product, you are going to have to deliver a better program. For instance, the University of Tennessee with the 106,000-seat facility [football stadium] up there, you cannot run a mediocre program. You cannot have a seven and four team. You have got to have a nine and two team and that same thing applies to basketball. If you have got a good facility, you are just wasting money by not putting on the very best show possible. It boils down to simple dollars and cents.

P: Why did it take so long to get the O'Connell Center?

B: I think maybe people figured that basketball was never going anywhere anyhow. They had priorities for other things than basketball. That was the story I always heard that the priority was for other things than basketball but Lord knows they needed it. The facility was not that good. Alligator Alley, while it had the advantage of crowd noise and everything, it could not accommodate the crowds and the seating facilities were not very good. Florida needed a facility very badly and it was a wonderful addition when they put it in.

P: This was after your announcing career but, why do you think that there was a shift to somebody like **Lon Kruger** who is totally different as a type of coach than Sloan. What did you think of Kruger?

B: I thought Kruger really brought a new aspect to basketball. I enjoyed watching his teams play and he got to the Final Four. He is the only Florida coach to have done that and he was a very personable young man. I think people liked his demeanor; his way of handling [things]. He was quite active in public civic affairs. He was a natural from that standpoint. I think there again, they made a move toward a man of that caliber. It was a sort of change.

P: What about the firing of Sloan the second time, after he violated several NCAA regulations?

B: Well, I read Norm's book and Norm is a good friend of mine. I have known him since his first day here at Florida. I know he and \_\_\_\_\_ got together and wrote the book. Norm feels like he was kind of betrayed and I do not think he has a lot of love for \_\_\_\_\_ or Carr. It is difficult for me to say who was right and who was wrong. It is like any argument. There are points on both sides, but I always enjoyed working with Norm. He was a very pleasant guy as long as you did your job and did not goof up. If you messed up, you are going to hear from "Stormin' Norman." I can tell you that for sure. I enjoyed my relationship with him all through the years that he was here. His son, little Michael, went into dentistry and he is practicing dentistry up in Maine. My wife and I have stopped by to see him a couple of times. The Sloan family, I believe, moved back to Newlands, North Carolina. He is still up there. In fact, Stormin' Norman and Joanne [Norman Sloan's wife] came to my wedding when I got married a second time. They were invited guests and we enjoyed having them. There is always a special place in my heart for Norm and for all the coaches. John Mauer, who coached basketball here, was a dear friend. He was a good fishing buddy of mine. He had been a blocker for **Red Grange** at Illinois and I feel privileged to have known him. He and I had made many fishing trips together down in Cedar Key.

P: Let me shift now to football. I want to start with the hiring of Bob Woodruff [George Robert Woodruff, University of Florida, head football coach, 1950-1961]. Explain a little bit about why the University of Florida hired Woodruff?

B: The man that he replaced was Raymond "Bear" Wolf [Raymond Bernard Wolf, University of Florida, head football coach, head of Intercollegiate Athletics, 1946-1950], who had been a very successful coach. In fact, "Bear" had coached at North Carolina and had some great teams up there. He was a teacher of the double-wing formation. He was an old Texas boy. I believe he played football at Texas Christian. He came to Florida and just had one thing after another happen to him. He lost recruits and he lost ball games and he had seasons where he would barely win one or two games. The Florida people wanted a winner. They said, we have got to get us a coach who has been successful. Bob Woodruff had been a great player at Tennessee. He had a very successful run at Baylor University in Waco, where he had been a winner. He was the number one candidate for the job, although there were others who applied. Bob got the job and came here in 1950. One thing I will say about Bob Woodruff, is that he never won the SEC. [However] he developed some great players; he had some all-Americans that he recruited. Bob Woodruff started building an athletic program from the word go. He did not build just football, but he built all the other sports. He was the one, during his tenure as athletic

director, that started increasing the size of Florida Field. When Bob Woodruff came here, Florida Field could seat about 22,500. In 1954, they went and doubled the size of the west stands. Later on, the east side was doubled up. His was a very progressive administration in that he built; he was a builder.

P: So you would say he set the foundation, not only for Florida football, but for Florida athletics?

B: All sports.

P: Overall, his record was pretty good 54-41 and 6, yet he was eventually fired. Why do you think he was fired?

B: Well, I think it was a game that he played. I think it may have been a Vanderbilt game when he made the statement that he was playing to win. He would kick in a situation when he could have gone for a first down. People were still looking for wide-open-type play. At Florida, the old punt on third down, a quick kick and a cloud of dust-type football is not very attractive to Florida fans. Florida fans like to feel like they have got a chance right up until the last minute. Their offense has got to be a fired-up. They are not going to be satisfied with a slow, plodding offense. When Bob made that statement, I think he lost a lot of backing by the Florida fans. I think that ultimately cost him his job. It was not that he had that bad a record. He had produced bowl teams. His 1952 team went to the Gator Bowl and was the first bowl game that Florida ever played in. They beat Tulsa that day. I believe it was 14-13. They beat the Tulsa team which was a very good Golden Hurricane team. He had success in recruiting. Bob was the first real all-around good recruiter. He recruited not only in the state of Florida but he got some out-of-state people as well. That kicking on third down or fourth down got him in trouble.

P: Also, it was rumored that he did not have very good relations with the press and did not like to explain what his strategy was.

B: That is true to a degree too, I guess. I remember one day we were playing Rice University and Rice had a pretty good quarterback. He called me in and he said, Otis, you may get excited this weekend because we are going to be playing Rice. He said, our defense is such that we are going to give them all the short stuff they want. They can throw all day and complete those short passes until they get down inside our red zone and then we are going to tighten up. He said, I do not want you to get too excited when they complete six or seven passes on a drive. He said, just rest assured of what we are doing. He let me in on that and he was always helpful to me. Maybe some of the press felt that he was closed-mouth and did not give things away. But I can truthfully say that my relationship with Bob Woodruff was a good one because I was able to get inside

information like that. I appreciated the fact that he did not want me to get too damn excited about five passes being completed in a row. That helped me, and I think it helped the broadcast too.

P: Talk about a couple of his recruits, for example, Rick Casares.

B: Well, Rick Casares was probably the greatest all-around athlete I have ever known. Rick played basketball, he played baseball, he played football and, had he chosen to be a fighter, he probably could have been a world champion heavyweight fighter. He was one of the toughest individuals I have ever known. We talk about punters today kicking the ball fifty or sixty yards. Rick Cosaris, back in the days when he was playing, used a quick-kick. That is, he would line up in regular depth formation, snap the ball to him and he would quick kick it on third down. That was a big offensive weapon. You caught the other team without their safety back there and that ball would roll and roll. Rick, when he kicked in normal situations in full depth punt formation, could kick forty-five or fifty yards. However, when he kicked a quick-kick, he could get seventy or eighty yards on that ball. I have never seen anybody who could equal him on quick-kicking. He was a very strong runner. That was proven by the fact that he later went to the Bears and was one of their top fullbacks. He played basketball with a vengeance. Johnny Mauer used to tell me, Otis, I have never seen anybody with the strength in their hands that Rick has. He said, if you are **contesting** the ball down near the basket with him and you hold on to that ball too long, he will stuff your butt right through the hoop. That is how good he is. Of course, he was a great fighter. I will not go into all the fights that he had, but he broke an Ole' Miss player's jaw one night over at the Ole' Miss campus in Oxford. A player slapped him during a ball game and they both got tossed out of the game. Rick kept watching the bench to see what was going to happen and the Ole' Miss player went back to get dressed and Rick followed him. The player ran and jumped into a steel cabinet in there. Rick broke down the steel cabinet and then punched him out and broke his jaw with one blow. You talk about macho, Rick Casares was macho and a great athlete. No kidding about that.

P: Another great athlete was **Heywood Sullivan**.

B: Yes, Heywood was a splendid athlete. He came out of Dothan, Alabama. I recall his sophomore year as quarterback, we went up to play Vanderbilt. Today, you would say, who is Vanderbilt? They have not won a title. Back in those days though, they were a pretty good football team. In fact, they were undefeated the day we played them up there and they had won four straight games. They had beaten Duke, Alabama and a couple of other pretty good teams. We went up there and Heywood was quarterback. He directed the team to a big victory. One of the things that made Heywood so good is that he had tremendous hands. He could circumnavigate a football with one hand. If it

was raining, it did not bother Heywood too much, he could still throw that rascal. He was a big strong kid. Heywood could stretch out and get you four or five yards. That is how good he was. He was also an excellent baseball player.

P: He left his senior year and signed with the Boston Red Sox. Wasn't that very unusual at that time?

B: Well, it was. He had a good offer from the Red Sox and of course, he later became part-owner of the Red Sox. He also became a manager for Mr. Charles Finley out at Kansas City. He was a good baseball man. His son later came back and played baseball here. Heywood and a young fellow named **Bubba McGowan** came down from Dothan, Alabama and they contributed a lot to the Florida program.

P: This is a little ahead of where we are now, but what is your view of sophomores and juniors leaving college to sign with the pros?

B: Once again I think old m-o-n-e-y comes into it. A lot of the kids who come up today see that if they could get out a year early and get a year's jump toward earning big money, it is a good deal. It is not too good for the school that recruits them and puts them through. From that standpoint, I would say that they should stay in. I really think that, under most circumstances, they should stay in and get their degree. A lot of the kids come back after they have gone out into the pro ranks and do get their degree. I know Emmitt Smith [Dallas Cowboys running back] came back, and a number of other players have come back. In a way, you lose part of your college career by doing that, but sometimes money is the overriding factor in this life. I guess that is one of those times.

P: Back during this time, they had freshmen teams. Do you think that is an idea that should be employed today?

B: Well, there are two schools of thought on that. Some people say, you do not play them in their freshman year, you red-shirt them and then you get four years out of them. Back in the old days that you are talking about, when you had freshmen teams, the only place that a freshman could play would be on the freshman team. Then next year he became a sophomore and if you want to red-shirt him between that, you could do that. The whole idea is that there are very few freshmen who could come in and contribute and make an impact on your team right away. There may be a few, like two, three or four. I kind of liked the old system where you had the freshmen team. That is my own personal opinion. I do not think many coaches would go for it. I think they like the new idea where you can sign them up as freshmen, red shirt them, and then play them for four years.

[End of side A]

P: [What about] increased pay for college football players?

B: There is an argument that the players do not get enough to cover the essentials that they have. I think, most athletic people figure that there should be a little more money for them to cover their needs. I do not know exactly how much kids get today. I hear stories that they do not have enough to cover their cleaning bills. Before I render an opinion on that, I would like to know how much they are going to get. If they are going to be pros, we are starting them out kind of early. I think that maybe with the increased cost of living, the coaches and the athletic people do have a legitimate argument. My opinion would rest on getting a few more facts before I commit myself.

P: I asked Coach Ray Graves that question and he said he thought they ought to get more. Maybe \$300 a month or something like that so they would not have to worry about getting a pizza or going to the movies.

B: Yes, that is the argument that I have heard two or three coaches put up.

P: Not big money.

B: Right, not big money. Just enough to meet the necessary expenses.

P: A couple of comments on the quarterback of the 1953 team, a fellow named **Doug Dickey**. Could you comment on him as a player?

B: When Heywood Sullivan went to the Boston Red Socks that left Bob Woodruff without a quarterback. Coach **Dave Fuller** had watched Doug Dickey as a youngster and Doug's father taught here at the University of Florida. Dave had seen him play and thought he was a good prospect and he encouraged the university to give him an athletic scholarship. It was a fortunate thing that they did because he was the guy who stepped in when Heywood left and became the quarterback. Doug was one of those people who was a keen student from the beginning. He did not throw as good as Heywood, not too many people do, but he was a good guy to have in there because he knew the game. He had experience playing as a high school quarterback. He stepped in and he had people in his back field like **Beauford Long**, Rick Casares and **Jay "Papa" Hall**. He simply had to hand off to some of those guys. I mean when you have got that many people in the back field to help out, you do not have to be the world's greatest passer. Doug did not have to be, but he did a great job on that 1952 team. That was the first bowl team that beat Tulsa.

P: Talk about the beginning of the series with Florida State? Obviously, Florida did not want to play Florida State, how did that come about?

- B: Well, Bob Woodruff was here at that time and he felt like it was going to be a big gainer for Florida State, but that the University of Florida was not going to gain that much out of it. If you won, they were going to say so what, who did you beat? If you lost, your alumni were going to be after your job. That is about what it boiled down to. So Bob tried to avoid playing and I think most of the people at the University of Florida tried to avoid it. There was a legislator up in Nassau County, I think his name was **Stratton** but I am not sure. He was really pushing this thing hard and heavy and they finally got it down to where they were going to pass a law that the two had to play. So the two presidents got together and finally agreed that they would meet. Florida and FSU scheduled the game in 1958 and they played it at Florida Field.
- P: All the first games were played at Florida Field?
- B: Yes, because the stadium up at Doak Campbell was not very big. FSU agreed to play here until they got an adequate facility to have a home-game arrangement. In that first game, believe it or not, FSU took the opening kick-off and threw a lateral pass across field and ran it all the way down to about the seven yard line and scored a touchdown. They were leading seven to nothing and the Florida people were in a state of shock. But a guy named **Jimmy Dunn**, who had turned down FSU and came to Florida, happened to score three touchdowns and the Gators won it twenty-one to seven.
- P: In fact, there was a lot of conflict over the recruiting of Jimmy Dunn because he had originally said he was going to go to FSU.
- B: Yes, he committed to FSU and then changed his mind. That commitment game is a dirty game in recruiting. People could come to blows over that.
- P: One other player, who was an interesting player and later played for the pros, was **Bobby Joe Green**.
- B: He is a real dear friend of mine. As a matter of fact, many of these Gators you are talking about have been real good friends of mine. I knew Rick Casares well and Heywood. It brings back a lot of memories. Bobby was a player who had played at Northeast Oklahoma. He was recruited here as a punter because he was a great kicker. The kicking game was very vital to the Woodruff scheme and the coaches that followed him. Coach Graves believed in a kicking game too. I used to tell people that when Bobby Joe kicked the football, you could see that baby come all the way up to the top of the stadium. If you wanted hang time, you could read the paper and walk down there. My Lord, he had the greatest hang time because he had great height and great distance. His punts are almost legendary. They talk about the different kicks that he made. The one thing that Bobby Joe did that I will always remember, is in his senior year

when Florida was playing Tulane at Florida Field. Bobby Joe caught my attention because, when I was a kid growing up, I liked to drop-kick. This is an art that is no longer played on the football field but the old timers used to be able to run right or left and drop the ball and kick it through for a field goal. You did not have to have a player holding the ball for you. If you decided you wanted to commit to a field goal, you would drop that ball and kick it. There were some great ones who did that. Bobby Joe had always said he would love to kick an extra point that way. So he got the coach to let him do that. We were ahead of Tulane. I think we had scored our fourth touchdown, it was twenty-seven nothing and so the coach said he could try the drop kick this time. He drop kicked one through the south end zone upright and that, in my mind, is the last time a drop kick has ever been successful. I think it would have been in his senior year if you were to look that up.

P: Let us talk about the career of Ray Graves at the University of Florida? When they hired Graves, the first choice was Ara Parseghian and for some set of reasons he ended up not taking the job. In fact, apparently Graves was the third choice. Why do you think they hired Graves?

B: Well, Graves came with some very good credentials. I think I mentioned earlier that he had been a great football player at Tennessee for General Neyland. He was legendary. He was a center. After that, he had a good career with the Philadelphia Eagles in which he played some outstanding pro ball. He and **John Eibner** were rookies together. John Eibner was later an assistant coach for him and head of Gator Boosters. These two had played for the Eagles. Plus, the fact that when Graves quit pro football, he went down to Atlanta and became an assistant coach for Bobby Dodd. Dodd had been a Tennessee graduate and he hired Graves because he wanted Graves to design some defenses for him. Later on, these two men became very close personal friends. They fished together, they played tennis together and they coached together. Bobby Dodd did not make him just an assistant coach, he made him assistant head coach. I think this was the first time this title ever came out. For the Florida job we had already had one Tennessee man, we had Woodruff down here. The makeup of Graves was that he was a little more outgoing than Bob. Bob was a little more laid-back and perhaps a little hard to get to know, but Graves was very good with the media. He believed in wide-open football and I think that was one of the things that attracted the Florida people who made the hiring. He had all the credentials that you needed to be a good head coach and to work in the SEC. He knew the SEC, he knew what it took to win. Heck, he had been molding defenses up there for Bobby Dodd on all his great teams in 1950. From 1950 on to the 1960s, Dodd and Georgia Tech dominated the SEC.

P: Were you surprised that when they were looking for offensive capabilities, they

hired a defensive coach?

B: Not really because usually, back when Ray was hired, he knew as much about offense as he did about defense. Another thing that Ray believed, and I guess all coaches do, is to hire a staff and turn the responsibility over to them and let them assist you. That was one of Bobby Dodd's great characteristics. He did not try to run the whole show, although he did. Bobby believed in hiring a defensive coach, a secondary coach, and an end coach. Each one had his responsibilities and he did his job. He delegated responsibility and Graves had the same idea. Get good people as your assistants because you cannot do it all by yourself. He followed that agenda here at Florida.

P: Was it a mistake to hire him as Athletic Director and head football coach?

B: Well, that is a question that has come up. Now you do not have that happen, but that was common practice back when Ray was hired. Just about everybody who was the head coach was also the athletic director. So when they broke with that tradition, it was due to the fact that they said hey, that is too much of a job, it needs to be split-up. Now, your head coach is not your athletic director. That brought about the whole change. I think he was a good athletic director. I think Ray Graves did a good job but maybe people were right in saying that it is a two-job deal, not a one-job deal. I think they made a good move there.

P: When he came, he said that when the press asked him what he had to do. He said, I have to beat Miami, Georgia and Florida State. He said, I could win all the other games and lose those three and get fired.

B: Well, in a Florida situation I think that is right. There are three foes, we do not play Miami anymore, but Georgia, FSU and maybe Tennessee are the big games. I think Ray put it in a nutshell. He knew the three most important ones. I think Steve Spurrier [University of Florida football coach] knows the three most important ones too.

P: When he first started coaching, his quarterback was a fellow named **Larry Libertore**. Would you describe him for us?

B: Larry was a little guy. Larry, weighed about 145 pounds soaking wet.

P: The football guide says that he weighed 138 pounds.

B: Well, I was not too far off. I remember he was a little guy but he could run to perfection. I suppose one of the greatest games I ever recall, was the first time that Bobby Dodd brought his Georgia Tech team down to play Ray Graves at Florida Field. Larry Libertore was the quarterback and the game see-sawed back and forth. I felt for Mrs. Dodd that day, Bobby's wife, because she was sitting

over there on the Tech side. Her husband was coaching Georgia Tech but her son, Bobby Jr., was playing for Florida. Now, who are you going to root for in a situation like that? One of her favorite players, I think **Pepper Rogers**, was the offensive coordinator for Ray Graves. Also, Ray had been Bobby's fishing buddy.

That was a game that was packed with emotion. To talk about Libertore, it got down to the final minute and thirty-seven seconds, and Libertore ran an option play. Tech was leading at the time, and Larry ran an option play to the right, over in the northeast corner of Florida Field. We had a half-back named Lindy Infante, and at the last minute Libertore pitched to him and he went in just inside the flag to score. That made the game seventeen to sixteen Tech. Just a year before that, they had put in the two-point conversion rule and Graves and Rogers knew there was no way they were going to go for one point for a tie. So they called for a two-point conversion and Libertore rolls to the right and dumps the ball in the end zone to **John MacBeth**, our fullback. I remember Libertore for that one game but he had many games. He went out to LSU one night and broke loose for a touchdown and quieted that crowd down pretty good.

P: Ray Graves called him one of his most courageous players.

B: I think Ray is right because he knew the size and the hits the guy took. Man, I will tell you I do not know whether he could take the beating that Wuerffel [Danny Wuerffel, University of Florida quarterback, Heisman trophy winner 1996] took up in Tallahassee or not, but he was just an outstanding young man. I think he has had a good career too after getting out of college.

P: Coach Graves also mentioned that he was beaten out for quarterback and he ended up playing defensive back?

B: He did. He was that kind of player. Wherever he could contribute, he did.

P: Comment a little bit on the Florida State series. One FSU coach, a person of rather extraordinary personality -- **Bill Peterson**. Have you got some Bill Peterson stories?

B: Well, I always remember the **Lane Fenner** catch. That was during the years that Spurrier was playing. Bill, and all the people at FSU, said he was in bounds when he made the catch but the official said he was out-of-bounds. There was a hell of a lot of hype over that thing. Honestly, Pete had wild expressions to say like \_\_\_\_ used to say. Also, like the old catcher of Yogi Berra, "It is not over, 'til it is over." He had some wonderful quotes and I cannot recall them right now because I have forgotten most of them. I genuinely liked Bill Peterson, I really did. I think he added a lot to the game.

P: One of the stories I had heard was that, before the game, he asked the team to

kneel down and say the Lord's prayer and he started out, now, I lay me down to sleep. [Laughter.]

B: That is possible, that is really possible I think. Now that sounds like something that Pete would do. He later came on and he became a pro coach out at Houston with the Oilers. He did some radio commentary too. He was just a very likeable guy. As a matter of fact, he was an assistant coach on the LSU staff when he was hired by FSU.

P: Just a point of interest. In that 1966 game, Lane Fenner was out-of-bounds?

B: Yes, he was out-of-bounds.

P: In Graves' first year they also won a big game over Georgia, 22 to 14. That, at the time, was the largest crowd in [Florida] history. Talk a little bit about this game in Jacksonville at the Gator Bowl. Why is that game so special?

B: It is very special to the city of Jacksonville, because they derive a lot of money for their economy. What it does is it keeps them from playing on a foreign field. While it is true that Georgia is playing in Jacksonville, they have as many Georgia fans as we do Florida fans. It sort of splits it down the middle and they divide the concessions. Everything is split. The tickets are split. Instead of being a road game, it is sort of a neutral game. The last of the big neutral games. I think they still play the Texas-Oklahoma game in Dallas. This is the last of the big neutral sites for a major college game. There is so much tradition and color to it. Georgia held the upper-hand for many years. When I was a freshman, I was lucky enough to see the Gators win six-nothing and I did not have to wear my rat cap for the rest of the session. We had a tradition; if you beat Georgia you did not have to wear your rat cap to classes anymore. A rat cap was a nice thing to have, or a beanie as they call it today, because you can catch \_\_\_\_\_. The football game itself had so many colorful players. I can recall seeing Frankie Sinkwich who was the first Heisman trophy winner in the SEC playing for Georgia. I can recall seeing Charlie Trippi play for them and **Gene Ellenson**, who later became head of the Gator Boosters and assistant coach here at Florida. I used to tell Gene that he was cruel. He played on the team in 1942 that beat the Gators seventy-five to nothing. Believe me, I broadcast that game. I tell people that was the most horrendous dog-day afternoon that a human being ever had. I had to sit there and try to make it interesting for Florida fans with their team getting beat seventy-five-zip. Unfortunately, a miracle did not happen. There were not too many happy Gator fans that day.

P: Fran Tarkenton [Francis Asbury Tarkenton, American football player, T.V. Host , 1940-?] was another.

- B: Yes he was. Fran was probably one of the greatest scrambling quarterbacks I have ever seen. He led Georgia to some big victories. I have a cousin who coached at Green Bay and I think he worked for Vince Lombardi [football coach, 1913-1970] for nine years. This was the maddest he ever got at Vince. Vince had a chance to draft Fran Tarkenton as the back-up for Bart Starr [Bryan B. Starr, University of Alabama and Green Bay Packers, 1934-?] and about the sixth round, he passed it up and he could have had him. A lot of people know that, of all the scramblers that came along, Tarkenton is perhaps the greatest. Of course, he had two careers, he played with the Giants and also with the Minnesota Vikings. He had two good pro teams to play with.
- P: One of the great Florida players during this period of time was Larry Dupree. Why was he such a superior football player?
- B: Larry was a runner. A short, stocky guy. He had a low center of gravity and he was awfully tough to bring down. Believe it or not, for his size, he was not built like a fullback but he had some marvelous moves. I saw him play great against a Georgia team one day. He was married and in his senior year, his child died the night before a Georgia game. It was a very tragic thing. The child was sick and passed away. He still went over to the game and played against Georgia and turned in a magnificent performance. Talk about a gutsy thing to do. It took real courage for him to do that. His entire career was that type of thing. He was one of those that I put with a capital G; a Great Gator. He was outstanding.
- P: There is a famous incident since you mentioned Gene Ellenson. Florida had lost a game, I forget to whom, but they were playing Texas A&M. Gene Ellenson had written a letter to the team describing his experiences in World War II where he survived the Battle of The Bulge. Tell me about that story and how that impacted the team?
- B: Is this the Florida team we are talking about?
- P: Yes, he had written a letter to the Florida team and he talked about overcoming adversity.
- B: Well, I am not sure I remember it involving the Florida team. I know that he impressed Steve Spurrier so much that, quite frequently if Steve had a big game, maybe he was playing the Duke-Carolina game or maybe Clemson, Steve would get Gene to come up and address his team. Ellenson, quite frequently, used adversity. He had been trapped in the Battle of the Bulge and did not see any chance of getting out and he was one of our war heroes. Gene Ellenson was just a great gentleman. I used to like to talk with him about his days at Georgia when he was playing and the days of the Battle of Bulge. I do not remember that particular incident. I know Florida played Texas A&M at a bowl game when

Dickey was the coach and we got smashed but we also played them when Hank Foldberg had gone out. Foldberg came over here, and Florida just creamed them pretty bad, about forty-eight to two. It was a bad beating.

P: That is very good. It was forty-two to nothing. You have got a very good memory for the numbers. Why didn't Florida, at this point, recruit black athletes?

B: What year?

P: 1962.

B: I do not think there were any other schools in the South that were doing it at that time. We started about the same time everybody else did. I know the first two black athletes we recruited were **Leonard George**, out of Tampa, and a young fellow named **Willie Jackson**. That is a name you have heard before, Willie Jackson. I believe he was from Sarasota but he had gone up to Valley Forge Military Academy which is just outside of Philadelphia. Both of these young men were outstanding. I was broadcasting and I was so proud of both of them. Leonard has become an outstanding attorney in Atlanta and of course, Willie Jackson has given Florida two great Gators. His namesake Willie, Jr. was a fantastic flanker and plays now for the [Jacksonville] Jaguars and **Terry Jackson** is perhaps the greatest all-around player we have had in the last few years here at Florida. He does everything. It is a shame that he missed out this season with that injury and I am hoping he will be back next year and take them to an SEC title. I think Florida got into the recruiting of black athletes about the same time that everybody in the SEC did. I think the ones that we have recruited have been outstanding too.

P: Schools like Penn State and other schools had athletes like **Lenny Moore** that they had recruited, but the SEC had not yet started?

B: No.

P: In the 1963 season, one of the great wins in Florida history, was when they went to Tuscaloosa and beat Alabama, ten to six. Talk about that game.

B: I recall that game very well because, believe it or not, we were more successful against Alabama than we were against Auburn. Auburn had an edge over us in wins and losses. In fact, there was a period of time from 1937 up until Dickey came here in the early 1970s, that we could not win at Jordan-Hare [Stadium]. They dedicated the stadium one day in 1939. Florida went over there and **Charlie Tate** scored a touchdown and they came back and tied it up seven to seven. We did not win at Jordan-Hare. We went over year after year and got beaten. Finally, Doug Dickey took the team over there and won early in the 1970s. That is how long it took us to win. I got off rambling on something else.

[Let me talk about] the Alabama game and the fact that we beat Alabama at Tuscaloosa in 1963. The fellow who was coaching was Ray Graves and he took a team over there that were underdogs and beat the great Alabama team ten to six. We had **Dick Kirk** who was not a running back per say, but he had a touchdown run of about forty-five or fifty yards and scored. We got a field goal and won ten to six. The thing I remember is "Bear" Bryant. Until that day as a head coach, he had never lost in Tuscaloosa. That was the only time he lost until the last year of his coaching career when Southern Mississippi went over and beat him. The only two teams to beat him in Tuscaloosa were Florida, under Ray Graves, and Southern Mississippi.

P: In 1964 the big recruit, which I think everybody knew about at the time, was Steve Spurrier. Can you talk a little bit about the recruitment of Spurrier?

B: Yes, I can. I went up to Johnson City on a basketball trip and Steve's brother was running a sporting goods store at the time. Of course everybody in Johnson City knew about Steve because he had been a great athlete at Science Hill High School. They even knew about him in Tennessee. He was a fantastic athlete. A good basketball player, too. Tennessee wanted him very much. Ray Graves' brother was the postmaster of Knoxville, Tennessee and he followed the sports pages pretty closely. He called up Ray and he said hey, there is a kid up here who can really pass wide open, a great quarterback prospect named Steve Spurrier. He said, I think you had better get up here and talk to him. The thing was that Tennessee was still using the old single-wing type offense (three yards and a cloud of dust), no wide-open passing. Steve wanted to throw the ball and he could throw it very well. He liked the wide-open style of attack. Ray went up and talked to him and told him that at Florida that was the style of football they were playing. In fact, they had completely gotten away from that three yards and a cloud of dust bit. He talked to Steve and persuaded him to come to Florida. I think Ray did most of the recruiting on that. He got the word from his brother who was the postmaster of Knoxville, Tennessee.

P: Spurrier, at one time, said he also liked the weather down here and he could play golf year-round.

B: I did not mention that, but you know Steve loves a game of golf and he is truly a great competitor. Yes, I think that probably was one of the great factors, but he also loves the University of Florida. He loves the tradition of the school and he has helped to create a lot of tradition for this school.

P: Talk a little bit about his career. Why was he an outstanding quarterback?

B: Steve had a knack of winning. There are some people who have it and some

people who do not. He is just a natural-born competitor. If he was playing a game of tiddly-winks or shooting marbles, he would be competitive. Whatever he did, he tried to do it to the utmost of his ability. Winning was very important and doing a good job. I have seen him out playing golf and he is very determined when he plays golf. When he is out there on the sideline and you see him throw his visor down, it is because something has gone wrong. Either it was a bad play or else the quarterback messed up; somebody goofed. He likes perfection and he strives for that. He was that type of player. He was the first quarterback to come to Florida that really was a master at doing the two-minute drill. He did that to perfection. I always felt that if we had the ball and we were behind six points, it did not really matter because if Steve got ahold of that football and had to go ninety-five yards, he could do it. He won a lot of ball games for Florida that way.

P: Eight times in three years they came from behind in the fourth quarter.

B: Right, exactly.

P: What is it that allows an athlete to perform well such crucial times?

B: I think in the case of Steve and the case of all great athletes, some of them perform better under pressure. If there is no pressure there, they probably do not put forth as hard as they would. There is something about pressure that brings Steve right up to the top. He likes pressure and he liked it as a player and I think, ultimately, he likes it as a coach.

P: Talk about, probably his most famous day, which was the 1966 game; the thirty to twenty-seven victory over Auburn at Florida Field.

B: In my mind I can almost see Steve getting ready to kick the ball. The game rocked back and forth and it came down to a twenty-seven to twenty-seven tie and finally Florida got a drive going late in the fourth quarter. They got to the fourth down. What was the distance of the field goal? Does it say it there?

P: I cannot remember. Somewhere around forty yards.

B: That means that he must have been around the twenty-five yard line and they were going to make the snap back to the thirty-two. We got stopped at the twenty-five on the fourth down. So the game is tied up twenty-seven to twenty-seven. We did not have the overtime deal in college football then. The game, unless Auburn scored with a few seconds remaining, would wind up at a twenty-seven to twenty-seven tie. The Gators desperately needed the win, plus the fact that Steve, himself, was in the race for the Heisman trophy. That was the year he won the Heisman trophy. He went to Coach Graves on the sidelines when he called time out and he said coach, let me kick this field goal. Graves

knew that he was a winner and he said O.K. Steve, you are going to be the kicker. He goes back in there and I forget who was holding the ball for him, I think it was another quarterback who was holding the ball at that particular time. I could see it now, it was up at the south end zone and Steve got the ball lined up and he was kicking that sucker from just inside the right rule hash marks. Most field goal kickers today, if you watch them, like to get a lot of loft on the ball. They cut it under and boy it goes, especially for soccer-type kickers. Even the old-time kickers did that. Steve hit that ball and I could see it now, it was like a line drive. I was wondering if it was ever going to get there, if it was going to clear the bar. It was just like a clothesline had been hung out. It just did get over that crossbar for forty-one yards in the field and that won the ball game. It also may have won him the Heisman trophy. It certainly influenced a lot of people. Here is a guy who stepped in and had not kicked field goals all year and he kicks a forty-one yard field goal to win the game.

P: That was certainly a courageous call by Ray Graves.

B: It took a lot of courage. Ray really believed in Steve and I think he has believed in him all of his life. He knows the character of the man. He knows that if [Steve] can do it, it will be done.

P: He told me that toward the end of Spurrier's career, Spurrier called a lot of his own plays.

B: I can believe that. That does not happen too often, but even today some of the players call them. Steve, in those days, just had a great knowledge of the game. He absorbed the knowledge of football like a sponge.

P: Talk about the Orange Bowl in 1966 against Georgia Tech.

B: I did not see that ball game in person. I watched it on T.V. That was a game that Graves played against his old buddy [Bobby Dodd] again. He had beaten him eighteen to seventeen the first year of his coaching career and they were chosen to play in the Orange Bowl against Georgia Tech. Dodd had a pretty good team that year and the Gators went down. There are two things that I remember about the ball game. One was that **Larry Smith** got the longest run in Orange Bowl history and almost lost his pants and his mother was in the stands. I am sure she was worried about that. Larry was truly a great athlete. He later went on to play for the Los Angeles Rams. He is a real fine gentleman too. I have always liked him. He and Steve were teammates that year. That was the Orange Bowl game and it was the first time that Florida had won an Orange Bowl Classic when they beat Georgia Tech. That is about the most I remember about that ball game.

- P: The 1966 team was nine and two and Graves said that was probably his best team. The 1967 team was six and four but one of the memorable games was the victory over Georgia. I believe that was the game where Richard Trapp made that great run.
- B: Yes, he went all over the field. He wove back and forth and just about every player in the Georgia team had a shot at him, but could not get him down. Trapp was an illusive character and a good pass receiver too.
- P: Let me ask you a question about officiating. We mentioned Lane Fenner. When you saw a call that you thought was a mistake would you point it out?
- B: If it was very obvious. Broadcasters do not have that good a vantage point, especially on sideline plays. We may think we do, but the official down close has a much better vantage point. You do see deals where they go off-sides or they miss a clip or something like that. If it was critical to the outcome of the game, I would call it. I never tried to second-guess officials because I think they knew their job a lot better than I knew mine. I will be honest with you.
- P: The 1969 season was an interesting season for Ray Graves. This was the sophomore team with John Reeves and Carlos Alvarez. Comment on that group. That was certainly a surprise, I guess.
- B: It was. We played the opening game against Houston and the Cougars were running for a national championship that year. They brought over a very fine football team with wide-open attack, good running, and good passing. The Gators won the toss to receive and John Reeves and Alvarez were to be heard from later on. Nobody knew too much about them on opening day. I think Houston was shocked from the very beginning. At this game, even though we were playing a team that was rated as a national champion, the stadium was not sold out. Today, you could not get a ticket on game day. There is no way you could do that. As I recall, though, there must have been about 8,000 or 9,000 seats available that had not been sold. Reeves and Alvarez, on the very first play, hit on a seventy yard pass play. A special play was put in by the offensive coordinator at that time. I do not know if it was **Fred Pancost** or not, but Ray always had a good offensive man in there. Pepper had already left him. The offensive coordinator put in this special play and Reeves hit Alvarez and he ran seventy yards and a got a touchdown. Not only that, but Florida came back and got another one. I think we had a quick turnover from the Houston team and the Gators were out in front fourteen to nothing. They kept pouring it on and Florida poured on a whole bunch of points in the first half. They were so far ahead that you could not believe it. People listening in on the radio heard that and said is that really true? Is he lying? Is he making this up? People from as far away as New Smyrna Beach, Orlando and Daytona, jumped in their cars and said they

had to go see this game. The half-time sales were the greatest they have ever had for a game in Florida Field. We had the seats. We had about 7,000 or 8,000 seats available, and they had the greatest sale of half time tickets ever at Florida Field.

P: The final score of the game was fifty-nine to thirty-four.

B: Yes, I am glad you mentioned that. Houston did come back in the second half. I do not think they scored but maybe two touchdowns in the first half, but Lord, they came back like gangbusters in the second half. Of all the offensive football games I have ever seen in college, that had to be the most explosive.

P: One of the keys in that game was Carlos Alvarez. I thought he was, in many ways, the best college receiver I ever saw because they could not cover him.

B: No, they could not cover him and if the ball was anywhere in his area, he was going to make the catch. I have some pictures that they used to have over in **Norm Carlson's** office of Alvarez with his hands out-stretched catching a football. They talk about pass-catching hands, Alvarez had them. It is such a shame that he got the injury that wrecked his knee in his senior year and he was not at full speed and could not do things like cutting and making moves. He later went on to become an outstanding attorney and has a good record. He was one of the most exciting receivers I have ever seen in Florida Field.

P: At this point, Graves ended his coaching career with 70 wins and 31 losses. Assess his career as a football coach.

B: I think he did a lot of things at Florida. He had a good relationship with the media, the press and the electronic media. He hired good assistants. Ray always had good people on his staff. He put a lot of emphasis on recruiting. I think he had a good relationship with the high school coaches, certainly in the state because he got a lot of the top high school talent. The type of football that he played was certainly interesting and wide-open. His whole program was a good program. He had bowl teams and he never quite won the SEC and I think that Ray regretted that. He wanted to win the SEC for Florida. I think the saddest I ever saw Ray was over in Jacksonville when we played Duke one time. **Bill Murray** was a coach at Duke and the Gators went out twenty-one to nothing in half time. Duke came back and overtook them twenty-eight to twenty-one. He told me once, that was the only football game that ever caused him to cry because they lost a twenty-one point lead. Did he tell you that story?

P: Yes, he sure did.

B: That hurt him.

P: Now, they ended up hiring Doug Dickey. Why do you think they hired Dickey and why do you think he came?

B: Well, I can understand why they hired him. Dickey was an alumni of the University of Florida. He had an outstanding coaching career. He had been an assistant at Arkansas and he was one of Bob Woodruff's boys. Bob was athletic director at Tennessee, so he brought him over to Tennessee as a head coach. He won some SEC titles and that had never happened at Florida. They said well, here is a guy who has won the SEC title and he is one of our own. Why not bring him back? He would be great. I think one of the people who was instrumental in doing that was was President Steve O'Connell [Steven C. O'Connell, University of Florida president, 1967-1973]. He really wanted to get Doug here. He thought it would be great to have a Florida man, who had won the SEC title somewhere else, coaching the Gators.

P: There was at least some disappointment on the part of the team. They thought Gene Ellenson should have gotten the job. Then there was this business where we ended up playing Tennessee in the Gator Bowl and some people thought that was not a very good situation.

B: It was fraught with a little frustration there from all angles. The Gators beat Tennessee, I believe fourteen to thirteen. Tennessee had won the SEC title. Here we have a coach coming in who has been beaten by Florida, you see. The scenario was not good. It kind of crumbled there the last week of the campaign, so to speak.

P: Now, he got off to a very slow start. After three years, he was sixteen and sixteen which was not even as good as Woodruff. Later, he will do better but why was Dickey not successful at Florida?

B: Well, a lot of people thought that he did not utilize the particular talent that he had. He did not utilize Reaves and Alvarez in the great wide-open attack that he had at his command. That came back to haunt Doug in the end. Doug loved the wishbone and whenever the wishbone came along he thought he could be in command with that wishbone. A lot of coaches, I guess, felt that way. For some reason, Doug never came within the domain of the SEC title. He did have some bowl games but things just did not work out for him.

P: Also he had trouble beating Georgia.

B: Yes, there was a time when he went up there and had a lead of twenty-seven to thirteen, and it looked like we might be on our way to SEC title, and then there was a famous fourth down where he went for it from our twenty-seven and did not make it and Georgia went on. We did not score anymore points, but they went on and beat us forty-one to twenty-seven. I guess that is an afternoon that

Doug would like to forget.

P: He was the one to use the first black quarterback. A fellow named Don Gaffney. What was the fan reaction to that particular decision?

B: Everybody thought it was a good decision because young Don Gaffney was a good runner plus he was a good passer. He put him in at the game over at Auburn. I think we had lost three in a row and we never beat Auburn at Jordan-Hare. He put Gaffney in and Gaffney had that little something extra. First of all, they had to watch him for the run. He was a good runner and he also could pass. Florida won the game that day twelve to eight. Auburn scored in the last two minutes to get the eight points. They went for two and got them.

P: That was at Auburn?

B: That was at Auburn, at Jordan-Hare. It was the first time the Gators had ever won there. The game was not as close as a twelve to eight score in any case. Florida dominated the play with Gaffney in there. They probably should have scored two or three more touchdowns than they did, but they won it twelve to eight.

P: He was going to be fired. Do you think the reason was just not winning enough games? There were some problems with players, they had been in some fights, they had low graduation rate, there had been apparently some violations of NCAA rules. Could you comment on that?

B: I do not have any direct knowledge, just rumors I have heard. I think all of the above probably contributed to it. I heard that sometimes the coaches do a disciplinary thing on a player where they have to run so many times up the stadium for some infraction. Then Doug would come in and countermand the thing and his discipline disintegrated because of that sort of thing. I heard that was one of the contributing factors. I think it was not just one thing. I think it might have been two or three or four things that contributed to it. Doug is a very knowledgeable guy about football. He is a little difficult to get to know. I think of all the Florida coaches, he was more difficult to get to know than any of the others that I met. He was always good. He always spoke to me, he always talked to me. The comment I heard among other people in the media was that he is awfully hard to deal with and get to know.

P: Why did they hire **Charlie Pell** when he had already been in trouble at Clemson with the NCAA?

B: I honestly cannot tell you why. I think they figured that they were going to bring in a guy who was going to win. Charlie got the idea that they wanted him to win no matter what and that probably got Charlie into a pack of trouble. He figured,

if I have got to win, I am going to do it my way. That is the outcome of that.

P: How difficult was that first year when they did not win a game?

B: That was bad but I had been through one in 1946.

[End of side B]