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## ***Arkansas Democrat Project***

Interview with

Bob Holt  
Lowell, Arkansas  
21 August 2005

Interviewer: Sam Krebs

Sam Krebs: [This is] Sam Krebs, with the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, and I'm interviewing Bob Holt. This is for the [Pryor Center] for Arkansas for Oral and Visual History. We both agreed to this interview. Bob is our [University of Arkansas, UA] Razorback [team] writer—Razorback football. Bob, let's get a little idea about your background.

Bob Holt: Well, it's hard to believe I'm starting my twenty-fifth football season with the *Democrat-Gazette*. That occurred to me the other day. They should give me something silver—a silver anniversary.

SK: I think we're going to have to get you—a Razorback, maybe?

BH: Yes, I don't know.

SK: I was kidding Steve Goff the other day—our Northwest sports editor up here—on a deal like that—that maybe we needed to get him one of those Razorbacks.

BH: Yes, I saw a picture of the [Volkswagen] Beetle that looks like a Razorback. But

yes: I was actually born in Saginaw, Michigan, and lived there for a little while and then moved to LaCrosse, Wisconsin, which is on the Mississippi River.

People don't think of Wisconsin and the Mississippi, but that's where I became a big [Green Bay] Packers [professional football team] fan. I'm a big Tigers fan from my days in Michigan—Detroit Tigers [major league baseball team]. And we moved to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, which is also on the Mississippi, but a lot farther south.

SK: I know exactly where that is.

BH: Southeast Missouri State's there. [I] moved down there when I was in fourth or fifth grade. So I basically grew up in Cape Girardeau. I liked sports, but I wasn't good enough to play beyond the small high school, so a way to stay involved with that was to—and I liked writing, liked reading and writing, so I stayed—a way for me to stay involved with sports was to write about it. I went to the University of Missouri in Columbia, which has a real good journalism school. I knew Jeff Krupshaw in Columbia. I guess he was a year ahead of me, I think.

SK: Yes, I've worked with Jeff at the *Democrat*, too.

BH: Yes. He's our deputy sports editor now. K-R-U-P-S-A-W.

SK: Oh, yes, let's be sure we spell that one right.

BH: Well, a lot of people mispronounce it, call him Krupshaw, but it's Jeff Krupshaw.

SK: And they know him affectionately as "Krup."

BH: Yes, Krup, that's how—most of his friends call him that. And Jeff was, I think, a year ahead of me, and he was working at the *Democrat*—what was *then* the *Democrat*. And I think he was covering Arkansas State football and horseracing. He really loved horseracing because he covered it all the time.

SK: I remember those days.

BH: Jeff kind of—and this, I’m sure it happens, hopefully it happens today, too. Jeff put out the word to me at Columbia, “Hey, the *Democrat* has an opening for a guy to live in Fayetteville and cover the Razorbacks.” Well, man, you’re looking for an entry-level job, [and] that’s pretty appealing, you know. Living in a college town and covering big-time sports. I mean, just getting a job period. So that’s how I heard about the job. And I remember being in Cape Girardeau, you know, graduating, and didn’t have a job. So I drove down to Little Rock. I think I slept on Jeff’s couch or something when I drove down. I think that was the first time I’d ever been in the state of Arkansas, except to drive through on my way to Memphis. To get from Cape Girardeau to Memphis, you drove through a little section of Arkansas. I’d never been to Little Rock. I remember Todd Gurley was the sports editor, and I think Michael Storey was the assistant sports editor.

SK: Right.

BH: He was our TV . . .

SK: He’s our Hollywood writer now. Michael’s done a little bit of everything.

BH: Yes. And I remember . . .

SK: Yes, I like Michael.

BH: I drove down and did the interview. Got lucky enough to get offered the job, and that was great. That made things a lot easier. Having a job after you graduate. “Mom and Dad, thanks for sending me to college, now I don’t have a job.” I guess I was hired in June of 1981, which is hard to believe. I moved up to Fayetteville and started covering the Razorbacks for the *Democrat*.

SK: And “Woo pig sooie!” [reference to Razorback cheer] and all that good stuff—

was that culture shock for you, or . . . ?

BH: Yes. I have a real good memory of watching that 1978 Orange Bowl game. I was home for Christmas break in Cape Girardeau. I remember watching that game, and, of course, being in Missouri, I was very familiar with the Big 12, or I guess then it was the Big 8—gosh, dating myself. And I just couldn't believe that anybody could dismantle Oklahoma like that. Arkansas won, I guess, 31 to 6.

SK: Unbelievable.

BH: That's when I really became aware of Lou Holtz.

SK: Lou Holtz's miracle.

BH: Yes. And hearing about guys like Dan Hampton and Roland Sales and Ron Calcagni and all these guys. I remember watching that game in our living room [and] just being astounded that Arkansas or anybody could dominate Oklahoma like that. So after that I started following Arkansas really closely. I remember—you know, it's funny, being in Columbia, we'd go to Mizzou games. I can still remember going to a Missouri-Southern Cal game in Columbia—they played in the late 1970s—and seeing a Hog—somebody in the stands in Columbia was wearing a Hog hat. So there was a little bit of Arkansas everywhere. And, of course, people might not remember this because Frank Broyles has been at Arkansas so long, but he was actually at Missouri I guess in 1957. That was a couple years before I was born, but I knew from covering Missouri that Frank Broyles had been there. And that Don Faurot, a long-time Missouri coach.

SK: One year, I think, at Missouri.

BH: Yes, just one year. Then Broyles got the Arkansas job, though. So I had a feel for it. I can't say I was an expert. I do remember one thing I did—now, this was

before the days of the Internet and everything. I remember going—before I would move to Fayetteville, I went to Little Rock for a couple weeks, just kind of to meet people and learn the operation. I remember—I guess it was in the library there, or it was in the paper, but there was a room that had these huge bound volumes of the paper. They were in like these big . . .

SK: We used to play poker in that room.

BH: Yes.

SK: Back when it was legal. It's not legal anymore.

BH: I guess maybe they had a couple weeks of the papers at a time. Basically, you would open up the book and then you would just turn pages of the paper. And it was bound. So I started to get a feel for how we covered Arkansas and what I felt like I needed to do. I would just read through there.

SK: . . . in those days.

BH: Yes. I would just read—I just read reams and reams of copy, so I knew, “Okay, well, if the second-string free safety stubs his toe, that’s a story; that’s news.” You know? In some places that wouldn’t be, but [in] Arkansas—I kind of got a feel for what the features looked like. Notepads. Just kind of how you covered the beat. And I don’t know if that was the best way to do it, but that’s what I thought. I really wanted—not being that familiar with the papers, I really wanted to see. I looked at the [*Arkansas*] *Gazette* a lot. [I] just kind of wanted to get a feel for it—what I was getting myself into and what was expected. Then, I guess, I probably moved up here some time in the middle of summer. My first—my first season was 1981. And there were some great players at Arkansas—Billy Ray Smith, Jr. was here then. Gary Anderson, who I was very familiar with because

he was from Columbia, Missouri—his mom worked in the cafeteria at Missouri, and there was a lot of consternation in Columbia, Missouri, that Gary Anderson was playing for Arkansas and not Missouri, let me tell you.

SK: Gary Anderson's one of the greatest running backs of all time.

BH: Right. And he was a great pro. Well, first with the old USFL [a professional football league that once rivaled the NFL, National Football League], [the] Tampa Bay Buccaneers when Steve Spurrier was the coach, and then later with the San Diego Chargers. Gary's really a great guy too. And there were a lot of great players.

SK: What's Gary doing now?

BH: Well, he was coaching the Arkansas Twisters [Arkansas's arena football team]. He's not anymore, unfortunately. I don't think what happened there was his fault, but Gary's back in Little Rock. He has a big fan base. He's done real well for himself, and I'm happy to see that. But, yes, there were a lot of great players around Arkansas at that time. Of course, Lou Holtz was the coach. I can still remember getting like a—setting up an interview to go meet him, because I thought, “The guy's a Razorback, I need to go meet him.” I was twenty-one, I guess, at the time.

SK: Your first meeting with Lou Holtz, you're never going to forget. I remember mine.

BH: I'll tell you. What was yours like?

SK: I came to Fayetteville—I was the sports editor at Blytheville back then. I made an appointment with him, and he came, here in Fayetteville. But Frank Broyles—you could just go in and he'd talk to you. Lou Holtz—it was like military. It was

like you were interviewing the general.

BH: Yes, yes.

SK: And I guess you can relate to that part of it.

BH: Yes. I remember being fairly nervous, kind of like a job interview.

SK: It wasn't that he wasn't a nice guy, or [that] he wasn't personable.

BH: No. No.

SK: It was just different from the old football coach interview.

BH: Yes, it was. I covered Norm Stewart, you know, long time basketball coach from Missouri and Warren Powers [football coach at Missouri], who had been there, but Lou Holtz just seemed—especially in Arkansas in 1981—you know, they weren't too far removed from the 11-1 and 10-2 years. He was held in pretty high esteem, and I, being a young cub reporter, I guess is the term—being pretty nervous in meeting him. Yes, he was polite and everything, but you walk into his office—he wasn't a guy who was going to start throwing one-liners at you like he did with his press conferences. He sort of had different personas. There was the Lou Holtz who would go and sort of charm the media and the fans, then there was the Lou Holtz who was pretty businesslike. I just remember being really nervous and wanting to make a good impression. I think it worked out fine. I never had any major problems. He did tell me one time that I must be deaf. I remember, this was actually after his last season, 1983. This guy—I was down at Barnhill Arena where he did some interviews, and me and another sports writer—I think it was Mike Burrows, B-U-R-R-O-W-S, who actually worked at the *Springdale News* [now *The Morning News*], but we were friends. We were just shooting hoops waiting for some players to come out and the word came down that Don

Lindsey . . .

SK: The defensive coordinator . . .

BH: . . . the defensive coordinator at the time had quit or been fired, and we weren't sure what was going on. We barely got down to the Broyles [Athletic] Center and found out what was going on. I remember what ultimately happened—I remember we caught Don Lindsey in the parking lot—that's L-I-N-D-S-E-Y by the way—and he—I think his—I'd have to look up the clips now, but my recollection of that time many years ago—this would have been the winter of 1983—was that Lou Holtz had fired a couple of Don's assistants, Rich Olson, who was a defensive backs coach and, gosh, I think it was Harvey Hampton who I think was a D-line [defensive line] coach. But these are both guys—especially Rich Olsen, [who] was a guy Don had brought in from Southern Cal. Don couldn't stand for that, so he had resigned. There were rumors that—and basically Don ran the defense, [and] Lou Holtz ran the offense—called his own plays. There was the feeling that he wanted Lindsey gone, so he fired a couple of Lindsey's guys, knowing he'd quit. But I think word leaked out about this and he—you know, back then a coach might get rid of a guy, but he wanted him to get another job, so instead of saying, “Well, we just fired so-and-so,” they'd wait until the guy got another job and then they'd announce, “Oh, so-and-so's leaving Arkansas for Directional State U and a great opportunity there.” And you'd look and say, “Well, why'd that guy leave Arkansas?” You knew what had happened.

SK: Lou Holtz getting burned out . . .

BH: Yes, he's burned out and then two weeks later [left for the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers football team] Gopher job. But anyway, Don Lindsey

was saying all these things that he'd been fired and this and that. Lou Holtz didn't want to comment. I think he was upset that word leaked out because he wanted them to get other jobs and then they'd announce discreetly, "Oh, by the way, these guys left." So I remember somehow we caught him in his office or somewhere, I don't know, maybe in the parking lot. But I remember saying, "Don Lindsey's saying these guys got fired, and these guys are saying they got fired, so what do you say about that?" And he said something like, "Well, who would know better than they?" What you want to say is, "Well, you're the guy who fired them, so just confirm it for me," you know? I guess I was trying to get it out of him any way I could, just trying to get him to admit that, "Hey, these guys are fired," as opposed to, "Well, who would know better than they?" And finally he said something like, it's hard to say something Lou Holtz said without doing a little Lou Holtz imitation, so he says like, "Well, you must have a hearing problem or be deaf, because I just said I'm not going to answer that question." I guess I was redundant because if you're deaf, I think that would be a hearing problem. [Holt then did an admirable Lou Holtz impersonation.]

SK: I think that was the point he was trying to make.

BH: Yes, but I guess he lost patience with me. Then, of course, it wasn't too much longer after that that he was out of a job, too. He has since said that he was fired. Well, he resigned—I usually say he resigned under pressure, because I think it is accurate that Lou Holtz resigned as the coach, I guess it was December of 1983. At the time they were saying he was fired, but basically they went to Frank Broyles's the AD [athletic director], the guy that Lou Holtz replaced as coach, said, "Well, either resign or we're going to fire you." Well, so you resign. Of

course, Lou Holtz was a good coach. He had kind of worn out his welcome at Arkansas. Another time I remember, I think this was 1981 or 1982, Arkansas had had an open date—back then they'd run the veer with Lou Holtz and they were switching to the I-formation, and the thing I never got was in 1982 they had—Gary Anderson is one of the greatest athletes ever. Great I-formation tailback. And they had Jesse Clark, [a] great fullback [who] played for the Packers and the Cardinals [football team, now the Arizona Cardinals]. Perfect guys for the I[-formation]. But they ran the veer. And for the ballgame, the very last game those guys played, they ran the I against Florida and beat the Gators. When those guys were gone, then they switched to the I-formation. I never quite got that. I think they felt Gary Anderson wasn't durable enough, but he proved in the pros he was very durable, because he went from playing spring in the USFL to an NFL season in the fall. I remember in the early 1980s I thought, "God, this guy basically played pro football without a break." So Gary Anderson was plenty durable. Anyway, [the University of ] Nebraska, of course, was running the I formation at that time. They were just blowing people away. There was an open date for Arkansas, and some of the assistants went to Lincoln, Nebraska, where [University of ] Nebraska is located, to watch film and visit with the coaches. So I thought, "Well, that's kind of an interesting story." I can't remember—at that time I remember talking to Jesse Branch, who was a running backs coach, and he told me who they talked to and how it was helpful, and they watched film and this and that. So after practice later that day, I said, "Well, I want to ask Lou Holtz about that, get his take on it." I didn't think it was anything earth-shattering. I just thought it was kind of an interesting open-week story, so I asked Lou—and

there were only five or six of us, a couple TV cameras, [a] couple [of] newspaper people. You know, he talked about this and that, and I asked him something like, “Well, Coach, I was wondering if you’d talk about sending some of your assistants up to Lincoln to learn more about the I-formation?” Well, this came as a total shock to him that I knew this. He clearly did not want to talk about it, and I caught him off-guard, so he started—I don’t remember exactly what he said, but he started saying something about he didn’t know what I was talking about. And at one point, I guess, this is okay—one of the guys, I guess, had his fly down—his fly unzipped by mistake—so to change the subject or catch everybody off-guard, Lou said, “You realize your fly is down, don’t you?” And basically, that was the end of the interview. I couldn’t ever get him to talk about it. But I still had to write the story because, thankfully, the assistants had confirmed it for me. I just remember thinking, “Why is this guy acting like this?” But, I mean, Lou Holtz was a great football coach. Whatever you think of him, I don’t think anybody can argue that point. I guess he had some odd idiosyncrasies. But that’s kind of a funny story I remember. He was an interesting guy to cover, there’s no doubt about that.

SK: Let’s talk about your experience at the *Democrat* versus *Gazette*. How did you approach that?

BH: I basically approached it—I knew we were the underdogs. I had a lot of respect for the *Gazette*. One thing I had learned in my history and principles of journalism class at the University of Missouri is that the *Gazette* was the oldest paper west of the Mississippi, so I had a good respect for that. And, of course, looking at the paper, I knew it was a quality paper. I knew they had quality

people. I knew—I remember—I think they used to have newspaper boxes that said, “almost twice as large” or maybe “more than twice as large,” meaning they had a like two-to-one or better ratio of circulation, the *Gazette* to the *Democrat*.

SK: There were some interesting claims during the newspaper war.

BH: Yes, and I remember—you know, no one was ever rude to me from the *Gazette*, or at least not that I recall, but you got the feeling so much—at least when I first started there, and this would have been summer of 1981, fall of 1981—not so much that they didn’t like you, but that they sort of just dismissed you. Sort of like an NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] team playing a [Division] 1AA team. You know, you were there. Yes, technically, you were competition, but you really weren’t competition.

SK: I think that’s the way they looked at it.

BH: Yes. And I don’t think it was mean-spirited. I think that’s just the attitude.

SK: Guys like Jim Bailey helped me tremendously.

BH: Oh, no, Jim Bailey—and Nate Allen, who now works for the *Times*, the *Northwest Arkansas Times*. Nate was a Missouri grad. No, Nate was never anything but nice to me. I can still recall instances of we’d be sitting there waiting for players, and I didn’t know who any of these guys were, and I might ask Nate, “Hey”—I mean, we weren’t going to trade information; we definitely were competitors, but Nate was a very classy guy. I’d say, “Is that so-and-so?” And he’d say, “Yes,” or “No, that’s not so-and-so.”

SK: [I think that worked] with just about everybody.

BH: Yes. But if somebody really wanted to make me look bad, they’d have said, “Oh yeah, that’s so-and-so,” and I’d have gone up and it would have been the wrong

guy, and I would have looked stupid. Nate was very nice and never did that to me. But, yes, you really got the feeling that the *Gazette* was the dominant paper. I remember telling people that it was a two-paper market, but the *Gazette* was so far ahead, I almost felt like we were number three in a two-paper market, you know? I just felt like I had to really bust it.

SK: And that worked to your advantage in some ways, didn't it?

BH: Well, yes, I mean . . .

SK: If I was up against Jim Bailey, I knew I had to bust it.

BH: I had—like I said, I had awesome respect for the *Gazette* people. I knew [sportswriter] Orville Henry was an icon in Arkansas and that he had Frank Broyles's ear, or Frank Broyles had his ear, or however. I mean, I knew that those guys—they went out and ate together, and Frank Broyles didn't know who I was, you know? So my feeling was—I guess I equated sports to it—an underdog team playing another team and all, and you'd better give them your best shot every day and you'd better bust it, and you'd better not take anything for granted, and you'd better really hustle. That was my attitude. I think that was the attitude of a lot of people. We had a pretty young staff. From what I can remember, we had a humongous news hole. I mean, I think there were days where we had, like, twenty open pages, which in a sports section you never see today.

SK: Before we started filling all the gaps.

BH: Yes, yes. And so we had a lot of news hole, and we did a lot of things. And whatever you wrote—and of course, as a young reporter, I was eager to do everything. It was basically whatever I did, they had room for. None of this, “Oh, we don't have room for that,” or, “Keep it tighter.” “You got it? Send it.”

So I really tried to pump out the copy. Of course, the main thing you wrote about was football and men's basketball, but that was when the Lady Razorbacks were just starting to get going with basketball. John McDonnell in track and cross-country was beginning to build his dynasty. So there were—we tried to cover the gamut. You know, [Razorback baseball coach, 1970-2002] Norm DeBriyn Baseball— Arkansas had gone to the College World Series a couple of years earlier in 1979 and was starting to become a national power. So football was obviously the engine that drove the car, but—and these were the heydays. [Razorback basketball coach, 1974-1985] Eddie Sutton. And a couple years past the triplets [reference to Razorback basketball players Sidney Moncrief, Marvin Delph, and Ron Brewer]. See, I covered a lot of great players in basketball— Alvin Robertson, Darrell Walker, Scott Hastings, Joe Kleine.

SK: Oh yes.

BH: So it was an exciting time. But you knew you were in a really tough fight because . . .

SK: You were basically the only one on the Razorback beat back then . . .

BH: I know, it's incredible.

SK: . . . you covered everything.

BH: Yes. And looking back, I don't know how I did it. I'd probably be afraid to read some of those clips now—think, "Oh God, what was I thinking? What was I thinking?" But the bottom line, like you said, was you had to make deadline, and you had to produce. It was exciting because I just thought it was great to be working at a newspaper and covering major college athletics. I knew a lot of guys that I'd gone to school with that were in small markets covering high schools.

Not that there's anything wrong with that, but I felt really lucky to be covering major college sports and getting to go to all these games and meeting all these people. Then, what you were writing was really important to people. I guess at that point the *Democrat* had just switched over to a.m. It was an a.m. paper when I got there, and I think it hadn't been too long. That would have allowed us to pick up a certain number of people just by switching to being a morning paper. I do remember—it was hard to get a *Democrat* in Fayetteville.

SK: I remember those days, too.

BH: I think I usually bought one at the [Arkansas] Union.

SK: [There were] some corners of the state where you could not get a *Democrat*.

BH: Yes. And you'd walk out to your mailbox and a *Gazette* could fall out of the sky. I mean, the *Gazette* was everywhere. The *Democrat*, you had to hunt for. I think I usually bought it at the student union. Why they had it up there, I don't know, but it was hard to get and it was like a state edition. Basically, anything that happened after seven or eight at night did not get in the edition up here. So any night stuff was not up here. You know, baseball scores. So it was hard to find a *Democrat*, and when you found it, it didn't have as much stuff in there as you would like to have seen, frankly. But that was way before . . .

SK: I think we had those old state editions where you had to put them in . . .

BH: Right. Well, they'd have the features and things, but there was a lot of stuff that was in the Little Rock edition that wasn't in it. And you'd walk by the training room and everybody in there would have the *Gazette* sports section. There weren't a whole lot of people—the *Democrat*—I'm talking about those early—like 1981, 1982. And people were always nice to me. I don't think people were

ever disrespectful, but, man, you knew you were behind in the race, and you'd better do some stuff to catch up.

SK: When did you see it start to turn around?

BH: Probably—Wally [Hall] became the sports editor. I remember Todd Gurley had hired me, and, boy, it wasn't too long after that that Todd left, I think, to go to a phone company PR [public relations]. I'm sure there was a lot more money in phone PR than in newspapers.

SK: There was, yes.

BH: Wally Hall became the sports editor and he called me. And I didn't know Wally really well. I remembered meeting Wally.

SK: Wally was our columnist at the time.

BH: Right. Right. I remember Wally calling me, which I appreciated a lot. He just assured me, "Hey, I just want you to know I think you're doing a good job and everything's fine." Because there could have been a feeling, "Well, hey, Wally didn't hire me. I'm not his guy."

SK: Of course, being up here, you don't have to deal with the Little Rock politics either.

BH: Well, not as much anyway. But I remember that meant a lot to me that Wally called and kind of reassured me that everything was cool, because I was a young guy and been hired a few months and then we were changing sports editors. And that was real good. But I think what you said—we had a lot of good young writers. Mark Potash was a good friend of mine who was from Missouri. He covered preps. He's now at the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

SK: He took over the *Traveler* beat from me, I believe.

BH: Yes, yes. And Mark was a go-getter. We just had a lot of guys who, I think, were young, aggressive—we weren't making much money, but we were excited to be working and covering stuff and just thought it was a great opportunity. Not that those *Gazette* guys—they were real pros and worked hard, too, but I think we just sort of let it all hang out and . . .

SK: And made more money.

BH: Yes. It's kind of a cliché, but we didn't know—sometimes when you cover a game and an underdog team is winning or holding their own, you're thinking, "Well, these guys don't know they're not supposed to be in the game." But I think that was sort of our attitude. We were just glad to be there and excited.

SK: That's a perfect example of how we were.

BH: Yes. And, of course, you were a young guy then, too, yourself. I mean, we were all a lot younger. I think it was just kind of an exciting time, and Mr. [Walter] Hussman [Jr.] was putting a lot of money into the paper. We were traveling. We were sending six and seven people to football games.

SK: I remember going to New Orleans.

BH: To the Sugar Bowl?

SK: Sugar Bowl with Arkansas and Alabama.

BH: Yes, that was before my time, but yes.

SK: Got to cover Alabama and interviewed Bear Bryant in Tuscaloosa, which is probably *my* most momentous interview that I remember.

BH: Yes. Fordyce native, Arkansan.

SK: Offered me a bologna sandwich and a lemonade.

BH: Those Golden Flake chips.

SK: And still [unintelligible]. Put *Look Magazine* on hold, of all things.

BH: Wow, that's pretty impressive. I'm sure he was glad to be talking to a fellow Arkansan.

SK: I think that was part of it.

BH: Yes. He probably wasn't doing that for *The New York Times*.

SK: No, probably not.

BH: But, yes, it was just a real exciting time. And you could just see the *Democrat* was kind of slowly but surely building momentum. People started reading you more. I don't know exactly the circulation situation, but it seemed like it started getting better with getting the paper. It just seemed like you started getting the paper more up here. And seeing it more. And getting people to talk about it. We'd break some stories and hustle. There was no doubt that the *Gazette* was still a great paper, but I think we were improving. The *Gazette* was—that was before Gannett bought it—but it wasn't [that] the *Gazette* was really—I don't think the *Gazette* was losing ground, it was that we were gaining ground. We were just getting better. We were working hard and kind of forming an identity, and we were kind of young go-getters. I think we were raising our level of play to try to get up to where they were. Of course, the advantage they had was they were a known quantity, and they had better writers, and they'd always kind of been the go-to paper—or at least they had for many years. The advantage we had was, I think, we had some young go-getters that were really anxious and hungry. When you've got that big a lead in the race, sometimes maybe you don't notice the guy that's trying to make up ground on you. And slowly but surely, especially in the 1980s, the *Democrat* made up a lot of ground.

SK: Let's give Wally his credit for that.

BH: Oh, yes. Wally deserves a lot of credit. He wasn't the guy who hired me, but he's been my boss for nearly twenty-five years. He knows that if he treats people well—if you look at the paper, you'll see a lot of former sports—well, you'll see a lot of sports people. Hey, I'm going on my twenty-fifth year. I never thought I'd be there twenty-five years. Now, what I like to tell people is the paper changed. You know, most people, they go somewhere, and to get to the kind of paper they want to be at, they have to switch papers. I was able to stay and work at the *Democrat* and the paper changed into something I wanted to be at long-term. But I don't think there are too many situations like that—certainly not nowadays, but if you look at the paper . . .

SK: [Mr. Hussman?] let me come back twice.

BH: Yes. We've got all kinds of people that are in higher places that Wally hired in sports. I think Wally has a pretty good instinct for people, and he set the tone. People may have agreed or disagreed, but they were sure reading him. I mean, he was the guy who—he was sort of the anti-Orville, if you want to put it that way.

SK: Well, see, Fred Morrow was back in my day.

BH: Yes, exactly. And I was sort of the *Democrat's* take. But, yes, Wally started building up their contacts and getting a bigger audience. We were sending Wally all over the place. And he really became the . . .

SK: Lo and behold, the day came that Orville started working for us.

BH: Exactly. I just don't remember. Man bites dog. When they had the story that Orville Henry was coming over from the *Gazette* to the *Democrat*. I think that's really when—I remember talking to people around the country who were friends

of mine. They were calling me, basically going, like, “What is going on?” It would be like Frank Broyles going to Texas or something.

SK: Right.

BH: And that’s when people really felt the newspaper war had swung the other way, when Orville left the *Gazette* to come to the *Democrat*.

SK: What year was that?

BH: It was the late 1980s. I want to say it was about 1988 or 1989. Maybe 1988. I’m not positive of that. I remember being in Little Rock; I came down for the announcement. I had gotten to know Orville. He’d always been nice to me. Orville was the better writer, and I had a lot of respect for all the stuff he had done. And I still remember—once again, just like some people [unintelligible], I heard some people say, “Why, gee, I think Orville’s not—he’s being too positive or this or that.” And I’d say, “Well, I don’t know about that. What I do know is the guy’s been beating deadlines for about fifty years. And as a guy who hasn’t been in the business very long . . .”

SK: With fifty-inch stories, man!

BH: I respect that. [If] you’ve been beating deadlines for that long, I respect that. So Orville was never anything but nice to me, and I had a lot of respect for his longevity and his volume of work. I still remember, when they had a big announcement in Little Rock that he was coming to the *Democrat*, going up to him and saying, “Orville, let me just say something I never thought I’d be saying to you, ‘Welcome to the *Democrat*.’”

SK: Welcome to the *Democrat*.

BH: That was the big—I think—not that Orville switching papers wasn’t a major deal,

but the wheels were in motion. The *Democrat*—it was sort of like—if you’re a baseball fan—it was sort of like the 1969 Mets and the Cubs. The *Gazette* was like the Cubs with that huge lead in August, and we were the Mets. And we might have been even in circulation and advertising and all that stuff, but we had the momentum. We were going forward. The *Gazette* was kind of—and this was after they’d been bought by Gannett, and a lot of things changed.

SK: Gannett just killed the *Gazette*.

BH: I also remember when Gannett bought the *Gazette*, I had some calls from around the country basically saying, “Man, you’d better start sending out your résumé because those guys are going to come in and blow you away. They’re Gannett; they’re a major—they’re a national chain; they’re going to kill you guys.”

SK: But they knew nothing about Arkansas, did they?

BH: Well, that was the thing.

SK: That’s what I was always telling them.

BH: Yes, to me, the problem with Gannett is—I hope I’m not speaking out of turn here—is that they thought you should run a paper in Little Rock like you ran a paper in Binghamton, New York. And people—what I’ve learned about Arkansas

...

SK: Or try to turn it into *USA Today*.

BH: Well, just that they had a formula, sort of like a fast-food restaurant. They wanted everything to be the same—“But this is the way we do it.” Arkansas—and there’s probably a lot of other places—but it’s been my experience in Arkansas [that] Arkansans take a lot of pride in their state, and once you’ve been here, you’re in Arkansas. That’s why [championship boxer] Jermain Taylor’s so popular. That’s

why [former star Razorback quarterback] Matt Jones, wherever he plays in the NFL—Jacksonville [Florida] or wherever—he’s going to be an Arkansan and people are going to follow him. That’s why people follow [former Razorback basketball standouts] Joe Johnson, Sidney Moncrief, and Ron Brewer, and all that. And I think Gannett totally misread the situation. They totally misread Mr. Hussman’s resolve, I’ll tell you that.

SK: Oh, yes.

BH: I think they came in and thought—I remember hearing or reading that they’d paid \$25 million for the *Gazette*. It seems like a pretty paltry sum these days, considering that Alex Rodriguez was making that much a year as a baseball player. But there was some study that showed that if they ran the *Democrat* out of business or folded or whatever, the paper would automatically double—the *Gazette* would automatically be worth twice as much. So their expressed goal clearly was to make it a monopoly market. And they just totally, I think, misread Mr. Hussman’s resolve and his business skill. [Editor’s note: Gannett paid \$51 million for the *Gazette*.]

SK: Oh, yes.

BH: Things just kept going better and better for the *Democrat*, and they just kept getting worse for the *Gazette*. Of course, the difference was, the *Democrat* was run by Mr. Hussman. He called the shots. Gannett had stockholders. They had people going, “What in the heck are you guys doing in Little Rock? It’s like we’re pouring money down the drain. It’s like a black hole. What is going on?” Eventually, I think that’s what really swung it, where basically Gannett just cried uncle and said, “Hey, man, enough. We don’t want any more of this stuff.”

SK: I still remember pictures. I'm trying to think where I was. I guess I was in West Memphis or Georgia about then. But I remember seeing those pictures of the *Gazette* taking the equipment out. Those famous pictures of . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2]

SK: . . . back in those days—when they finally made the big announcement. All those people were basically either out of work or had to become part of the *Democrat*.

BH: Yes. I'm sure that was a shock to the newspaper people around the country that somebody had beaten Gannett, which they certainly didn't expect. You felt bad for it after the *Gazette* [folded] because you surely [did] not wish that on anybody—to lose their job. On the other hand, I'm glad that the *Democrat* didn't fold. We all could have lost our jobs. That wouldn't have been a good outcome, either. And I just think it speaks well to the *Democrat's* drive and resolve, to not go away and to keep striving to get better. It was a pretty incredible time.

Actually, when that happened, I was in Dallas. I've always worked for the *Democrat*, but I worked here in Fayetteville for a while, and what we were talking about earlier—the volume of stuff just got to really overwhelm me. And when you first come in, you're twenty-one, you're pumping out the copy—that's one thing. When you're still trying to do that four or five years later—I was just burned out. I mean, I really was burned out, so I moved down to Little Rock for a little while and covered UALR [University of Arkansas, Little Rock], and that was interesting because UALR basketball's pretty good. You had Mike Newell [now coach at University of Arkansas, Monticello], and that was an interesting time. When [former Razorback] Jerry Jones bought the [Dallas] Cowboys

[professional football team], that became a major story. That was kind of part of the newspaper work, too.

SK: What year was that?

BH: This would have been the fall of 1989. I guess Jerry bought them—I can't remember when the sale was finalized. Of course, nobody thought that this businessman from Arkansas was going to get the Cowboys. He was a long shot, but he brought in [his former teammate on the 1964 UA national championship football team] Jimmy Johnson of Arkansas. So suddenly the Cowboys were a major story in Arkansas. And the *Gazette*—[the late] Kim Brazzel was covering the Cowboys for the *Gazette* and we were saying, “Well, we'd better get somebody in there.” So I was going from Little Rock . . .

SK: Kim worked for us for a while, too, at the *Democrat*.

BH: Yes. I went out to Thousand Oaks, California, for training camp. I was out there the whole time, covering training camp every day. I mean, Jerry would go out there, and whatever Jerry did, I wrote about. And I went to the exhibition games. And Wally came out and did some columns. Then I was going to Dallas every week to do stories and go to games. Finally it just seemed—I was spending so much time there, and, of course, this was when Arkansas was in the Southwest Conference [SWC], and their headquarters was in Dallas. They were always playing football down in Texas—baseball, basketball, and just all kinds of sports. Basically all their road games for the conference were in Texas—not basically, they *were*, because everybody else in the conference was in Texas. So I moved to Dallas and covered the Cowboys and Southwest Conference. You had the Mavericks, the NBA [National Basketball Association] team, there, so I'd do

stories on Razorbacks who came through and played. I'd go out to the [Texas] Ranger [professional baseball] games and do stories on Razorbacks or Arkansans who were playing. The Rangers had some players who were from Arkansas. So I was just doing a little bit of everything. Yes, I knew the Razorbacks were always going to be the meat and potatoes, but I thought that the stuff I was doing was sort of the dessert. It was extra stuff that was nice to have. It wasn't like you needed it to survive. But that was kind of driven by the newspaper war, too. It was a lot of fun because it was something that was different. You know, covering pro sports. The one thing I missed about being—it was fun to be in Dallas, but one thing I missed was that—once again, Jerry Jones could not have been nicer to me. He loved the fact that Arkansas papers were covering the Cowboys. And Jimmy Johnson was an interesting guy, for sure.

SK: I remember Jimmy Johnson was [UA] assistant coach. . .

BH: Yes. He was defensive coordinator for Frank Broyles in the 1970s. But in Dallas, nobody reads the *Democrat*, or the *Gazette*, for that matter. And so I kind of missed that. That daily affirmation, like, whether, “Oh, you got it right,” or, “You got it wrong.” At least they were reading what you were doing. I'd go up to interview [Dallas quarterback] Troy Aikman; the *Arkansas Democrat* didn't mean a whole lot to Troy Aikman or [Dallas running back] Emmitt Smith, you know. And that's not saying they were rude, but the guys from the *Dallas Morning News* would go up to them—well, that was a big deal. Everybody cared. That was kind of tough. But I was there three years, and it was really interesting. I think it came at a good time in my career because I was a little bit burned out on the college experience. And, basically, two things happened there at the end of the 1980s.

SK: Who covered the Razorbacks here then?

BH: Oh, Steve Caldwell. Who's [former Northwest] city editor.

SK: Our city editor now.

BH: Once again, another Wally hire in sports. We've got them all over. Basically, two things happened there at the start of the 1990s. The *Gazette*—the *Democrat* bought out the *Gazette*, or took it over, however you want to put it. And Arkansas was leaving the Southwest Conference. So without a newspaper war, and without Arkansas playing all these sports in Texas, there really wasn't—and the Cowboys were getting good then. I mean, they were starting to go to Super Bowls. It may seem odd to people, because I covered a 1-15 team. Then the Cowboys—once they started getting really good, we weren't covering them as much. But to be honest, the newness of Jerry and Jimmy going there together had worn off. I mean, it still was a national story, but it wasn't like it was that first year, where everything Jerry did was news. He was making national news—saying things. So that kind of coming together just—it didn't make sense financially or editorially or anything for me or anybody else to be in Dallas. So I had the opportunity to come back here to Fayetteville.

SK: And Arkansas joining the Southeast Conference [SEC] really changed things, too.

BH: Right. And Steve was still on the beat. At that point, we'd expanded our coverage. I came back and me and Steve were kind of co-Razorback guys. He was doing football and I was doing basketball. And I was helping out with football, and he was helping out with basketball, but instead of me having to do it all by myself.

SK: Like you and Scott [Cain] are doing now.

BH: Right. Like me and Scott Cain do now. [Note: Scott Cain now works at Bank of America and Tom Murphy replaced him.] So that was a lot better deal, because if the chance would have been to come back and do what I did in the early 1980s, I think I would have had to say, “Man, I can’t do that, I’ll be in the hospital in a week.”

SK: Well, the seasons so overlap now.

BH: Right. Of course, now we have a lot more people on staff. So that was a good opportunity. I came back—I guess it was in the winter of 1992—and started covering basketball again. Really, ever since then—up to now, 2005—I’m still covering the Razorbacks. I guess you’d [have] thought I might have gotten tired by now, but I think it’s a really great job to have and . . .

SK: This is an exciting time for Razorback football.

BH: Oh, yes. Well, you’ve got the facilities. You’ve seen the facilities change. I just remember the first time I came to Fayetteville in 1981 [and] I saw their stadium. I said, “This is their stadium in Fayetteville?”

SK: And no lights.

BH: Yes. It sat, I guess, 40,000. I remember thinking, “This is where the 1969 big Shoot-out was?” [Editor’s note: The “Shoot-out” was the football game between undefeated UA and the undefeated University of Texas that effectively decided the 1969 national championship.] Because it was not a very impressive looking stadium. It was kind of a glorified high school stadium. But I also understood the dynamics of playing half the games in Little Rock.

SK: Just a little college campus stadium. That’s the way things were back then.  
Every little college campus has got a stadium, but you go play your [bigger]

games somewhere else.

BH: Yes. And I remember thinking, “I just can’t believe this is Arkansas’s stadium.” And, of course, now they’ve—they added on in 1985 and they’ve added on \$100 million. Now it’s one of the best stadiums in the country. Of course Barnhill [field house, former home of UA basketball] at the time was a nice facility.

SK: I’m a little sad about the demise of War Memorial [Stadium] in Little Rock.

BH: Yes. Because the crowds there have been great. And [Razorback football coach] Houston Nutt is 17-1 there, so he’s certainly . . .

SK: Which was a great place to play at one time.

BH: Yes. Well, I think it’s still a good place to play, but the economic reality has changed. Arkansas can make \$3 million from a home game in Fayetteville. They can make about \$1.5 million at a home game in Little Rock. And you have great crowds, but, boy, when you’re sacrificing \$1.5 million a couple [or] three times a year, that’s a lot of money to not be taking in. So that’s the realities of Title IX [Editor’s note: Title IX, passed in 1972, is the federal law mandating equal opportunity for women in school activities, including athletics] and having women’s sports and you’ve got to pay—basically the only sports that make money on most campuses are football and men’s basketball. Now, maybe at LSU [Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana] baseball makes money. It’s getting close to where it’s going to start making money at Arkansas. Maybe women’s basketball . . .

SK: We all go see baseball games here.

BH: Oh, yes.

SK: It’s a great atmosphere for baseball now.

BH: Old George Cole Field, which is now the softball field [now known as Lady ‘Back Yard] that they fixed up really nice—yes, that was what I would call a “rinky-dink” stadium. I think Frank Broyles used that term for different facilities—“rinky-dink”.

SK: You should have seen where they used to play, when I went to school up here.

BH: Oh, at the old fairgrounds?

SK: The old fairgrounds, yes.

BH: Yes. I’ve heard about that. So the facilities—just the way you’ve seen those facilities change into where—I don’t think any—I haven’t been everywhere, but I’ve been to a lot of college campuses. I don’t think anybody has a better collection of facilities than Arkansas does, when you add in football stadium, baseball stadium, basketball arena, indoor track. The fact that it’s all right there within about a mile or less of Razorback Road is just astounding. All the money—that’s where the economics are up in Northwest Arkansas. I know the whole state [has elected to pay support] for that, but that’s where the economic boom of Wal-Mart and Tyson has really helped out. Of course, Frank Broyles’s fundraising abilities are second to none. It’s really amazing to see the transformation of what—and then it goes with all the transformation of Northwest Arkansas. I can remember being here in 1981. It was a nice town, but it was basically—oh, I don’t know if it was a sleepy college town, but it was not a major metropolitan area. Now it’s—and the airport—I remember the old airport in Fayetteville. If there was a cloud in the sky, “Oh, we can’t take off, ceiling’s too low.”

SK: Rogers is going to be a crown jewel up here. Like everything else.

BH: Yes. But now you've got direct flights to LAX [Los Angeles International Airport, Los Angeles, California] and New York. It's just amazing how all that's gone. And I know Wal-Mart has a lot to do with that, but I think it's helped with the sports growing, too. It's helped with Arkansas's recruiting that Northwest Arkansas is so much more accessible now. Especially by air. I think that's helped recruiting a lot.

SK: Is it becoming too big too fast? That's what everybody seems to say.

BH: Yes. I guess you'd like to have a perfect world. Luckily, because of my job, I don't have to drive at peak hours very often.

SK: Luckily, I live across the street so that I don't have to, either.

BH: Yes. But the few times I'll be out driving around 5:00 [p.m.], or if I'll be going to the airport in the morning or something, I am kind of amazed at the traffic. I guess that's a byproduct of the growth. But just all the options you have now for restaurants and shops and mostly with the expanded airport. I think it's worked out pretty well. But it is amazing how the area—I mean, sort of the change in the area up here in Northwest Arkansas really mirrored the change in the *Democrat* in a lot of ways, I think.

SK: I'd be amiss if I didn't ask you—your best interview in all this time. Do you have any one moment that stands out?

BH: Well, there are a lot of them. Interviewing [former Razorback basketball coach] Nolan Richardson was always very interesting.

SK: You got in on the Nolan Richardson [ ? ] . . .

BH: He was the basketball coach. I was covering the team when Nolan Richardson got hired.

BH: Eddie Sutton went to Kentucky, and Nolan Richardson got hired. That was a major to-do because he was the first black basketball coach in the Southwest Conference. What I always write is he was the first black basketball coach at a major school in the South, because the SEC, ACC [Atlantic Coast Conference]—nobody had a black coach. And that was a major deal. Of course, there were a lot of issues, things that happened during his tenure. But when they won the National Championship in 1994, that was a great moment for Arkansas and for Nolan Richardson. I had a lot of interesting interviews with Nolan Richardson [laughs]. He didn't always like the paper. That's probably an understatement. But he . . .

SK: Was that because of Bob [John Robert] Starr? Bob Starr would take credit for that sometimes.

BH: Yes. I think he didn't like a lot of Mr. Starr's columns. He didn't like some of Wally's columns. Although I think that was blown out of proportion. I think Wally was pretty fair . . .

SK: Oh, he kind of kissed and made up with Wally before it was all over with, didn't he?

BH: Oh, I don't know about that. I don't know about that. But Coach Richardson, he—I might go in there and he might spend the first fifteen or twenty minutes of the interview railing about the *Arkansas Democrat*, but when we got down to business, he'd give me some good stuff. I thought I had a pretty good working relationship with him, to be honest. I don't know what he'd say. But he was always an interesting guy. Frank Broyles has got to be the most successful athletic director in the country. That's where I think people that cover Arkansas are very fortunate, because he's been in major college athletics since the 1950s—

really the late 1940s as an assistant coach. So, really, anything that happens on the athletic landscape, whether it's the—yes, he's a go-to guy. Whether you're the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* or *The New York Times* or the *L.A. Times*, he's the guy you'd like to ask his opinion on things that are happening in the world of college sports. The shift in all the conferences, whether or not to have football playoffs—he's a great source. And he's very accessible. Whether you call him or catch him at his office. He'll talk to you on a plethora of subjects. I guess my best interviews—I think my best interviews have probably been with him, because he's a very interesting guy, and you're never quite sure what he's liable to say. I guess I did a story last December on the fact he was turning eighty and was going to be still going strong as athletic director. And we talked about a myriad of topics—his tenure there. Of course, his wife had just passed away from Alzheimer's, [and] we talked about that.

SK: That's right. I loved talking with Barbara.

BH: Mrs. Broyles was very good.

SK: Somebody mentioned, I think, that she was like the phone screener . . .

BH: Right.

SK: If Barbara knew you, you got through pretty quick.

BH: Yes. I talked to her a number of times. The main thing about Coach Broyles is he has listed his home number. And somebody usually answers the phone.

SK: I know, I know.

BH: In this day and age, believe me, that *is not normal*. So I talked to her many times, where I'd call and ask for Coach Broyles. Maybe he wouldn't be in and she'd take a message. Or maybe he'd be doing something and she'd hold the line. She

was always very nice to me, and a very classy lady. Just covering that whole thing was, I guess, one of my favorite interviews—just talking to Frank Broyles about his almost fifty-year career at Arkansas, and just the fact he was still the AD [Athletic Director] at eighty and was showing no signs of slowing down. I guess one of the funniest moments in that interview—I thought it was funny. I brought up the point to Coach Broyles that he had been at Arkansas longer than Fidel Castro had been running Cuba.

SK: [Laughs]

BH: You know, he came to Arkansas, I guess, in—well, technically, I think it was December of 1957, basically the 1958 season. And I think I put it to him he had been running Arkansas longer than Castro had been running Cuba. Now of course, when he came he was the coach, not the AD. But certainly the football coach of Arkansas is a pretty important person. What I'm trying to say . . .

SK: It really puts things in perspective, doesn't it?

BH: Well, in this day and age, you know, you can't think of Cuba without thinking of Castro. And I don't think too many people would remember who ran Cuba before. I guess it was Batista. I know that from watching *The Godfather* movies or whatever. So anyway . . .

SK: I think I was, like, eight years old at the time.

BH: Yes. I was telling Coach Broyles, "Just like people associate—they can't think of Cuba without thinking of Castro, they can't think of Arkansas without thinking of you, because you've been running Arkansas longer than Castro's been running Cuba." And he kind of got this look on his face. He looked a little disappointed. We were in his office, [and] in his outer office [was] his secretary, Donita, and he

kind of looked at me and he said, “Well, I don’t know if I like being compared to Castro.” And he said, “Donita, has anyone ever compared me to Castro?”

SK: [Laughs]

BH: He yelled it out there, and I was kind of cringing, going, “Oh, geez, I didn’t really mean it quite like that.” Then she [said], “I don’t think so, Coach.” So I said, “Well, I don’t mean that you wear a green army suit and you have a beard and you smoke cigars. I just meant that nobody can”—and he might have been having some fun with me, too, but that was one of the funnier moments. That’s always kind of a funny story to relate. I’ve been fortunate because I covered Lou Holtz, Eddie Sutton, Nolan Richardson, Frank Broyles, Houston Nutt, Norm DeBriyn, [and] John McDonnell, the greatest coach of them all. I mean, the guy’s won forty-one national championships. Just an amazing, amazing thing. And I felt real fortunate to cover most of John’s career here. When I was sent here, one of the first things I read in the *Gazette* was Nate Allen wrote a column about Arkansas going for its eighth straight SWC cross-country title. I guess this would have been in 1981. Well, they’ve won every title in cross-country in either the Southwest Conference or the SEC since 1974. So I was reading eighth straight, and it was a good column by Nate, and he had every right to make a big deal, but now they’ve won—well, whatever 1974 to—what is that? Thirty-one? Thirty-two? [Editor’s note: Coach John McDonnell has led the UA track team to forty-two national championships, including twelve outdoor, nineteen indoor, and eleven cross-country titles.] That’s mind-boggling. I know cross-country doesn’t get the interest that football or basketball does, but you’re talking about two major conferences with major schools that don’t like getting beat by anybody in

anything, and Arkansas . . .

SK: We are talking about world-class athletes he brings up here . . .

BH: . . . to me, that's the most amazing string . . .

SK: . . . to Fayetteville, Arkansas.

BH: Yes. That's just the most amazing streak in any conferences, or like a say, spanning two conferences. But, yes, John McDonnell—I mean, the people I've gotten to cover. I feel very fortunate to have been around these people. And I've told people this before, the way the readers are so interested in the Razorbacks—to me, I could go work at a bigger paper that has a bigger circulation, but I don't think I could ever do anything where the percentage of people who read the paper would care as much about what I do. I don't mean that—I'm not saying that to brag or be arrogant. I just think that's the way it is, so I feel a real—I'm not trying to overplay this like it's covering the president or something, but I feel a real responsibility to those people to deliver quality coverage for them because the Razorbacks mean so much to them. And whether it's me or anybody else on the beat, I don't think we should ever take that lightly because that is a big responsibility. Sports may not be life and death—but in Arkansas it's pretty close. [Laughs]

SK: I think so.

BH: And the other thing . . .

SK: If we had not gotten [Springdale, Arkansas quarterback] Mitch Mustain, then oh, my gosh, the world would have ended up here.

BH: Boy, I don't know about that. I try to stay clear of recruiting. That's Otis Kirk's turf, and he does a great job. I just cover the Razorbacks once they get here. But,

yes, you can't underestimate the level of interest out there. I feel real fortunate to be able to have covered the people I have for as long as I have. And hopefully I'll be doing it for a few more years, anyway.

SK: And to be representing the *Democrat-Gazette* means something now.

BH: Oh, yes. Well, I always took pride in the *Democrat*, but, yes. You go there now and people recognize the paper's name. And I do think we have a pretty good reputation out there. I hope so. I get around the SEC, and there are a lot of good papers in the SEC region, but I don't think—I guess I'm being biased here, but I don't think anybody does a better job of covering a team than the *Democrat-Gazette* does covering Arkansas.

SK: Outstanding. Well, Bob, we appreciate it. And I enjoyed it. I'm pretty sure we both did.

BH: Yes.

SK: I think we've got some stuff that people needed to know. Excellent job.

BH: Yes, I'll just reaffirm that, yes, this is Bob answering the questions, Sam Krebs asking them, and as far as I'm concerned, everything on this tape can be on the record.

[Tape Stopped]

[End of Interview]

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