

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center  
for  
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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**Arkansas Memories Project**

J. Frank Broyles

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford

December 18, 2007

Fayetteville, Arkansas

## Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

## Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
  - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
  - annotations for clarification and identification; and
  - standard English spelling of informal words
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

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**Scott Lunsford interviewed J. Frank Broyles on December 18, 2007, in Fayetteville, Arkansas. This interview is a continuation of the interview recorded on December 17, 2007.**

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Well, why don't we just go ahead and talk about the—the [19]60s?

Frank Broyles: Okay. I was curious [*unclear words*]. Yeah.

SL: Um—you—y'all came so close to having national championships. Not just one.

FB: We had—four times we came within a few minutes of winning in an eight-year period. [Nineteen] sixty-two, if—um—we don't fumble the ball going into the end zone, we're national champions. We'd be the only undefeated team in the country. Uh—[19]64, we won. In [19]65, Brittenum got hurt in the Orange Bo—in the Cotton Bowl and—the first half—and—uh—we couldn't score anymore. LSU upset us to break our twenty-two game winning streak, or we—or repeat national champions there. And then, of course, in—um—[19]69—uh—we had Texas beat, and—uh—they hit a pass and scored and—about a minute to play. And—um—Nixon came out and gave the trophy to Texas instead of us. He was in our dressing room and had—to give it to us—and had to run over to the Texas dressing room.

It was the last minute of the ball game. And I tell people, "Well, you've had some tough times." I said, "Hey," and I'm talkin' about my coachin'—I said, "When you've been through three or four times and lose the national championship with a minute on the clock. If the game had been fifty-nine minutes, we'd probably would have won four national championships—durin' that—durin' that—could have won four in that period—um—then everything's minor." [*Laughs*]

[00:01:32] SL: Well, that's true. But, Coach, that's just an amazing—that—that was a dynasty. It was you—you and Darrell Royal . . .

FB: Yeah.

SL: . . . between—uh—Arkansas and Texas in the [19]60s, there just wasn't any team very close . . .


FB: Whoever won that game was going to be in the Cotton Bowl and have a chance for the national title. And Darrell won three national championships. We won one and missed out on three others at the last of the game.

SL: Y'all's records during that period of time were almost identical.

FB: Yeah, my—my record—uh—during that ten-year period—uh—Texas had one tie more than we did. We had—uh—Alabama was leading with eighty-five wins, and we had eighty wins with—

um—nineteen losses and one tie. And Texas had eighty wins with—uh—eighteen losses and two ties. [*Laughs*] That's how close it was during that decade.

SL: Well, what a—what a great and exciting time in the Southwest Conference.

 FB: Well, at—at what—what happened with the Arkansas-Texas game, it became a national game, where—uh—in the past everything the Southwest Conference had among themselves other than Oklahoma was strictly—in fact, Oklahoma was down—we took Oklahoma's place—uh—as the rival of Texas. Oklahoma was havin' some bad years through that period. And so the big national game for the Southwest Conference was Texas and Arkansas, and we could sell that to our recruits that we were gonna be on national TV, and in those days, that was wonderful recruiting—uh—information to get to your prospects.

[00:03:12] SL: They even moved y'all's schedule around.

FB: Oh my gosh. Let me tell you that story. Boone Arledge called me—who was head of ABC Sports—[*beeping sound in background*] called me—um—around June the fifteenth, and he said, "Frank—uh—Bud Wilkinson has convinced me that you and Texas could be one and two in the nation next year, and—uh—we would like to move the game to after the last game of the

season. It will be the only game on television, and—uh—we'll have a national audience, and he's convinced he can get President Nixon to be there." Quote, unquote. And I said, "Well, I'll agree to it. Let me call Darrell." [00:03:47] And I called Darrell, and he said, "Sure, we'll agree to it." So I went in to tell Coach Barnhill that—uh—we'd made that decision and what did he think. He said, "Well, Frank, suppose the only thing you-all are playing for is the championship of Washington County." [Laughter] I thought, "Oh my gosh!" Now we—now I got to thinkin' when football season started, can we live up to what ABC, Boone Arledge expected? Had we reached th—the goal that we could live up to what was predicted at the beginning of the season? So every game we won, [*vocalized noise*]. The next game we won, [*vocalized noise*]. And when we got to the national ch—to that—uh—end of the season—Ohio State beat Michigan or Michigan beat Ohio State, I can't remember, and moved us up. Texas, number one. Us, number two. President—uh—Nixon flew in, and everything went off as Boone Arledge had prepared. Miracle, miracle.

[00:04:40] SL: Miracle.

FB: Yeah.

TM: You know—uh—I think that one thing's interesting. There's a

picture of all those politicians—you've probably seen it. There's Nixon. There's George Bush, there's—they're all sittin' there . . .

FB: Yeah.

TM: That must have been something to have all that kind of heavy  
[unclear words].

JE: [Unclear words].

FB: Well, there's prestige and here in Fayetteville, Arkansas. We put in Astroturf for the game. I don't whether you remember. Uh—we thought that—uh—[beeping noise in background] let's see, Tennessee was the only other school that had a artificial surface. We went over and got the same company, and we were going to play in December, so we spent a \$100,000, which was big money in those days . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: . . . to put in that Astroturf, so that we could have a good field in December in case the weather was bad. Worked out perfectly except the game should have been fifty-eight minutes and—no fifty-nine minutes . . .

SL: [Unclear words].

FB: . . . and ten seconds long. Then we're national champions.

[Laughs] Oh, I cried over that. I've not read—we've got a wonderful book [Editor's Note: *Hogs, Horns and Nixon Coming:*



*Texas vs. Arkansas in Dixie's Last Stand* by Terri Frei] written about it—uh—that's been a—a huge success. I've not read it. I have a copy of it somewhere, but I don't care where it is.

[Laughs]

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:05:42] FB: But—um—and it's still called the "Game of the Century" in Arkansas in this part. And I—I want to tell myself, "Well, if we'd won by—by two touchdowns, which it looked like we'd do." We scored twice and then scored again, and they called it back.

SL: Called it back.

FB: Yeah. Um—it was a very close call on the penalty. Could have gone either way. Um—and I thought well—and I think, "Well, you know, we could have—uh—we could've been 21–0 up—uh—in the middle of the second quarter. It'd been over. Been over." Darrell told me that the longest run that they had was, other than the [James] Street scramble on a—on a fake pass—I mean, a pass and a scramble, then scored—um—was eight yards. And he told his team—uh—when they had 4<sup>th</sup> and 2—uh—they took timeout, and the coaches said, "Well, let's throw a little short pass." He said, "It won't make any difference, we're not going to score. We can't go sixty yards and score against 'em. We're

gonna go for it all right now. We're going for the bomb on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2." And it was a terrific call on his part . . .

[00:06:49] SL: Great call.


FB: . . . and—uh—he likes to—to help us out by—Arkansas out—by saying there was six hands that went up for the football, and it came down right between four other hands and his player—um—hands were there to catch the ball. We had two people there that could have deflected the ball, and the game's over. And we win the national championship, and Nixon stays in our locker room. [*Laughs*]

SL: You know . . .

FB: Oh me. I had s—those days were wonderful. The great thing for that football team is, and I told 'em, that they lived up to their expectation. Before the season started, the game was moved with the purpose that we could be one and two. That was in their mind the entire season. All of our fans had read about it and all, and so every game, we would win, and Texas would win, and we were ranked two and three most of the year, or four—somewhere in that range. Um—and they thought, "Well, is it gonna happen? Is it gonna happen? Is it gonna happen?" And it did happen. Just one minute too long.

[00:07:51] SL: That's something else. You know—uh—[*FB clears*

*throat*] didn't Bernie—um—kind of catch you off guard after you had—I guess it was after the [19]59 season? Or maybe it was—no, it may have been the—I think it's when you went undefeated for the first time—your first 11-0 season.

 FB: Yeah, I'll tell that story. But let me go back and tell you what he did for me after the first year.

[00:08:14] SL: Okay.

FB: When we were f—won the last four ball games, he called me in, gave me a raise, extended my contract, and bought Barbara a new station wagon. And that showed—what it did for me, it showed me how if you have confidence in somebody, don't wait until you have to give 'em a raise. Give it to 'em when they've earned it or whatever reason. And I did that all through my career. What he did for me with a 4-6 record, I'll never forget. It's unbelievable. And—uh—so—uh—there's no question that—that—uh—that I learned that. Now your—your little question was—was kind of cute. I came in—after we won the national championship, I—um—Bernie was sick and didn't get to go to the Cotton Bowl game. So I rushed back and—and rushed in—he was in the office maybe a couple hours a day—and I rushed in, and before I could say a word, he said, "Frank, you've just screwed up the best job in America." [*SL laughs*] I said, "What

do you mean, co—Barnie?" He said, "Now you can go only one way—down. You've ruined the best job in America." [*Laughs*]  
I'll never forget him saying that. And I thought about that, and you know, people did get spoiled. Some did—um—um—but . . .

[00:09:30] SL: Well, sure we did. Spoiled to this day, Coach.

FB: Yeah. "You've ruined the best job in America. You can't go anywhere but down." [*Laughter*] Oh me, that's a great line. I'll never forget that.

SL: Well, didn't he—uh—also say, you know, "People remember November."

FB: Yeah. Well—uh—I'm not sure whether he said that. I think he did. Uh—we started concentratin' on November when we won those four games, and then—uh—when I was talking to the reunion of our—all of our players here at the—at South Carolina game—I did research, and the first thirteen years, we played fifty-two games in November and won forty-eight of 'em. And I was bragging on the—on the fact that—uh—and I told Houston Nutt many times, "They remember what you do in November."  
[*Beeping noise in the background*] And so he had me talk to the team. Uh—the night before I talked to my squad on the same subj—I had already selected to—to talk to my fa—past players about, was—uh—how we stayed and got—improved every—

every game and ended up bein' one of the best teams in the—  
country—uh—each year. And Houston had me talk to the team  
on Thursday night, when I told 'em that we were—um—48-4 in  
fifty-two games, and we won forty-eight of 'em in November in  
our—in our first thirteen years. And told 'em why and what all,  
and we won—Houston won three big ones, where we beat the  
number one team in the country in November—and that has a  
lasting effect on recruiting—uh—ticket sales, everything you  
could imagine that's gonna happen the next year, that you  
need—uh—people talking in a positive vein—uh—that does it for  
you.

[00:11:23] SL: Um—well, let's talk a little bit about you and Darrell  
Royal.



FB: Interesting. Because Darrell and I—I was talkin' to him—uh—I  
talk to him about every two or three weeks for about five  
minutes. We just talk about our families, and we don't talk  
about our games or anything, and—uh—uh—we were friends  
from the time that—uh—I came to Arkansas. We vacationed  
together. Our wives like to shop the same way. In these little  
country towns, they'd go through and—and see the sales on  
houses—in houses and on—on different—uh—antiques and so  
forth, and Darrell and I would play golf, and we had a wonderful

relationship. And we had a—a gr—a—we didn't realize it, but we—we—I guess we were good friends 'cause we didn't talk about our game. [00:12:10] And after the season wa—[*clears throat*]*throat*—after we retired, we were on the—on the plane goin' to Michigan. Bo Schembechler had asked us to—to speak at his coaching clinic, the two of us. So we're sittin' on the back of the plane, and here's the way it went. He said, "Frank," he said, "you know, we've never discussed our games, but I've just got to know. Were you stealing our defensive signals in 1971?" I said, "Well, wait a minute. Before I answer that, were you stealing our offensive [*beeping sound in background*] signals in [19]62?" He said, "Yes." And I said, "Yes." We had a big laugh, and we never discussed it again. [*SL laughs*] We were pickin' up what—what in [19]62, Bill Pace came on our staff, and he said, "You could signal the plays in. You didn't have to substitute." So we had towels and everything. And somehow they—they got the signals of what we were—we were callin' from the sideline, and we did the same thing on their defense. And—and—uh—Joe Ferguson just drowned 'em. We beat 'em 31–6, or somethin' like that. And we knew when they were going to blitz and when they weren't gonna blitz. And that does help.

[*Laughter*]

[00:13:17] SL: Well . . .

FB: It's not illegal to pick up—you know, if a team wants to signal, you have every right to pick it up. Now—uh—the pros have a rule you can't do that. You can't take film of it or whatever. I don't know that we took film of it, but somehow our—our people—um—knew a little bit. I remember one time—uh—when Jimmy Johnson was playin'. Uh—we beat Texas in [19]64. And there was about five times in the game we called the defense where Jimmy was supposed to slant to the right—uh—to—to—to his left—and he ran, and he slanted to the right—the only one that made the play. And after the game, I looked at that, and I said, "Jimmy, what in the world you doin'? You're supposed to go left." He said, "Coach," he said, "I could see the guard over the side. He had so much weight on his hand, I knew he was going to block down and come in. So I just went that way and made the play." And he said, "You—you think I did wrong?" I said, "Oh, no. No, no. [*Laughter*] You—you did exactly right." He could tell by the weight the guard put on his hand. If he was back like this [lowers his arm], he was going to pass protect. And if he has had all the weight on the hand and—by the—by the—the—uh—uh—veins on his hand, he could tell whether they were gonna run or pass. And he had a great game. So we let

him do that. [*Laughs*]

[00:14:37] SL: Well, yeah. Yeah, why wouldn't you? Well, wh—you know, you and Darrell weren't . . .

FB: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . necessarily the same kind of personalities, though, were you?

FB: No, but we had the same philosophy in football, and that was—um—Darrell—um—had complete integrity. Complete integrity. And—um—we did also. That was our goal. Uh—Coach Barnhill, Coach Dodd had taught me about integrity. When I—when I gave a talk recently, I talked about the integrity that he taught everybody on his team, players and his—and coaches and all.

[00:15:15] But—uh—we had great respect, and we both loved to play golf. And we were competitive as all get out on the golf course. Uh—in fact—um—uh—I remember one time we were—we were at Lubbock at a conference meeting. We got there early and Bobby Layne, the great quarterback, was going to play golf with us. Going to tee off at eleven o'clock. Now this is in August, and it's hot as it can be, so Bobby Layne called and—and said to Darrell, "It's too hot. I'm not gonna play." Well, get this. Everybody knew we played fast. So we teed off at—at a—at—uh—at the—um—Lubbock Country Club. We played seventy-six



holes . . .

SL: Whoa.

FB: . . . the two of us. And then I was up two, so we played four more, and he got even. So we played seventy-six holes. Well, here's what's funny—what happened. Every tee, every group of Lubbock people who teed off, they said, "Coach Royal and Coach Broyles are out there. Let 'em through." It was like the Red Sea partin'. We would—we would start approachin' a—a group, they'd just part, motion us through, didn't slow us down, and we'd catch 'em again. They—we caught 'em on the first nine, we'd catch 'em on the se—we'd play and be back on the eighteen, and go through 'em again. And we—we got to play seventy-six holes, four of 'em after dark. Well, he was two down, so we played four—in the pure darkness we played [SL laughs] one and two and seventeen and eighteen. But we played so fast. We just—we had a rule that if you take an extra putt just to practice, that's a five-dollar fine. And you don't wait. We had to always have two carts. [00:16:44] We played ninety holes here in Fayetteville at a conference meeting. We—he came in early. We teed off about six thirty in two different carts. There was nobody out there. We played ten—there was nine—there was only nine holes. We played ten rounds, or ninety

holes. And we finished about six holes after dark and went into the conference meeting. But we played—uh—uh—"golf polo." Everybody said that—um—and Darrell and I had a rule. If we saw the shot, you couldn't tell us about it. We didn't want to hear about it. [*Laughs*] You know, golfers want to tell you about what happened in the shot. "I saw it." So you can't tell. [*Laughter*] Or I'd start telling him, he'd say, "I saw it." So I had to shut up right there. [*SL laughs*] Uh—but we had wonderful—we played a lot of golf. He had—uh—the people who owned the 7-Elevens—uh—were great Texas supporters, and they had a place down in Mexico they let Darrell go to, and Barbara and I went with him down there. And we—we vacationed for a couple weeks down there in June and played golf every day and had wonderful times and—but we had respect for each other. We still do. And—and we were just on the telephone the other day. I said, "Darrell, isn't it sad that we don't see any other coaches that are friends with any—anyone in their profession?" He said—he says, "That's just a loss to everybody." Our friendship has been just one of the best things of our life and his life. And other coaches could do it, but they—some reason they—they just—it never has happened, except with us.

[00:18:09] SL: Y'all—uh—retired from coachin' the same year.

FB: Uh—yeah, I called him. Uh—I heard he was going to retire, and—uh—I called him, and I said, "Darrell, the—the coaching profession needs you. You shouldn't be retiring right now." But I said, "I'm gonna retire." And—uh—he said, "What?" I said—he said, "I'm definitely gonna retire." And we both did, and we had moved the game like we did in—in—uh—[19]69 to late in the season, the last game of the season. And neither one of—we were playing for nothin' but Washington County and whatever the county is in Austin. And—uh—that was the last game both of us coached. Um—he had wanted to—uh—things were happenin'—uh—outside of coaching in—in the coaching ranks in the Southwest Conference. A lot of schools were goin' on probation and all, and it wasn't any fun. And—um—I had made up my mind—I was going to retire when I was fifty. Uh—I was goin' to go in another profession. But the athletic director job and ABC came along, and—um—so I stayed. But I really wanted to go into another profession. I had made up my mind. I'd live longer and be happier changin' professions at fifty years old. It was fifty-one when I changed. [*Laughs*] [*Clears throat*]

[00:19:27] SL: Uh—were you going to go do—you were gonna go into real estate, weren't you?

FB: Well, no. I had—uh—I had a job—one of my friends that—uh—I

could have been president of his insurance company.

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: Which would—uh—I'd get to buy some of the stock and—and all. And—uh—and—but what—I was goin' on the—on the—uh—bridge tour. I loved to play bridge, and I was pra—I had made up my mind that we—I wanted to be on a—competitive bridge player when I retire. And there was this law student here that I'd played with, and he'd been on the bridge tour before he came back to law school. And so we practiced for three months before ABC offered me the job. We'd gotten all of our bidding down and so forth, and we were ready to start goin' on the tour to p—to compete—um—professionally on the bridge tour when ABC called me and told me. And so that would eliminate the whole fall, and so we dropped it. And he finished law school, lived in Blytheville, retired in Blytheville, and called me and wantin' to know did I wanna go on the bridge tour. He was going to go and find a partner. I told him, "No, I was beyond that right now."

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:36] SL: Yeah.

FB: But I love bridge. I was pretty good at it. And worked hard at playin' bridge, and many times when I was assistant coach, I'd play all night. Not during the season, but we would—we'd start

our bridge game with our wives, and they'd go to bed because they were all workin'.

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: And they'd go to bed about ten o'clock—we'd play till four or five o'clock in the morning. It's a great—people don't play much bridge today, but in my day, it was wonderful. It was a great outlet. In fact, Al Witte and myself and Hubert Cowan and Pendleton. Think of his name in a minute. We played—during football season, we played on Thursday night at my house.

[00:21:19] SL: Is that Joe Pendleton?

FB: Joe Pendleton, yeah. We played on—at my house on Thursday night. Just relax. We'd—I'd come home—that's the only meal I ate with Barbara—during that time—and the kids. And so we—we'd eat dinner. Then they'd all come over, and we'd play bridge till about ten, eleven o'clock and compete as all get out. And somebody'd win two or three dollars. [*SL laughs*] But it was great sport. Great fun. [00:21:47] But let me go back to Darrell. Darrell—he had been drafted during the war. Was assigned to the seventh, the seventh air something in Fort—in Dallas. And he played football all during the war. They had a team. The air—their base had a team, and he was a star right out of high school. So four years later he enters Oklahoma and

becomes all-American and everything and then went right into coachin', right up to head coach. And the first time I saw him—I met him—was when he was—he'd just been named head coach at Mississippi State. He'd gone to Calgary in Canada from assistant's job or two that he'd had. North Carolina State, Tulsa. And came back to Mississippi State, and he called me, and he said, "Y'all are the best in the kicking game." He said, "You know, at Oklahoma we never had to kick." [Laughter] You know that was called "Oklahoma and the Seven Dwarfs" in my time. They were winnin' every year, forty-nine games, and whatever. So he says, "Could I come over and talk kicking game?" So that was my last year at Georgia Tech and his first year as a head coach at Mississippi State, and so we spent about three days going over the kicking game. Got to be good friends, and that lasted all the way until today. Still is.

[00:23:15] SL: So that wasn't unusual, for coaches to help other coaches out with their games?

FB: Oh no. We do that today. I mean, we'll have—when I was coachin', and we were winning like you were talking about earlier, we—durin' spring practice we'd probably have, oh, fifteen or twenty head coaches come in, or assistant coaches come in. When I was assistant coach, I went to Bear Bryant and Bud

Wilkinson. In 1955, I asked Coach Dodd and Coach Bryant let me come—he'd just gone to Texas A&M. I went over and spent three days with him and then went up and spent three days with Bud Wilkinson. And then went back. And—th—tha—coaches are generous that way. They—they're proud of what they do. It's not a secret. You can pick it up. But the little things that you need to know and be there are important. We had coaches all along come and visit here with the things we did. Bobby Bowden paid me a compliment recently. It was in the—I didn't hear it—it was in *USA Today*. He was lecturin' at the high school coaching clinic this last Ju—last August. And he was talking about lecturing. He said, "Well, I'll just tell you, Frank Broyles was the best lecturer on football there ever was. I'd rather hear him lecture than anybody in America." And he got in the *USA Today*. But I was pretty good on the chalk. [SL laughs] That didn't win a lot of games, but I was good about that.

[00:24:43] SL: Oh, you won plenty of games. You know—there's a couple coaches' names we haven't talked about. We haven't talked about Bear Bryant at all.

FB: Well, Bear Bryant, I had a—we were friends because of Bobby Dodd and so forth. But when I was doin' football broadcasting—telecasting on broadcasts—on the telecast, I often commented

that Bear had a way with players to get 'em to give a peak performance. Normally in a ten-game schedule—we would research through the years—and four or five peak performances—all you could get. Then you'd get some average peak, and then you'd have two or three games you were way down below your potential. I don't ever remember a Bear Bryant team playing below their potential, and I would comment when I was doing the telecastin' that his teams—somehow he had a way that—that Arkansas drawl or whatever—he could get right into your mind. I mean, right into your mind of the players. And they responded, and I don't ever remember reading anything about an Alabama team that didn't play their peak effort. He was a genius at understanding what eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds needed to motivate 'em and get them to play their peak performance week after week. [00:26:16] And he didn't really have football ideas himself. He copied from Bud Wilkinson the split-T and put the option play in at Alabama. He was 5-5 with their great quarterback there who's doing their radio there now. And went out and visited with Bud Wilkinson and got the option play and put it in. Then he went—you know, he was nine, ten, eleven. He won, I guess, three national championships or maybe five. I know Alabama has five. Think



he has three of 'em in the time that he was there. And I remember I did the Sugar Bowl when they beat Penn State for the national championship. Tackled the Penn State fullback on the one-yard line with about a minute to play that preserved the national championship.

SL: Where was it that he was born and raised in Arkansas?

FB: Fordyce.

SL: Fordyce.

FB: He was born in Fordyce, and we had a big battle recruiting Houston Nutt, since Houston Nutt's family was from Fordyce.

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: And Coach Bryant knew all of his family. He thought sure he was gonna get Houston. Houston was the last commitment we got for the freshman class of [19]76. And it was between us and Bear Bryant right till the end. Houston finally made up his mind right at the end of the recruiting season. But Bear was after him. Fordyce. *[Laughs]*

[00:27:47] SL: Well, now what about Bud Wilkinson? I hadn't . . .

FB: Well, Bud Wilkinson was the most intellectual coach of our—of my time. He was a English major. Could speak with such language, and he had a great thing at Oklahoma, and he took it to the very top. I was coaching Missouri when they—I claimed

we were responsible for breaking their forty-nine game winning streak—we were their last lo—win. Notre Dame beat 'em the next week, [*SL laughs*] and I jokingly say we took so much out of 'em that Notre Dame upset 'em, but that wasn't the case obviously. But Bud was a genius. When you heard him lecture, you thought you hear—you were in an English class. I mean, he was just eloquent as he could be. Understood and knew football and was a great motivator. And I went to his spring practice one year. Gomer Jones was his line coach. And the same time, I went from Bear Bryant's up to Oklahoma and spent three days up there and was really impressed with everything that I knew about him, that I learned about him. He was probably the smartest coach of our time if you just want to put smartness. You know, he went on and worked for President Nixon and ran for Senate and got beat by about a thousand, maybe a hundred votes for the Senate. Then he went—got a job—Nixon hired him as some type of a advocate in his organization after he lost his Senate race.

[00:29:27] SL: Mh-hmm. Well, I just didn't realize that coaches were just so open in sharing their strategies and the way they . . .

FB: Well you know, they don't really—it—people can't copy another

one. Bear Bryant's assistants—those that tried to copy Bear failed.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: And those that used his techniques but coached it their own way were successful. You just can't—in coachin' it's so much personality for the head coach and everything that he does both on and off the field. You just can't say, "I'm gonna copy somebody." You can learn from 'em, but you got to be your normal, natural self. Bobby Dodd couldn't be Bear Bryant, and Bear Bryant couldn't coach like Bobby Dodd.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: I couldn't coach like Darrell, and Darrell couldn't coach like me. My personality—what you're comfortable with and what you feel the—you're gettin' the attention of the players and get them to respond—teachin' and motivating is all coachin' is, teaching and motivating. You teach 'em, and then you motivate 'em.

That's—do those two, you're gonna win and win a lot. [*Laughs*]

[00:30:46] SL: Well, Coach, were—you were ready to retire when you retired. In fact, you had really—hadn't you thought that you'd retire earlier?

FB: One year earlier. I was going to retire at fifty, and I retired at fifty-one. We—Earl Blaik and the coaches—that time, I heard

'em give lecture after lecture that you should retire at fifty and go do another profession. There's only two ways you can leave the coachin' profession—voluntarily or fired. [*Laughs*]

[00:31:19] SL: Yeah.

FB: And if you stay too long you're gonna get fired. I don't ca— Bobby Bowden—Joe Paterno—Joe was in—wasn't about to get fired, but he wasn't having any fun there for two or three years. And then Bobby Bowden at Florida State, you know, they are losing three or four games a year. And his president played for him. And his president said, "He'll be here as long as I want." Otherwise, he would have been forced to retire at the end of his career. Because he won so much, then they started breaking even, and that wasn't good enough, and I guess he's been there forty-some-odd years. [*Clears throat*] I—and Joe Paterno—the same way. Now the difference in both of 'em is they have a major population base around their campus for recruiting like Los Angeles. Both UCLA and Southern Cal should never lose. They've got fifteen million people that are great athletes, all—or have athletes in their families. Well, the same thing at Penn State . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:32:25] FB: . . . Joe Paterno has fifty million people within three

hundred miles of him. Fifty million. And some of the best football in the world, so he—whoever he's recruiting, they're close by. And the same thing with Bobby Bowden in Florida. Now Florida's come up and taken some of those players away from him. And Miami's down right now, and Florida State is down, so Florida is way up.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: That's what happens in football. That's what happens in—but when you've got, like Paterno—you've got fifty million people that play great football—in eastern Ohio and New Jersey and Pennsylvania. It's some of the best high school football in the world. You just reload. That's the new terms that I use is, that a team that has to go in somebody else's territory has to rebuild [*phone rings*] often. The team that has the area, reload every year. They've graduated fifteen seniors, but they've got 'em all waiting to come up from home based. That's why it's tough on Arkansas and why it's hard to be the coach here very long. You wear out recruiting. It wears you out—how you have to stay at recruiting. Houston made something like thirty-six trips out of state. He th—called on thirty-six prospects out of the state. He only made one—they did change the rule for head coaches. I co—I could see a player every week. They can only see him

once during the entire recruiting season. They go to his house one time. And head coaches got that put in. That was a good rule. *[Laughs]*

SL: Yeah.

FB: That'd make you last a little bit longer in the profession.

[00:34:00] SL: Coach, before we get you retired out of coachin', there was one year that you lost a player durin' the season. It was . . .

FB: Claud Smithey?

SL: Yep. And why don't you tell us a little bit about Claud Smithey and how that affected the team that year?

FB: It affected all of us and his daughter came here. We were—wanted to take care of her, and we gave her a scholarship, and she came and graduated. It's my best remembrance that she did graduate. I know we helped her. Claud was havin' some problems, and the doctors kept him out three or four games, and then they said, "He's ready to play." And we were playing at Texas A&M, I believe. And he had—this attacked again, and we had to come home without him, and I can't remember whether I stayed. I just can't remember whether—Dixie White stayed—I'm not sure. One of our coaches stayed with him. And they said he'd be all right, but he'll come home the next day,

and he died while he was down there.

SL: He . . .

[00:35:19] FB: That's the best I remember of it. As far as how it affected our team, we were devastated. And what you do, you have leadership that says, "We're gonna finish this season for Claud, in Claud's honor." So they put it on their helmet and did everything to honor him the best we could for the rest of the season.

SL: Y'all went 8-2, didn't you?

FB: I can't remember . . .

SL: I think you did.

FB: . . . that year. I can't . . .

SL: And I think the team—didn't the team—or the seniors—decide that they didn't want to go to a bowl?

FB: Yeah. Well, we lost in the last minute to Texas Tech, and we were devastated because we were going to the Sugar Bowl. No, I'm sorry, we were going to Miami. We had—if we beat Texas Tech, we go to Miami—get a share of the championship and go to Miami. And Texas Tech intercepted a pass—a lineman deflected the ball, another man caught it and ran for a touchdown and beat us. And we were so blue that the only bowl we had was in Dallas—somewhere in Texas. It wasn't a big bowl

played before . . .

[00:36:34] SL: Bluebonnet, or . . .

FB: Bluebonnet or somethin', and the team was just so blue about not bein' in the Orange Bowl that they voted not to go. And I didn't want to go either. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, y'all were . . .

FB: Bowls weren't the—it wasn't the end of the world not goin' to a bowl. But we were devastated because we thought we were gonna to be co-champions and in the Orange Bowl.

SL: Well, the way I read it was Claud died right before, I guess, the Tech game.

FB: Yeah, he did. He did, yeah.

SL: And . . .

FB: That had somethin' to do with it.

SL: You made the decision that the team should know, even though they were about to go out on the field, it was bef—a couple hours before they were going out on the field.

FB: That's right. I'd forgotten that. That memory, yeah.

[00:37:21] SL: You let the team know.

FB: And we didn't play very good.

SL: Yeah.

FB: Claud was a popular person with our team. He was a comedian



and a good player and had a wonderful life. He was married and had a wonderful wife and—who was a student also. The doctors, you know, we always say, "Well, we wish we hadn't put him back in the game." But they said that didn't have anything to do with it at all. We had to leave him there, and he didn't recover. He died right there while we were gone back—came back to Fayetteville.

SL: Well, he wanted to play, Coach. He . . .

FB: He . . .

SL: . . . was after you all the time.

FB: Oh yeah. He kept—you're exactly right. He asked me every week, "I'm ready to play. I'm ready to play." I said, "We got to let the doctors approve that, you know." And finally they did. But they said that didn't have anything to do with his death. I don't know, you know, whether another doctors—other doctors—would have said anything else. But broke our heart. We weren't the same after that. No one was.

[00:38:37] SL: That was tough. Well, you and Darrell retire the same year. Kind of in a—the game wasn't—I think Texas won that game, didn't they?

FB: Yeah, they won it. We had—what happened that year was Calcagni got hurt.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: And he was a awfully good quarterback. We were leading the conference. We just beat Houston, and he got hurt against Houston in that game, and we had to play freshmen after that, and we only won one more game, with a freshman quarterback. And then Calcagni came back and led Lou Holtz's first team with all these good juniors and sophomores coming back that we had won the championship the year before. Led 'em to number three ranking and a great victory over Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl with Calcagni as the quarterback.

[00:39:39] SL: So your first hire as athletic director was Lou Holtz.

FB: Yeah, Lou had told me—he called me—I called him in September, early September, before the pro season started about Rolland Fuchs—recommended him to see if he would take him with the Jets. He had been cut somewhere else, and I thought he could play. [00:40:00] And this is the way the conversation went. "Coach, let me close the door." He came back, and he said, "Frank, I'm a fish out of water. If you hear of any job, I'm going back into college right after this year." He was whispering where nobody would hear it, you know, like that. I can remember as if it was yesterday. So when I decided to retire, I called him, and I said, "Well, are you still gonna retire?"

"Let me close the door. I'm going to retire at the end of this season." Whispered to me, you know. And I said, "Well, I know where there's gonna be a good job open, and I think I can help." And he said, "Arkansas?" I said, "Well, I can't tell you." This was about in the first of November . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: . . . and I said, "Don't take another job because—until you find out what this job is." And so when I offered it to him, he resigned from the pros and came on down.

[00:40:54] SL: Well you know, I think everyone will always remember that Orange Bowl game.

FB: Oh my goodness. Here's one funny story about that. Oklahoma had just beaten Nebraska—a lopsided score—and they were the number two team in the nation and they had been sensational in November. Barry Switzer was doing a great job, and we were signed to play them. I remember the pass that we hit against Texas A&M that cinched the Sugar Bowl bid that Calcagni hit. But anyway, Lou came off the road, started looking at film, and quit recruiting. And after about ten days, he came into my office and you could see his—he said, "Frank, suppose we beat Oklahoma thirty points. You think we'll be voted number one?" I said, "You'll get my vote." He had changed from scared to

death to thought he was going to beat 'em by thirty po—he told me, "Thirty points." And we beat 'em, what, 31–6? We beat 'em 25 points.

[00:42:03] SL: Well, we beat 'em without our starters.

FB: Well, he had three starters out. He had—some—sometimes that spurs you on. And Lou was very capable, and he turned it into a positive in the fact that three of 'em weren't gonna get to play from disciplinary reasons. I remember the lawyer in Little Rock going and trying to sue us to force us to play 'em, and he lost. He took it to the Governor Clinton. And Governor Clinton did not—declined it and said, "We will not support that." And then the team was all fired up, and they just played great. Played great.

SL: Well, I just remember the fans were just completely—they just couldn't believe that we would—well, they couldn't believe that the players had some—had done something to keep 'em out of the game. And then they thought, "There's just no way" . . .

FB: Yeah.

SL: . . . "that we'll ever compete with Oklahoma."

FB: Well, Roland Sales came in and rushed for—still an Orange Bowl record, I think in that ball game. I think about 180 yards or something like that. Just sensational. And Oklahoma thought

the same thing. "They lose three great players, and we're number two. They haven't got a chance." And they never caught up because we got ahead of 'em. They just couldn't believe it.

[00:43:35] SL: You know, [*clears throat*] I—I'm just going to guess that the fellow that you modeled yourself after had to be Barnie, I guess? I mean you didn't have any other . . .

FB: As a—you're right. As an administrator, yes, I did. Barnie had done some brilliant things. Number one is he gave the radio broadcast to all the radio stations to get Oklahoma out of the west and Louisiana out of the south and Mississippi out of the east because they could get it free, and whatever advertising they got was a profit. [00:44:09] I thought that was a genius thing to do. The—at the time that Barnie came, eastern Arkansas carried Mississippi. And just like I said, so by the fact that they could get it free, there was nobody in the state but Arkansas that had the radio broadcasts. No other team had any radio 'cause they—some towns had three radio stations. Like Hot Springs, all three of 'em carried the Razorbacks. They could give it awa—and they could sell it and make a complete profit on it. And then when we changed that later—it went through the legislature. And the legislature voted that we could only take

part of it back to where it wouldn't be just giving away, we were going to charge 'em. And then certain ones got it free. I've forgotten. But the legislature, it went all the way to the legislature when I tried to change it. To get some money. We needed to be self-supporting. But that's what he did. And then he's form the Razorback Clubs, and he did everything in the world to build a fence around the state and to get everybody from West Memphis to Texarkana to El Dorado supporting the Razorbacks. And when I came here, the foundation was built. The foundation was there just ready to spring forward.

[00:45:28] SL: You know, there's nothin' like—it's a—the phenomenon is, is that the Razorbacks became a uniting—the fan base was just so great that it was the one thing that kind of transcended politics, transcended the hard times . . .

FB: That's well said . . .

SL: . . . and the good times.

FB: You're right. It transcended everything, and I think maybe I told you the story about Monticello. This—the shirts and all. Didn't I tell you that story?

SL: No, I don't think so.

FB: Here's a typical—one of the professors got a—new professor—got a job at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, and their

colors are blue. He went in his first class. There wasn't a single student wearin' blue. They were all wearin' Razorback shirts.

[*Laughs*] And he called his friend up here at the university and says, "What in the world kind of state is this? I'm teaching here, and we got a color blue for our Monticello teams, and there wasn't a single color blue. They were all wearing Razorback red. What in the world's going on?" [*Laughter*] He couldn't understand it. But that's the way it is.

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: That's the way it is. The thing I love to see is a—and when I—when I'm visiting or whatever—speakin', or in a town or something—walk through there'd be little kids, just all of 'em got a Razorback shirt on. And that makes me feel great because they're startin' to be a Razorback at that age. There's no other—I don't see any other—I don't see a Cowboy, I don't see any other [*clears throat*] color. It's all red everywhere all over the state. And that's what Orville Henry helped build, was that monumental coverage of the Razorbacks, and it's just continued to grow.

[00:47:10] SL: It's just a collision of circumstances that brought all this about.

FB: You had to be lucky, and you had to have some good leadership



and some breaks and all. But you know, when I came here the stadium held twenty-six thousand, and thirteen thousand on each side. Then we got it built up, and I remember when they put end zones in Little Rock. That's gettin' ready for the [19]64 season, and so I went to Bernie. I said, "Bernie," I said, "who's payin' for the expansion of War Memorial Stadium to make it a bowl?" He said, "Don't ask." [*Laughs*] So about fifteen years later, I called the city—the state—and I said, "Look up and see how those seats were paid for." Our governor—Faubus—transferred out of his fund \$500,000, and that put it—made it. And they never told. Wasn't any freedom of information in those days for in—where the press would find out. Nobody asked. The seats just went up, they were paid for, and Faubus had paid for it out of a fund there. And we didn't have to pay a thing for it. [*Laughs*] I found out about it seventeen, eighteen years later. I was curious how in the world it got paid for.

SL: Well, you couldn't get away with that now.

FB: No, you couldn't get away with it now. But it made all the difference in the world in our stadium there. We went to forty-eight thousand.

SL: Yeah.

FB: And we had twenty-six thousand up here, and we had to enlarge



it. We finally went to forty-two here, and then up to forty-eight during the time that I was here. During th—the five decades.

*[Laughs]*

[00:49:00] SL: You know, you mentioned—I believe Governor Faubus came into the locker room at . . .

FB: Oh, right.

SL: . . . end of the [19]58 season.

FB: Yeah. We lost our fourth game. And I knew he didn't know anything about football. We had played—a good game up here, but they beat us 21 to nothin', I believe—in the last quarter. And I think it was 7 to nothin' up until the last part of the ball game. And he came in our dressin' room, congratulated me and said, "I can see great things," you know and all. And when he left I said, "Boy, he doesn't know a thing about football."

*[Laughter]*

[00:49:35] SL: But there's no question that he supported the program.

FB: Oh, he did.

SL: Now we know for sure.

FB: Yeah.

SL: Because of War Memorial Stadium, but . . .

FB: Yeah.

SL: . . . in fact, every governor . . .

FB: We've had great support from the governors. No question about it . . .

TM: Coach, real quick. Are your ears—I'm kind of hearing a little bit of sound.

FB: Yeah, I'm sorry. Yeah. I can get that chain. I'll pull it out a little bit. That does—I put it in too far. Every governor has supported us. It's—has supported the effect of the binding together all state—all areas of the state into one mission and one goal and one interest. In the past, eastern Arkansas had a lot of interest in Mississippi and, you know, and around . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: . . . close to 'em or whatever. But Bernie brought it all together, and the governors helped bring it together and p—and put it together. Sure did. No question about it.

[00:50:38] TM: When did—I mean it seems like it has business and that kind of business always been a part of football, or when did it really start comin' in and really making a difference as far as [unclear word] . . .

FB: Well, let me give you an example. When I took over as athletic director—Bernie had done all he could do with the money and so forth. Our budget was nine hundred thousand. And we didn't

s—baseball didn't play in the Southwest Conference. We didn't have the money to go there. We had no full-time coaches in any of the sports but football and basketball. PE instructors got paid extra money for helpin' us coach. We didn't give scholarships to anyb—only one or two in any sport. And I'd been encouraged everywhere, "When you become athletic director, can you get an all-sports program? I have a lovely son that—I mean, I have a great son who's a tennis player. You can't—you don't have any scholarships. He's got to go out of the state." On and on, so what I did it's got this interesting story. I—I'd heard . . .

SL: You know, Joy, should we stop for just a second?

[Tape stopped]

[00:51:47] FB: South Carolina had a contribution program to help their athletics. And so when I took over as the athletic director, I asked 'em to make it s—we had to be self-supporting. So I started a scholarship program. And our budget was nine hundred thousand. We would raise four hundred fifty thousand the first year. And then we put all of that into basketball. And I hired Eddie Sutton. I knew I had to get basketball as a moneymaker. Football was payin' all the freight and everything. So Eddie came in, we beat Southern—we beat Texas A&M in a triple overtime. And we went somethin' like 326 games with

complete sellouts from that time on. Something like twenty-six seasons. [*Clears throat*] And basketball started makin' money, so then our scholarship program—we were able to give scholarships and hire coaches. Then we hired baseball coach Norm DeBriyn, gave him full—moved him out of the PE instructor into full time. John McDonnell. You can go on and on and on. So we built our all-sports program. [00:52:53] Oh, let me tell you what I did. I went to—I called a meeting in Little Rock at Pleasant Valley of the six most influential friends in the state. Jack Stephens and [R. A.] "Brick" Lile and Bill Darby and Ed Penick and—there were six of 'em there. And I sat down and told 'em about my plans. And I said, "You've got to support me." And I lu—turned to Ed Penick of the Worthen Bank, and I said, "Ed, you have been helpin' us by buying sixty tickets. But you know what? You're going to get four good tickets, and fifty-four—six of 'em are going to be in the end zone. You've got to agree to that." "I agree to it," he said. So they—I got total support. So three weeks later I called a meeting of every Razorback big fan, all over the state, three hundred of 'em came to Pleasant Valley. And I gave 'em—about the scholarship and the tickets and so forth. And all but two—there was a dentist that I played golf with at Pleasant Valley and Bill Wallace over at

Forrest City, who is in the hotel business and all, over there— they disagreed with me—the only two out of three hundred. And they said, "Okay, we'll support you in this raising of money." And so I called them when I got back, and they joined me. And then the scholarship program just took off and made all the difference in the world. We could build without borrow—without any state money or anything. [00:54:16] We built about 250 million in facilities during this period of time with no cost to the students, no cost to the faculty, or the school or state. [*Clears throat*] But the people that wanted to love the program supported me in this effort. And we didn't move anybody. We formed the Broyles-Matthews, the Big Red, the Super Hogs, and gave 'em the best seats available. There were students—I mean, faculty—they had their same seats till they gave up or, you know, died or whatever. And we started that program, and that's allowed us to do all the things that we need to do for our facilities to get competitive. We ha—[*clears throat*] in the South Carolina paper they voted our facilities number one in the conference. And there's a big story in there about how we did our facilities and so forth. And everybody says, "How can Arkansas have the number one facilities in the conference?" It's because our Razorback fans joined the Razorback Foundation,

and we were able to save money and build up a reserve and do the facilities. And the key was, if those people supported me at that—at those two meetings to let us get started.

TM: Did you model that after anybody, or was that . . .

FB: No. I changed. South Carolina had just a priority system. And the seats here—you had to make so much of a donation and so forth. I didn't like that be—because I'd had to move people that had been sitting in the seat for ten or fifteen years—and good fans—if they didn't have the money to make a donation. [*Clears throat*] [00:55:53] So I put in a motive to join a level of giving. The Broyles-Matthews got a coat and got a parking pass and got various things, a list about this long of things that we gave 'em [uses hands to indicate size of list]. And then the Super Hog got a little less, then the Wild Hog a little bit less. But we encouraged people to give to the program and take pride in being a contributor to the program—not paying for their seats. And I think it was a tremendous way to go. In the—and when I did a research, and I think I told you earlier, 81 percent of the people who make a contribution give more because they want to have a level of giving than what their seat priority would require. Eighty-one percent. And that shows you the passion of the Razorbacks. They want to be a part of the program. They want

to give to help the program. And it's not an insult to have to pay for their seat in the stands. They get the best seat available. And we're proud of that, and that's made all the difference in the world. Other schools—every school has that now. Every team has it. Every school has it. They raise—some schools will raise three times what we raise, but they spend three times more than we do. [*Laughs*]

[00:57:09] SL: Yeah.

FB: And my goal was, we're gonna keep it as low as we can to always make a profit. And that's what we've done. We've made a profit every year I've been the athletic director. Thirty-six years, we have made a profit every year. And I remember when I took over as athletic director, the budget was 900,000. We had 890,000, and I transferred 10,000 out of the Razorback Club fund to balance the books. And then we went every year since then and made a profit.

SL: So . . .

TM: Let's go ahead and change tapes . . .

FB: Got to be lucky.

SL: Okay.

FB: You got to be lucky.

SL: Well . . .

FB: And we made—we got lucky and made some goo—but we had the Razorback passion. And we had Orville Henry. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, let's get some tape in this camera here.

FB: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[00:57:59] SL: So let's talk—you know, I don't think many people know about this meeting at the Pleasant Valley golf course.

FB: No—no. Most of the people are gone. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

FB: The attendance, see that was thirty-six years ago. And most of the people were thirty-five to forty-five years old. But I wanted to get the grassroots support, and I had to get the six most influential people in the state, and they supported me totally and completely. And then I got three hundred. Three weeks later, I had a meeting in—at Pleasant Valley with three hundred from all over the state. I invited everybody and told 'em it was a major meeting—they had to come. And they did. And all but two—I remember Bill Wallace and the dentist that I played golf with—I think he's still living at Pleasant Valley. And then I called them when I got back and won their support. And we went into it, and from that point forward we were able to do everything we needed to do to be competitive with Texas and Texas A&M.



Oklahoma in this neighborhood and LSU—joined the SEC. And we've been competitive, and we have the number one facilities in the Southeastern con—and people say—other schools tell us we've got the number one facilities in America, of any school in America. And that's the—that Razorback passion.

[00:59:18] SL: Well you know—and this wasn't just about football, though.

FB: No, it wasn't about football, it was about all the other sports.

That was—when I became athletic director, my goal was to have an all-sports program. Bernie didn't have the money. And we had to start a way to get money. The ticket—our football stadium was twenty-six thousand. And Texas was sixty thousand. And so we had to find a way to get money to build the facilities to be competitive, and also to finance all the other sports. I hired John McDonnell because he was—he had already been hired to coach the cross-country team. And we got one point in the Southwest Conference track meet. Didn't get any scholarships. And he's ru—I'm practicing there in the fall—cross-country—and he's leading the cross-country team. Runnin'. And they go up the hill there on the east of the—on the west of the . . .

SL: Markham.

FB: . . . stadium there. And that's the track up there. When he came back, he was leading 'em still. And I hired him as our tra—I said, "Anybody that can outrun the track team"—I hired him, and he won forty [*beeping noise in the background*]*—no, he won thirty-six straight cross-country cham—he's not lost a cross-country championship. But that was what I wanted to do, was get an all-sports program. I had the money from the foundation, and so I hired John McDonnell, and we started a track program. And then we hired . . .*

[01:00:44] SL: Norm.

FB: . . . DeBriyn from teaching to be a full-time coach. And then we hired—instead of a volunteer coach in golf [*beeping sound in the background*] and tennis, we had a full coach. And then we had facilities. And the first facility I b—really built was the arena, you know. And Bud Walton had been giving us—the foundation—about \$180,000 worth of Walmart stock a year. And I'd gone up and met with him, and he called me—his secretary called and said, "Mr. Walton's gonna send—you wanna see us send it?" It was about \$180,000, 'course, it had doubled and doubled, you know, three or four times. But we—so he told me one time, he said—I went to thank him for the gift, and he said, "Well, what are you going to do about facilities?" And I

said, "Well, we're gonna start with basketball." And this is exactly what I—funny story. So about three days later, his secretary called me and said to Donita [Ritchie], said, "Mr. Bud wants to come down and see you." I was shakin' like a leaf. Bud Walton's gonna come see me, you know.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[01:01:56] FB: And so he walked in the office, and I was scared to death. And I knew he was a duck hunter—I mean, a bird hunter. So I had about thirty seconds of bird-hunting experience to talk. [*SL laughs*] And that's about what my conversation lasted. And he said to me, he said, "Well, Frank, how much is a new basketball arena gonna cost you?" And I told him. He said, "Well, count on me for half of it. I'm going bird huntin'. See you later." [*Laughs*] And walked right out of the office! He said, "Count on me for half the cost, whatever it is. I'll see you later." [*Laughs*] Oh boy. I couldn't quite—I ran into Nolan—Nolan was down practicin'. I went runnin' into pra—I said, "I got great news." I said, "We're going to build a new arena." And guess what I did. I told him, I said, "Nolan, I know how a coach feels about Barnhill. You love to play in Barnhill because the fans right on"—and they're about ten or twelve points—and I said, "I've already gone to"—I went to the school to see if they want

to participate and use it. No, no, they didn't have any money. "No, you just use it for basketball." I went to the city, and I asked the city did they want to use it for anything they could participate in the bond—no, no, they didn't want a thing. I went to the students, and they didn't want to use it at all. So I said, "Okay, it's gonna be basketball. I'm gonna pay for it—I'm gonna build it just for basketball." [01:03:21] So we—North Carolina and Arkansas are the only arenas in America that were built strictly for basketball that have twenty thousand seats. We had nothin'—we moved 'em right in like this and like that. [Moves hands to indicate the arrangement of seats.] Our basketball seats on the east and west side there, on the side courts are thirty-five feet closer at the top than any other sch—other than North Carolina. And they're fifty feet closer in the end zone. So I told Nolan, "We're gonna have a big Barnhill. Instead of nine thousand, we're gonna have twenty thousand just as close to the court, and nobody wants it." So people would come to me and wanted to put musical shows in it and all. I said, "Nope. This is just basketball." And they practice there. We don't have to—other schools, it's used at to where they have to have to build a practice arena for basketball. And they practice over there and play here. We practice where we play. And it's right on—

everything—across the end zone, it didn't go around like a bowl—went straight across. We brought everything in and went straight up. And I went to Jerry Jones's stadium two weeks ago to see his stadium. He did the same thing. He—in his new stadium, that billion-dollar stadium, billion-two now, the seats go straight up. And they don't go back—like there are no seats—first fifty-five rows, they're not bleacher seats. They're all premium seats with the skyboxes and club seats. So they can go straight up like this. The only bench seats are in the upper deck.

SL: Hmm.

[01:04:54] FB: And when you walk down on the floor of his stadium, it looks like a basketball arena because it's right on top of you just like our arena is. So we—that was the first facility we built. And Bud Walton—we named it for him—he was thrilled to death. And Sam had gotten all the publicity and everything. And we—I thought Sam was gonna come in, too, but I think Sam realized he wanted Bud to do it.

SL: Yeah.

FB: And where it would be Bud's. And we were proud of it. We still are proud of it.

SL: It's a great facility, Coach.

FB: But that was the first one that we really started to do anything with. We had—we'd done some football with skyboxes on the west side . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: . . . and a few things like that. It's been a great run. A great run.

[01:05:45] SL: Well, that was a great stroke to get those—that group of folks together.

FB: Oh yeah.

SL: Right out of the shoot. I mean, you'd been retired . . .

FB: I didn't—I hadn't been athletic director for two weeks when I did that.

SL: . . . yeah.

FB: But I had good contacts and Jack Stephenson—Jack Stephens was there—and Bill Darby and Brick Lile and Ed Penick. There were six of 'em.

SL: Was Louis Ramsay there?

FB: Who?

SL: Ramsay? Was Ramsay there? Louis Ramsay?

FB: No, Louis wasn't there—from Pine Bluff. They were all Little Rock. And we met, and they supported me 100 percent. "I understand what you do. We're behind you 100 percent." Then

I got—three weeks later—I got three hundred people there. Gave them the same pitch. All but two, and I got—won them over later. And so we went forward with the program. That's how I did it. How we did it.

[01:06:34] SL: Now that did a lot of things for the program. I mean . . .

FB: It was the key—we couldn't compete . . .

SL: . . . you couldn't. Yeah.

FB: . . . no. We couldn't compete at all on a \$900,000 budget. Our facilities—like football—when we expanded football stadium—before we expanded, our ticket sales for the season football—\$5.1 million. Last year they were 23 million. Ticket sales, gone from 5.1 to 23 million.

SL: And then . . .

FB: Basketball went from—a game in basketball was—our ticket sales and all was sixty thousand. It's three-sixty in Walton. Every game we make three-sixty in basketball. Three hundred sixty thousand. It was sixty thousand in Barnhill.

SL: That's big business coach.

FB: Well, what it's done is let us have an all-sports program.

SL: Yeah. And even the concessions play a role, too, don't they?

FB: Big time. When we expanded the stadium, the concessions went

from seven hundred—seventy thousand—to about five hundred. We are—concessions and clothing and all reaches five hundred thousand, of which we get—on concessions we get 47 percent of the gross. Not the net of the gross. And then we get about 25 percent on everything we sell a Razorback on it. So it's about—profit and all—is about three hundred fifty to four hundred thousand a game. Used to be seventy thousand. But all of that is going into salaries. We have to meet the marketplace. You say, "Well, what are you going to pay in salaries?" We got to pay what our competitors pay—or—pay—or we can't get 'em. Whatever the competitors pay, you're going to have to pay. It's a—it's an arms race in facilities, and it's the marketplace in salaries in coaches and so forth.

[01:08:25] SL: Men's athletics pretty much supports women's athletics, doesn't it?

FB: We have—it's so wonderful. Bev Lewis has done a terrific job there. I don't know what her income is, but we transfer equivalents of about ten, eleven million per year. And she manages it and does a great job with it. Yes, we have—and it hadn't—it has not delayed us—the men's sports—in any way to be able to pay for the women. That's another reason we had to have the bigger stadiums and so forth because their program,



they have to keep addin' sports and growin', and all, and I don't know—I would say their budget's probably twelve, thirteen million. And we probably put up eleven of it—eleven or twelve of it.

[01:09:13] TM: You know, another side product, too, is what it does for the community now. You know, what the impact of all these people coming into games.

FB: [*Laughs*] Oh yeah. The Chamber of Commerce were thrilled when we played six games here. And we had played six here and two in Little Rock. Well, they say that a game brings in about three hundred—about three million of tax money. Hotels, food, and so forth a [FB edit: game]—a weekend. And so goin' from three games and nine million to six games and eighteen million in tax money for the city.

[01:09:46] SL: Well, and then you've got—of course, there's the academic side of it, too.

FB: Oh yes.

SL: Not only are you doin' the scholarships, but y'all—I know that you've helped—I remember you doing the Campaign for Books for the library at one point in time.

FB: Oh yeah. Nineteen seventy-seven, we were about to lose accreditation for the library. And Dan Ferritor asked me, would I

chair a fund to raise it. And I remember one of my friends down in Houston called me. He had sold his hospital. He was a doctor, and he had sold his hospital. And he said, "I'm going to give you the 200,000 to put you over the 2 million." I was thrilled to death, thrilled to death. [*Laughs*]

[01:10:26] SL: Well, do y'all—what—do you do anything else for the academic side of the university community as far as donations or . . .

FB: Well, we—no. What we do—our budget for the band is about 400,000. Maybe a little more than that, that we pay a lot of expense of the band. And they're important to us and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: . . . and by payin' that, we are able to reduce the amount of money that the university has to put into—the band's important. It doesn't just play for us. It plays for a lot.

SL: Right.

FB: So I—I've forgotten what we put into it. I think we upped it to about four hundred, maybe four-fifty, two or three years ago. But we let the students in—a dollar in football and six dollars in basketball, which is a third of the price of the ticket. And we have—I remember the bowl money one time, we put into the library campaign. We got 300,000 and—excuse me, for the

tournament in basketball, and we put it into the book campaign.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: I don't remember that they've asked me, really, for any—  
anything. What we try to do is have a reserve in the foundation  
for half of a year's operational budget. So if there's a  
catastrophe of some kind . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: . . . hurricane or tornado or something where you couldn't play  
your games, we could still have our program. So we try to have  
one-half of a budget—one-half year of a budget in our reserve  
for emergency.


[01:12:19] SL: Also while you were athletic director, the television  
business kind of [*FB laughs*] took off.

FB: Oh yeah. Well yeah, we used to get on television in the  
Southwest Conference, it would pay about 900,000 per game,  
and we'd divide it up about a 100,000. Now we get a turn back  
of \$10 million from the conference. With the basketball TV—the  
basketball tournament and football TV—nationally—as well as  
our own package each school gets about 10 million, which is  
twelve—that's 120 million that is divided up among the schools.  
And what that does—that helps the have-nots as well as the  
haves.

SL: Yeah.

FB: To get that ten—equal amount. Keeps the teams with less stadium and less population—helps them to be competitive.

[01:13:26] SL: You know, I guess at some point we gotta talk about the move to put most of the games up to Fayetteville.

 FB: That was a tough, tough call. We got big resistance as you know.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: I lost some real good friends over that . . .

SL: I know that.

FB: . . . because I was convinced that we had to have a stadium to be competitive in the Southeastern Conference. We had to have a stadium to raise our football ticket sales from 5 million to 20 million—or 23 million—if we were gonna pay women's sports, if we were gonna have the money and not go to the students and not use tax money. To be self-supporting, we had to expand our stadium. Well, when you look at it—the debt service—we had to have at least five games up here to retire the debt service and still not lose everything we have for ten years, well, that we needed for women's sports that we needed for expansion of our programs. And it became an issue that people in Little Rock thought that we'd move all the games. We'd move one, and

then they'd all be lost.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[01:14:46] FB: Now remember that Little Rock kept us in the business. Starting in [19]48, we played our first game in War Memorial—excuse me—in Little Rock Central Stadium. But there were the roads were such that—Fayetteville was nine thousand people. And Little Rock saved us. I mean, we had to play in Little Rock to—otherwise, we wouldn't been—had any competitiveness in the Southwest Conference. The things that were escalating—small at that time—but they were still escalating. So Little Rock has played a major role in the fifty—this is the fiftieth year coming up—and they wanted us to play an extra game down there in honor of the fifty years. And we're playing Texas on the road so that takes one other game away from us, and we couldn't do it. And they finally understood. But we had—it was—we didn't have enough votes on the trustees to pull it off. And I called the chairman—I won't go into his name right now—but I called the chairman, and I—and I got down on my knees in my bathroom, and I talked to him for two-and-a-half hours, about everything and what it would mean and so forth. And he said, "Okay, I'll support it. I was gonna be neutral, but I will support it." And so we won by one vote—and

to move that one game. And there's still a lot of people that think that was wrong. And they have arguments . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[01:16:23] FB: . . . because of what Little Rock did and—but we saw it as a necessity to be competitive to—in the arms race and in everything that we were participating in, that they didn't understand as much as—we could see the future, where we were goin' and what we had to do. And the stadium now, we proudly show it off as one of the best in the country. And before that it was a high school stadium—it was a Texas high school stadium. There were many schools—high schools in Texas had as many seats as we had, and they use that against us. They used to say we had—you know, we told you we had a hundred thousand-seat stadium, fifty in Little Rock and fifty in Fayetteville. When we were in the SEC that's what they used against us in recruiting. It was something that I had my heart in, and I just felt like that we were never gonna get to where we wanted to be and where the fans deserved to be if we didn't do it. So I got—we had a majority on the board that approved it. But it was tough.

[01:17:35] SL: You know, I—of course, I was there for that meeting, and it just a—as evidence to how much Razorback athletics

affects the state. [*FB laughs*] I can tell you that that room was packed.

FB: Oh yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: And they—those that wanted to keep the games in Little Rock brought in war veterans, you know. They used the memorial stadium side of the . . .

FB: Oh yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL . . . of the venue to, you know, kind of pull on the emotional strings. And also that meeting was telecast . . .

FB: Yeah.

SL: . . . live all over the state.

FB: I know it.

SL: Now I don't know how many colleges or programs would have to go to that extent to satisfy e—ev—to bring everyone in the state involved in that process. I don't think there's another school in the country . . .

FB: No, there wouldn't have been. And interestingly there's nobody in America that does it anymore. I think the last one that moved was Green Bay. They had been playing—what's the biggest city in Wisconsin? They would play in Milwaukee . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: . . . a year, one game. But they moved it back. There's some

neutral games like Texas and Oklahoma play in Dallas, but that's a neutral site. But having two stadiums at home is a thing of the past—I am told—all across pro football and college football today. There were about five when we made our decision to move one game. So we are the only school in America that has two home stadiums.

[01:19:30] SL: Well, I know it cost you some personal friendships . . .

FB: It did.

SL: . . . Coach, and I know that there's still hard feelings about that. And—but do you see any recovery? Do you see . . .

FB: I see recovery from the people. As an example, when we made that decision, tw—one-third of the fans went to Little Rock only, one-third of the fans went to Fayetteville only, and one-third went to both. It was just across the board. Now the people in Little Rock have come to see the college experience in Fayetteville, and so we're reducing that one-third. It's down below a fourth now of the people that just go to Little Rock only.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: And they're now buying them—we have extra tick—we can't do any more in Little Rock 'cause we don't have any more seats. And—but up here we had more seats, so the people in Little



Rock could start coming up here, and I hear—I—and I look at the changes each year, and I see people, and they talk to me. "We love—like Little Rock, the games there are wonderful, but it's a special experience being on the campus. I went to school here. I like to get back and walk through and have—we have meetings up here, you know, on the campus and so forth. And it's a college experience," where it's just like a professional experience in a town that where—a neutral town like there. You'd go to the game and go back, which is wonderful. But here they come to do more than just go to the game. And so that number of Little Rock-only is dropping. It's below a fourth now, and it was a third of our ticket sales.

[01:21:13] SL: I think that's—well, you know how I stand on it. It was the right thing to do, but . . .

FB: Yeah, sure. Yeah.

SL: Well, let's talk a little bit about—what time is it? Do we—are you doin' all right?

FB: Yeah.

SL: You want to take a little break?

FB: No.

SL: You want to keep goin'?

FB: Let's keep goin'.

[01:21:25] SL: Okay. You've worked with how many administrators now?

FB: Nine.

SL: Nine.

FB: I've had nine presidents—well, they were the president, now the president has turned it over, and it's called a chancellor now, but I worked for nine. And all have been supportive. The only run-in I ever had was with President Bishop. He wanted my skybox. There's only one skybox in Little Rock, and I had it for the coaches' wives, and he wanted that and tried to take it, but the board stopped him. And then he left and went to Houston.

SL: [*Laughs*] That's somethin' else.

FB: That's what happened. I don't know why he left. I don't know whether that was the reason or not, but . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: . . . but he wanted that skybox down there that I ha—only one, and the coaches' wives had it, and I won that battle with the board. Louis Ramsay was the head of the board at that time. On the board, yeah.

[01:22:41] SL: So they've all been supportive.

FB: Yeah.

SL: And why wouldn't they be, Coach? I mean, look at what you

had gathered a—around you as far as the support across the state.

FB: They've all been supportive.

[01:22:53] SL: You know, you can't recruit an academic scholarship without putting in that Razorback package.

FB: Oh yeah.

SL: It's a formula.

FB: Yep. Most schools—Notre Dame built their reputation on winning football and enrollment and contributions and everything, from a school that didn't have a little bit, but they started playin' Army. That was their first big game. Army played 'em, and they beat Army, and from then on, it was a big thing. Georgia Tech believes that they have to be competitive if they're gonna recruit the engineers to come there and all—that—that's part of the college life of a percentage of 'em, what the percentage is—varies what part of the country you're in. Some schools have fifteen thousand students going to the football game and seven, eight thousand going to basketball. They may not be there—who knows, you know, if they didn't have a competitive program. [01:24:03] So we think we—and my goal is always try to convince the public and the news media and the faculty that we're part of the university, and we're proud to be part of

the university. We don't want any special treatment of any kind. We want to contribute to the overall good of the university, and anything that we can learn where we can improve, we're gonna do it. And that we—it's a work in progress. You're always trying to get more alumni and more fans involved and as an example, the—having the kids come up for our museums, and all—go through there. When I—in our museum in the Broyles Center, when I walk by there, there'll usually be one person in there lookin'. And football game is, oh, probably two thousand go through it looking at the Razorback history. But I see 'em in there with all ages looking at—goin' through the museum. And I've walked down and shake their hands, and they want to take a picture. And I do that e—virtually every time I walk through there, there's somebody in there looking at the museum. So all of that just builds support for the university and strengthens support for the university.

[01:25:27] SL: Well you know, you can't—we can't forget that what a great role you played in the latest development efforts for the university.

FB: Well, I was privileged to be asked to be one of the chairs. And I will brag and then explain—the truth of the matter is that the year that I was chairman was the biggest we've ever had. But

the stock market had turned around. [*Laughter*] It wasn't me. It was the stock market. [*SL vocalized noise*] I think I was the chair in [19]73—I mean in [20]03.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: And it rotated around, and I take great pride in that. I always want to give back. And I think that people who are givers are happier and have a not only more enjoyable life but a more successful life, if you're a giver and if you care. And we certainly in our athletic department take pride in bein' a part of the university and contributin' to its welfare wherever we can.

SL: Did you ever think it'd really come to pass—the school could raise a billion dollars?

FB: No, not in my fondest imagination. We started, as you know, at a half a million and then went to 700,000 then to 900,000, and they asked Jim Walton to make the motion . . .

[01:27:00] SL: You mean 900 million.

FB: Huh?

SL: You mean 900 million. [*Laughs*]

FB: I'm fin—what am I saying? Crazy. Nine hundred million, and it's hard for me to say that.

SL: I know.

FB: And they asked me to make the second. So I had a great

privilege of seconding Jim Walton's motion to go to a billion dollars, and the leadership of David Gearhart—he is an exceptional, exceptional—has exceptional ability to organize and predict what's gonna happen and make it happen.

SL: Well, now you worked with David a long time ago.

FB: Oh yeah. I worked with David during the library campaign. Yeah, we got to be good friends. And we were very pleased when John White sought him out to bring him back. He'd just missed out on bein' the president of Penn State. He was the—there were two candidates—two finalists—and he lost out at Penn State at the last second. There were two finalists there. And so he was working for a private firm in Li—in Chicago, dealing with many, many schools—his organization—of their campaigns—and John White recognized that and brought him back. It was a great hire. *[Laughs]*

SL: Great hire.

FB: Yeah.

[01:28:21] SL: Great hire. Coach, what hires are you most proudest of in your tenure as athletic director?

FB: Well, I guess the one that was the biggest change was Eddie Sutton. I remember Eddie, when I brought him down to interview—he and his wife—they had just lost—they were at



Creighton and playing in NCAA in Tulsa and got beat in the second round. And he was just—he and his wife were driving over, and they had—they took the wrong turn over [*laughs*] at the border and came the slow road down by the lake there and so forth. And they—and she thought that, said, "My gosh, y'all don't have any roads in Arkansas, do you?" [*Laughter*] But Eddie said to me, he said, "Well, Frank, I'll come if you'll promise me that you'll enlarge the arena. Five thousand is not enough to have a competitive program." I said, "Well, how about eighty-five hundred?" He said, "Then I'll take the job." So I said, "I can do that." But he helped me do it. And I remember the trip that we made around the state together. And people were wantin' to have a basketball program, so we were able to raise enough money to—we put nine thousand seats in there.

SL: Well you know, now Barnhill Arena back then was a barn.

FB: Well, it was.

SL: I mean . . .

FB: We practiced there.

SL: . . . tell us what Barnhill . . .

FB: Well, Barnhill had the seats on the north side, and on the south side was a dirt area where we practiced football. They had bleachers there just for the students. They took 'em down, and

we had bad weather—that was our bad weather practice area.

Dirt floor. And we had our off-season class in there where—our team would tell you a lot of stories of Wilson Matthews running our [*laughs*] . . .

[01:30:08] SL: Well, let's hear them.

FB: . . . running—well, they would be so tough. I mean they would just be—when they saw me walk in, they knew I was going to ease it up. That was my nature. But they got in that dirt, and they came out with dirt all over 'em. He had 'em doing every drill you could imagine on the dirt floor, while the basketball team's practicin'. We had—nobody said anything to—we just practiced right there. And so when Eddie came and—we made that commitment to him—we were able to put in what it looks like that—and go to about eighty-five hundred from five thousand. And then we could be competitive. [01:30:44] And then he, as I repeated earlier, we beat Texas A&M in a triple overtime. And I—in his first year. And from that time on for twenty-six straight seasons, we sold every ticket in our season ticket—that was the biggest turnaround of any s—John McDonnell. How can you not put him at the top also, with the championships and national championships. Norm DeBriyn stayed with us thirty-four years as the baseball coach. Lou Holtz



did a great job. Movin' in the SEC, it's a tough league. And we're the—we're so far from everybody. There are five Big 12 schools closer to our campus than the closest one in the SEC, which is five hundred miles—four hundred miles—four hundred fifty miles. And South Carolina and Florida are a thousand, eleven hundred miles. So it's a different world we're in.

SL: So . . .

FB: We're recruiting in a different world.

[01:31:47] SL: . . . how do—when did you sense that you needed—that the Southwest Conference was kind of on its way down . . .



FB: Well, in the [19]80—about [19]85. The pros had taken over Texas newspaper.

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: They had taken over the dollar for entertainment with pro football—major pro football—Major League Baseball, NBA basketball. So the schools that had—like SMU are in a town with two pro teams, basketball and football. And ho—and hockey, also. And baseball. Wha—what chance did they have? What chance did TCU have? What chance did Rice have? So attendance went down. We were having about—and what was really disturbing was that when we played anybody but Texas, Texas A&M, the football stadium was barely half full and

basketball about a fourth filled. And so the TV money was droppin'. Everything was goin' down, and Texas A&M and Texas and Arkansas—we met many, many times. And we kind of had a silent agreement that they were goin' to follow me, but they couldn't do it because of political matters. I was to go first, and then they would follow. But they couldn't do it. They went the other way eventually.

[01:33:16] SL: So the SEC was open to bringing everyone into the fold like that?

FB: Well, with the—well, I don't know. I just—I think that what they would have done is A&M and Texas would have been in the western, and the—and Alabama and Auburn would have been in the east.

SL: Yeah.

FB: And we'd have played the schedule and gone on about our business, but they couldn't do it, and they had to form something. So the Big 12 came and organized and took four teams in the Southwest and every team in the Big 12. And I've told people—people say, "If you'd waited, you'd been in the Big 12." I said, "Where? Where would we have been?" And I've talked to the three or four people over there that had a lot to do with the Big 12, and we would not—they don't think we'd have

been in the Big 12. We'd have been in the Lone Star Conference or somethin' because we didn't have the pull to and I—that worried me in the late nine—[19]80s, Texas was talking about goin' to the Pac-10. And I thought, "Well, where are we going to go? Without A&M and Texas, where are we gonna be?" And I started lookin', and so I went over to—I got permission from the board and our chancellor, and I went—Dan Ferritor—and I went over and met with the Roy—it wasn't Roy Kramer—but the—he wasn't the commissioner then. And Doug Dickey met me there, and we played golf, and I had permission to tell him if they expanded that we were ready to go. We already had permission, we would accept immediately if they expanded any time in the future. Three years later they expanded. But I'd been over there three years before that. I was worried about where we were gonna be if A&M and Texas pulled out.

[01:35:04] SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: And I don't know where—it had to be something bigger than a twelve because Baylor and Texas Tech were gonna get in politically. A&M and Texas were gonna get in, and where were we going to be? And I've had people in the Big 12 tell us we wouldn't have been in the Big 12. We'd have been in the Lone Star Conference or the USA Conference or an independent if we

hadn't gone to the SEC. That's speculation—that's what you look back on. But I was scared. I don't mind telling you that A&M and Texas were going to pull out and go somewhere, and we'd be left without any of the big draws in our conference. We'd be playin' good teams, but they didn't have the attendance because of the pros. [01:35:48] We—right today, if you look at attendance in the nation, the SEC has seven of the top twelve. [Clears throat] There's seven teams in the SEC that are in the top twelve in the nation in attendance. So they got money, and they got facilities. We have to have money, we have to have facilities to stay competitive with 'em, and our passion for the Razorbacks has let us do it. And that's the key. We have to meet the marketplace. I don't like the salaries that we have to pay or for other things, but if our competitors have it—if we're gonna win, we have to have it. And there's an old sayin'. Lou Holtz used to say it all the time, "They don't come to see you play. They come to see you win."

SL: Yeah.

FB: And so you better win, or they're not comin'. And so that's our goal. That's what—we don't have any other road map to follow. The road is paved with—the Razorback passion paved us a way to be competitive by supporting us. And so the new coach and

the new athletic director, the fans have paved the road to continue to improve in my judgment s—considerably.

[01:37:12] SL: We might—that's a good way to—that's kind of a good way to end an interview, but I kinda hate to stop right now. The—you know—the—I think one of the great hires you had was Nolan Richardson.

FB: Well, no question it was. Eddie Sutton started the basketball program. He won 80 percent of his games, got to the Final Four. And Eddie came in and then took it to the next le—excuse me, Nolan came in and took it to the next level. When Nolan, with his style of play and the players that he had, it was obvious we had to build a new arena. In [19]93 and [19]92 and [19]91—[19]90 through—[19]90 through [19]95, we were the winningest basketball team in the country. Had more wins than any basketball team in the country. And there was—Nolan had taken what Eddie had started and built on it and took it to another level, and it was excitin'. I guarantee you I stood up half of every game, [*laughter*] 'cause if I wanted to see I had to stand up.

[01:38:24] SL: That's right.

FB: Everybody else was standing up cheerin' 'em on.

SL: Nolan was . . .

FB: No question about it.

SL: . . . Nolan and Orville were pretty close, weren't they?

FB: Very close. And—very much so. In fact just before Orville died, Nolan went down to see him and visit with him. Clay [Henry, Orville's son], you know, runs the [*Hawgs Illustrated*] magazine here and all. And we had seen Orville and all, but he was goin' fast. And didn't have long to stay, and Nolan went down to see him. But they were very close, very close. Orville just believed in Nolan and supported him 100 percent. And they had a strong, strong friendship. Was good for both of 'em.

[01:39:09] SL: Yeah. Any other hires that—or . . .

FB: Well, Dave Van Horn has been a great hire for baseball. McDonnell is the most successful ever in America—or anywhere, not just for us—for—but in America. We've already talked about him. I think Houston did a great job of firing us up, and he had to go to the new conference. And it was difficult without a stadium or anything. We got everything in facilities, and things picked up. He was a good hire for us. He was—he came at the right time.

SL: You know, we can—there's some—there's so many ironies about [*unclear words*] . . .

FB: Lou was a good hire. Lou Holtz was a good hire.

SL: Lou was a great hire.

FB: Great hire. I'm telling you. He was funny, and he won big, and our fans, they supported him and rightfully so. And Ken Hatfield was a great hire, too.

SL: Ken Hatfield.

FB: A native Arkansan. A player here, all-American. He did a great job. He has the winningest percentage of anybody. The last two years here, he won championships. Won the Southwest Conference championship in [19]89 and [19]90 or [19]88 and [19]89. I can't remember which, I think it's [19]89 and [19]90. But we had—those were awfully good hires. Well, my daughter's animals are comin' in. [*Laughs*]

[01:40:49] SL: That's all right. You know, I remember reading how Bernie was really glad to get out of the Ole Miss series.

FB: Well, I tell you what happened on that, I think. He called me in and told me that we were gonna cancel the Mississippi series. And I said, "Why?" And he said, "Well, we can't get along with who owes us money. We played a game. They hadn't paid us for our game yet. And they said they don't owe it to us. And you know, we've just had some terrible negotiations for the last"—I didn't know anything about it—"for the last six, seven years. I'm just canceling the game." I had nothin' to do with it.

He made that decision and—had to with the—leadership over there and his leadership. They just weren't working things out satisfactory to both schools.

[01:41:50] SL: Well, what an intense rivalry.

FB: Oh my gosh. My goodness. I remember—[*SL laughs*—I remember the si—the [19]54 game when Bowden [Wyatt] upset 'em 6–0. I remember the crowd and all and watched it on television. What a ball game. It was a—I guess the intensity at that game was as high as it's ever been. It's interesting that now today that—well, it's gonna change with Houston at Ole Miss. But LSU has become more of a rival than Mississippi was. After comin' back and joining their league, it hadn't been the attendance at either place like it was before. It may pick up with Houston there though.

SL: I remember my parent—my dad—I think my dad was involved in some kind of fight in the end zone in one of those Ole Miss games. [*Laughter*]

FB: I wouldn't be surprised. He was a Razorback. And there were a lot of fights. It was a lot of things. It was a—we were playing in the Southwest Conference with—Mississippi was our biggest game. Even bigger than Texas at that time.

SL: I just—I—for me, Coach, it seems like there's just some irony



that Coach Nutt is now gonna be at Ole Miss.

FB: Isn't that somethin'? That just . . .

SL: It's . . .

FB: . . . I don't understand how [*unclear words*] . . .

SL: . . . it's also kind of ironic to me . . .

FB: Oh, it's the most ironic thing I can think of.

[01:43:15] SL: Well, it's kind of neat that we're playing Missouri in the Cotton Bowl.

FB: Well, that's ri—because that's where I was when they hired me. But let me say this. I maybe have told that I had a one-year contract. And—because that's all they could give. And so Don Faurot was a wonderful supporter of mine, and we were 5-1 at the time. And they'd been 1-9 the year before. And he came to me and said, "I'm gonna get you a raise"—I was makin' 10,000—"I'm gonna get you a raise to 15,000, and I'm gonna get you a three-year contract." They only gave a one—the state laws wouldn't, you know—our state laws had that except for athletics.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: And well, I thought that was great. And then at the end of the season, he came to me and said, "I failed. I'm just so mad at 'em. They're gonna give you a raise to 12,000—from ten to

twelve—but then you'll only still just have a one-year contract." And so I had to accept it. But then Arkansas opened up, and when I took the job, he came to me and says, "I don't blame you at all. I couldn't fulfill what I had promised you." And so he felt that I had made the right decision. I had a five-year contract.

[01:44:37] SL: Surely he knew though that Arkansas was the job that you had always wanted.

FB: Well, he probably did. I'm not sure that—oh, I wanted the job desperately. But I didn't apply for it this time because I had a job, and I didn't think it was ethical to apply for the other job when I had one. I could have lost my job. *[Laughs]* I had a one-year contract. They could get rid of me at any time. I didn't think about that till just then. *[Laughter]* But I didn't apply, and Coach Barnhill would not let my name get mentioned, and yet he was the one I wanted. And then he hired me as a surprise. And I remember Orville Henry's headlines. "War—Mur—Wa—Murray Warmath was gonna be the head coach announced at four o'clock on Saturday afternoon." That was the front page. Not spor—front page picture, story all about Murray Warmath. And I'd already been hired. *[Laughter]*

SL: That's kind of like "Dewey wins."

FB: Yeah, right. "Dewey wins." You're right. Yeah. But I had been blessed to have a job for fifty years. Only job I've ever really wanted. I di—I did not want to leave and to be able to have support and be in a leadership role for fifty years is very, very, very rare. And the people of Arkansas have just made it the best thing I could possibly do, and I'm proud of it.

[01:46:09] SL: So what's next, Coach?

FB: Well, I'm going to try to raise some money to—I'm—first I'm gonna continue to help the coaches whenever they might need me—the athletic director [Jeff Long]—I'm gonna be available with fifty years experience if they need to know something or whatever. But I'm also gonna be tryin' to raise money to reduce our debt. And I'll be supportin'—raisin' money for the university as well as the athletic department, and I will play more golf, [laughs] I guess. I don't know. If I play good, I play a lot. If I'm playing bad, I quit. [SL laughs] It's a crazy game. But—and I think I said that Doug Dickey had told me that, I repeat, that a consulting job is eleven to one with hour off for lunch. [Laughter] He said he had it for four years—it was pretty good. I've got—I think I signed a either a six- or seven-year contract, and I'm gonna continue to work for the university and the athletic department in a fund-raising capacity wherever that I

can assist with my experience. But not meddle. I'll be out of the way.

[01:47:22] SL: Yeah. I'll bet you are tapped every day. Every day, I bet, someone will come see you.

FB: Well, I'll be available because my love is here. My passion is to see the Razorbacks win another national championship—football or basketball.

SL: That seems to be the big passion now.

FB: Oh, it is. It is and it's time, and we got a chance. Great coach we've hired, the passion of the Razorbacks, the facilities that we have—we all—we—we've got a better chance today than we've had in a long, long time because of that.

[01:47:58] TM: I'm kind of curious. How about the importance of sports and athletics to an individual or just the culture? I mean, what it does for a person being involved with athletics?

SL: That's a great question.

FB: I'm sorry.

SL: Well, he's . . .

FB: Go ahead. I couldn't hear you.

[01:48:11] SL: He's talking about the role that athletics plays in the development of the individual.

FB: Well, first is, yes, competitive a—athletics teaches you to be a

team player. It teaches you that you've got to make sacrifices for the team, for something else. It teaches you that you can have success, and it teaches you how to accept success and then not just rely on that but work harder. The harder you work, the better chance you have to win in sports. Very few people just walk out and play. The com—competition is too intense for that. But I would tell you that the people that play football, which is my sport that I coached and others, too—but the football—they're very s—many of 'em are very, very successful because they learned to be a team player. And I don't think you're su—I don't think you ever get promoted just because of what you do. You get promoted for what you've done for the organization. And that's the great thing about eleven players out in football. It's a team effort, and the team gets the credit. I think it's a wonderful lesson and you have to be tough. You have to sacrifice. You have to be able to do schoolwork and practice. You have to learn how to adjust your times and all the things that a parent want—wants you to be. Sports ca—can help you in that way. It's not perfect, but it can help you.

[01:49:56] SL: Coach, is there anything you want to say familywise?

Is there—do you want to say anything about or to your kids,  
or . . .

FB: Well, the great thing—my children have supported me and supported the job that I have even though it's been tough on them at times. They have some wonderful benefits that other kids don't have, like going to the games and all. But it's been tough on 'em but they've stayed level. They've stay—they've supported—Barbara was wonderful help to me. She would not talk, as I've said earlier about this, about my job when I came home. It was all family and what the kids had done that day, and she never told me anything they did wrong. Linda was the town crier. She did, but Barbara didn't like that. But my family has been very supportive. They love Fayetteville. Five of my six children live here. My—the son that doesn't live here, his daughter is a junior here in school. And his other child—another daughter—is a junior in high school. And she'll be here two years from now. So what has happened for my family is that Fayetteville is such a wonderful place that five of my six children live here. And all but one of my grandchildren live here. And I don't know how you can be wealthier or have more wealth than have your family livin' with you. We had Christmas the other day. We have it so they can have Christmas at home for Santy Claus—but we had Christmas at our home, and our kids were there having a wonderful time. My granddaughters—there are

five of 'em in college—and they had a wonderful time and went over to Taylor's house, who is in school here—and Molly live together. Two of my granddaughters have an apartment. And they talked till four o'clock in the morning. But being here has kept my family close, and staying here has kept us even closer. And they've been very supportive. The children have taken the notoriety or whatever and growin' through—in the first grade, second grade, all the way through. They've learned to live with the tough part of it and learned to live with the good part of it. And it's been a good lesson for—and they're all, as I say, happily married and gainfully employed. So that's good. [*Laughs*]

[01:52:21] SL: That's really good. Your sister still alive?

FB: My sister is the last one in my family. She was here for the South Carolina game. And she's healthy as she can be. Doesn't have a gray hair on her head. Red headed. Still plays on the Cornelia [FB edit: Georgia] tennis team. At eighty she's already—I'm eighty-three—she's eighty-eight. And she's the one that we talked earlier about—took care of me. But she's in perfect health and enjoyed being here for the South Carolina game and the festivities.

[01:52:55] SL: You know, there's one other person that I—I've been aware of that's been in your life for a long, long time, and that's

Donita Ritchie.

FB: Well, yes. We should have mentioned her earlier because she's been my assistant and worked with me for twenty-eight years. And at this stage of my life, I can—with cell phones, I can be on the golf course, and nobody knows it. [*Laughter*] She just says, "Hold it just a minute, I'll connect you." And so I just talk, and nobody knows where I am unless I tell 'em. But she's able to—I remember when I first started as a coach and all, I dictated my letters. And that was hard on a engineer. And I spent a lot of time dictatin' letters. And it was expensive to—spendin' that much time and my salary instead of doing other things. So in the last fifteen years, when I get my mail, I just write on the letter what I want to say, and she drafts the letter better than I could ever write it. And people think I'm very, very, very good in English and letter writing and all, but she handles the phones. She knows which calls to get through to me and which ones to postpone or whatever. You know, answer 'em herself or whatever. But she's been with me twenty-eight years, so she can run the office, and she's gonna move with me to the new office.

[01:54:20] SL: Bill Gray's been with you a long time, too.

FB: Bill played for me. Went into coachin'. Came back with Ken



Hatfield, then—as a recruiter—then moved up as an administrator about 1985. And he's in charge of all the game management, compliance, and does a great job. Loves his work, and I believe that our new athletic director will want to keep him. He's very talented, very dedicated. Was an outstanding football player for us. Played on the [19]64 team, safety man. Made some big plays in that game. And he's—I can just rely on him and don't worry about it. I delegate and turn 'em loose. And he's one that does a great job.

[01:55:14] SL: And we probably ought to say somethin' about your—about Gen.

FB: Well, yes. We—it's interesting that when Barbara died of Alzheimer's, I really wanted to get involved with helping other caregivers of Arkansas, and it spread nationally. And Gen—Donita said, "You ought to be doin' some socializin'." And so she says, "I've got a friend. I think you oughta meet her." I said, "Bring me a picture." [*Laughs*]

[01:55:48] SL: Oh, you. Now was that Donita or . . .

FB: Donita.

SL: . . . Donita did that.

FB: Yeah. She's the . . .

SL: You know, here's the story I heard. I heard that you went and

talked with Kevin.

FB: With who?

[01:56:02] SL: With Kevin Trainor before you ever . . .

FB: No, no.

SL: You didn't?

FB: No. Kevin—Ruth [Trainor, Kevin's wife]—Ruth told Kevin—Ruth is Gen's daughter, one of the triplets, and said, "Well—this is not gonna work out. If you get a raise, they'll say because Coach Broyles is married to my mother." And Kevin says, "We'll worry about that when it happens." [*Laughter*] No, I—no, Kevin didn't introduce me or anything. Donita—Donita's twins were the same age as Gen's triplets. They were in class all the way through, and they knew each other. And so Donita says you oughta start socializing some. I said, "Okay." So I said, "Get me a picture." [*SL laughs*] And she was beautiful. So I took her to lunch out here at Ruby's.

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: And I knew right away I wanted to mar—marry her because we split a hamburger. [*Laughter*] She wasn't high maintenance. She had been married to a great man who was a profe— professor here for many, many years.

[01:57:07] SL: That's right, Jim Whitehead.

FB: And—Jim Whitehead was a . . .

SL: Who—great football player.

FB: At Vanderbilt.

SL: Mh-hmm.

FB: And Gen s—told me later. She says, "You know, all I wanted to do, all the way through school, was meet somebody, get married, and have a lot of kids." And she had seven. [*Laughs*] And I've got six, so our family's fifty-six now. I have one great-granddaughter. And when we have a party, we split up. And we have one, one night at her house and one, one night at my house. We can't get everybody in the same room. But we ha—we're both very, very happy, and she's been just wonderful. She was a delivery nurse. She—what she did, when her children—her triplets—the youngest were in the first grade, she wanted to educate 'em. Her husband was on salary here as a faculty. So she became a delivery nurse for thirty years. Educated all six of her children. They have one—six of 'em have one—excuse me, seven of 'em have one degree, and six of 'em have two degrees. And she paid for it all out of her nursing thing. And wouldn't let 'em come to Arkansas. She said—it wasn't Arkansas—she says, "All right, you got to get off on your own and learn what life's all about." So she paid out-of-state

tuition all over for 'em. And all of 'em have a de—one degree—  
and six of 'em have two degrees. And her daughter [Dr.  
Kathleen Whitehead Paulson] is a gynecologist here, you know,  
and one of the best here in town.

[01:58:23] SL: That's a great story.

FB: Yeah, it is, really. We're both very happy. And we laugh about  
it. The marriage is probably gonna last because she's redoin' the  
house for me. [*Laughter*] She wa—I kid her. She's been  
wantin' to get bigger bedrooms for me and bigger closets. I've  
got so much clothes and everything. And so she's finally workin'  
on it now. And I tell everybody, "I think she's now really  
thinking that our marriage is going to last." She says, "Don't  
you say that!" [*SL laughs*] I used to say that when we first  
started—got married, I would say, "Well, she's one-upped me.  
She had four kids and triplets, and I have four kids and twins.  
So she's one-upped me all along." After about the third time,  
she said, "Please don't say that. Most people think I'm crazy to  
have seven children, so don't say that." [*Laughter*] So we have  
a great time. Have a great time.

[01:59:14] SL: Well, Coach . . .

FB: Thank you for this, Scott. It's been wonderful.

SL: Coach.

FB: And we look forward—my family will enjoy having a copy of it. I think you said I can get a copy . . .

SL: You'll get copies of everything. We'll—all of the things that we scan. You guys will have that . . .

FB: Good.

SL: . . . as well, and . . .

FB: Well, there's one other thing I need to tell you. I have a long film that was—that—they did my life story. Had one on Barbara and one on me. I've never looked at the one on me. They did it in Little Rock, and they were gonna try to sell people doin' this for their children.

SL: Uh-huh.

FB: You may want to look at it—may be some pictures in it. I don't know . . .

[01:59:51] SL: Okay.

FB: I had one on Barbara, which is really great. And she's talkin' in there about her life and everything even though she's half sick. And the—I had one on myself. And they went through, kind of like you did. It's not near as long, but thi—it might be somethin' that you might want to use.

SL: Oh, we'd love to have that.

FB: I'll give you both of—I'll try and look 'em up and find both of

'em.

SL: Okay.

FB: And . . .

SL: We'll make a copy.

FB: . . . yeah. I used Barbara's—hers at her funeral. I used—I cut out some of the thing at the funeral if you remember.

SL: Yes.

FB: When she was talking, that was out of the—her life story. I think I just remembered that I got my—I'll go look for both of those.

SL: Okay.

FB: Good.

SL: That sounds good.

FB: Thank all of you.

TM: Thank you.

FB: Thank you.

SL: Thanks to you, Coach. It's been a great couple of days for me.

FB: Oh yeah, it was great. I enjoyed it. And I—my grandchildren and all, will be proud to have a copy, too . . .

SL: Good.

FB: . . . that would be wonderful.

[2:00:47 End of interview]

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