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ORAL HISTORY

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ORAL INTERVIEW WITH COACH STEWART WAY

Grebe: We're interviewing Coach Stewart Way who is presently assistant coach at Marshall University and has been associated with Marshall for the past eight years as either assistant coach or head coach. Before coming to Marshall he was at Huntington High School for 21 years as Head Basketball Coach, seven years at Madison High School as Head Basketball Coach and two years at Ceredo-Kenova High School as Head Basketball Coach. Coach Way lives at 1543 Washington Blvd. here in Huntington, W. Va. My name is Mike Grebe and this is May 1, 1973.

Coach Way, going back to your high school coaching days, I think your first coaching position was at Ceredo-Kenova. What can you tell us about that?

Way: Well, Mr. Grebe at the time I was employed as uh assistant basketball coach and assistant football coach and I remained there for two years in 1935 and uh 1936. Then I left there to go to Madison High School, Scott High School in Madison, West Virginia as head football coach and head basketball coach.

Grebe: Coach, do you remember in 1935 when you started at Ceredo-Kenova, do you remember what your salary was then?

Way: \$1,250 dollars per year.

Grebe: \$1,250 per year?

Way: That's right.

(From here throughout the paper Grebe will be designated as G and Way will be represented as W.)

- G: At Madison what other sports did you coach besides basketball?
- W: The only two sports they had were football and basketball, and uh, and I was the head coach and uh only coach in both football and basketball. No assistants. And the salary was \$1,485 dollars per year.
- G: After that you left and you went to Huntington High and started your long and great career there. Uh, you were at Huntington High for twenty-one years. Besides basketball, what else did you coach.
- W: I coached football. I coached the backs for several years and then I coached the line for several years. All told it was sixteen years of football coaching at Huntington High School.
- G: Coach what, uh, when you were at Huntington High, of course I know you won a couple of state championships. What were your greatest teams while you were there?
- W: Well, I would say the most outstanding teams we had at Huntington High School were the uh, uh, in 47, and uh, 59 and uh, uh, 55, of course when we had Leo Byrd and then the year that, uh, our associate, or our assistant graduate coach at the present time, Gerald Martin played. This, this was in the period of the sixties, and uh all the teams were, well there were several teams in that period because I had real fine young men.
- G: I've heard you several times talk about the team Coach Martin played on, and you'll sort of had a unfortunate experience down at Logan. Can you tell us about that?
- W: Ha! Well we had, we had many unfortunate experiences, but Logan that particular year had a real real fine ball club and they had only lost one game and that was to us by twelve points. And, uh, we played in the regional at uh Logan, and uh, lost after the game was actually over by a young man that later came to Marshall and I had the opportunity to be associated with and help coach Jim Davidson, shot a couple of foul shots after the game was, was already over. Uh, uh, I would say that was very disappointing uh situation because we uh did have a very

outstanding team in my estimation and in the estimation of many throughout the state, the very best team that there was in the state, because Logan went on then and won the state championship without too much uh difficulty. However, to go back a little we were ranked in 1959. We were ranked as the number one team in the state by the U.P. and uh, the Associated Press. And we lost out in the State Tournament finals, and then the following year we won the state tournament, which was 1960, with real good athletes which went on to become outstanding players, *especially Ricky Ray at West Virginia and was an outstanding player* at the University. And so, we, we've had a lot of disappointments, disappointments in coaching, and uh a lot of them have been very satisfying and I would say the plus side is the satisfying side Coach Grebe.

G: Uh, Coach, you, you of course, were in high school for thirty years. Do you have any certain players that stick out in your mind, you know, maybe one or two who were favorites for one reason or the other?

W: Well, we had a lot of real fine young men, and uh, it seemed, we seemed to always that we were fortunate, very fortunate to have a lot of good fast break men. And most of them, I'm happy to say were on the All-State teams beginning with people like Jerry Roy who went to Kansas State, and uh, uh, Ricky Ray who went to West Virginia University, who was a outstanding player there. And, of course, Leo Byrd who came to Marshall and to the uh, uh, Helms, bona fide All-American from Marshall University and hold the single season scoring record here at Marshall. And, uh, many other that were, Bob Bias who is now the tennis pro, and outstanding tennis player. He was one of our fast break men. We, we've had a lot of real good fast break, fast break folks, Corky Layman. But we also had other people that did a good job as far as for rebounding was concerned. We were never blessed with, with what you would classify as a great big man. Gerald Martin, whom, who, I mentioned a moment ago as being uh graduate assistant along here with you, Coach Grebe. Gerald Martin

was a outstanding performer at, at defensively he played forward and did a lot rebounding for us. But offensively, he played guard and was a real good outside shooter and good driver and exceptionally^{o-ss} feeder.

G: Coach, after being in high school for thirty years you suddenly decided to move over to Marshall as a assistant coach. What prompted this move?

W: Well I think primarily Coach Grebe, it was a matter of teaching^y up, five classes of Social Problems, and uh, with the average load being forty-eight pupils in each class, uh plus the fact, that uh. uh. Coach Ellis Johnson was here at that time and he wanted, had two definite purposes in mind, uh, in talking with me, at least, these are the two things he wanted me to do was work on the defense and make a center out of uh a young man from up in Michigan named Bob Allen. And it was some, somewhat of a challenge. I don't, I don't know that I was so uh, so uh, thrilled and anxious to get uh, on the college level as I was, I, I, had gotten reached a point where I didn't care for those five senior social problem classes, with a load of forty-eight students in each class.

G: Coach, when you came here you were a assistant under Coach Ellis Johnson for two years. Is that correct?

W: Three years!

G: Three years. And then you took over as uh, ----

W: Acting Head Coach then, the fourth year. And then head coach the fifth year, and then then became the associate coach. and now serving as the assistant coach to Coach Bob Daniels.

G: Uh, what was the prompted move of Ellis Johnson as head coach, and why were you just named as acting coach instead of immediately being named head coach?

W: Well, that was during the days of the Mid-American Conference investigation you might call it, and uh, in that particular period the entire, uh, program was investigated, football, and basketball, and uh, so the job came open and the President asked me if I would serve as acting coach. Uh, for that particular year, that, uh, Coach Johnson was, was re-released.

G: Uh, after that you, uh, served one year as acting coach and was then named----

W: Head Coach, that's right. And then after becoming head coach, why I chose, after being in it as long as I had been, and for what I felt was the benefit of of the University, plus the fact that I felt the program was, was on a very good foundation, we, we had a fine group of young men, and I felt that perhaps it would be better for the overall picture of the basketball program and Marshall University, if we had uh, someone that that was younger, and I had brought in a younger man the year before with the idea, that he would be able to take over and keep the program moving as I, I hoped that it would and for that matter has, so that I requested from Dr. Barker and Mr. McMullen that uh, I be given the job as associate coach.

G: Coach, uh, of course you've been here eight years now, as somebody pointed out to me the other day, that Marshall has had with the people here a great reputation in basketball, but the man that told me, said that it didn't start until you got here. He said that in the eight years you've been here they've had four post season tournament bids. And he attributed a lot of this to you.

W: Well, I think that's, Ha! I don't think that's exactly right because the greatest, the greatest days of Marshall were, of course, under Cam Henderson when Cam Henderson was coaching here at Marshall University, I, of course, was coaching at Huntington High School. And we practiced either before or after Marshall practiced and I had, had

a great opportunity there in listening to the coaching and philosophy of Coach Henderson and watching his practice and having uh, my young men watch his practices and we learned a great deal from that experience. Uh, although, at that time, uh, they were a smaller college situation. The scheduling was long and argueous, they didn't play as many major teams and they weren't invited to as many tournaments and so forth on a national scale as we've been recently. But, the, when Coach Johnson came in and they asked me to become his assistant, he had been here at that time, this was his third year and he felt that there was a need for someone to come in and assist, the only assistant he had was a graduate assistant, and consequently we began to I suppose, work a little harder, and there were a lot of fine young men here. And they worked hard, and through their efforts, we were able to get the invitation the first year I was here to the N.I.T. And then the second year I was here we got another invitation to the N.I.T. , and then, of course, by a lot of hard work of the part of the fans, faculty, and the student body and the basketball program, we got some very fine recruits and constructed the foundation for the team that represented us in the NCAA, and of course, we had the residue left over this year which Coach Daniels and yourself, Coach Grebe, Coach Martin, Coach Robinette. Everyone worked together and produced a team which represented Marshall University in the NIT this year.

G: Coach, uh, going back to Cam Henderson, of course, I've heard a lot about him and some people say he is the man who originated fast break basketball. But what can you tell us about Cam Henderson the man?, your impressions of him?

W: Well, well, Coach Henderson had, had a great philosophy and , uh, that particular time in history, there wasn't

a, history of basketball, there wasn't that, that many individuals that were outstanding, that had their own definite idea, and pattern of play. Coach Henderson used a zone defense entirely. There wasn't any such thing as man to man defense except by his opposition. As far as his playing it, though behind by many points at the end of the game, he would stick to that zone defense and they would trap a little bit more but they would never use any zone trap, as it is known today or was known in the 40's for that matter. But, he, uh, uh, would two time them a little bit more in offensive and of the court in and attempt to get the ball but, there wasn't any such thing as picking them up all over the court, or full pressure defense at all. And basically his defense was his offense because he aligned his defensive men in the position of either a 2-3 type of zone, or a 3-2 type of zone in order to get the fast break. And it was based on a three lane fast break where he really spread them out and he always had a good fast break man and a good man coming down there and filling the right lane, and a good man coming down the left side, that was generally a left hander, or a right hander that he converted into a left hander. And uh, this was an innovation as far as basketball was concerned and consequently he took advantage of a lot of teams that they played because they had never seen the zone used as, uh, offensive weapon. Uh, and uh, not just as a adjustment defense as most people use it now. And so with the fast break, uh, Cam was outstanding and uh, probably at that time in history of basketball, he was one of the uh, five or six real outstanding coaches along with Poog Allen, and uh, uh, Dr. Meanwell at Wisconsin and folks of that description. Of course Adolph Rupp would have to be in there too as he was just beginning down in the southwest, uh conference, and and that made Cam receive a lot of national publicity because of the fact that there weren't that many outstanding

basketball coaches. Basketball was a game in which you could innovate and there was a lot of chances to make changes and alterations and almost anything you came up with could be a new idea. At the present time, uh, the, the coaches are so well versed in the game and, and there are so many different facilities to practice, for the young men to practice in, so many different avenues of learning through the news media, television and so forth that the day of the innovation in the basketball world, or the coming up with something real new to me is just about past, except that you're maybe able to take care of them a little bit more in the period of transition of the going from the offense to the defense, ah, that's the only place that I can see that you're really going to bring about any imaginative ideas in basketball. The rest of it depends upon bench strategy and uh, your psychology, and of course, today about 90% of it is psychology and the rest of it is your ability to get the maximum from the individuals which you have participating for you.

G: Coach, let's go back to your, to your childhood. What can you tell us about your mother and father, brothers and sisters?

W: I have two brothers and they both played football and basketball although they weren't large in stature, though they both participated. And having lived in Ceredo-Kenova and having gone to Ceredo-Kenova High School That was, that was mandatory. If your were male, you had to go out for football and basketball. If you were eliminated, it's so you were eliminated. But in most incidents you were not eliminated. Its always been a very fine town for high school athletics and uh, of course, both my folks were interested in athletics. My father, while I was in high school did not miss a football game in ~~h~~ the four years that I was on the squad and participating and he did not miss but two basketball games, while I was participating in at Ceredo-Kenova High School. And that was true of most the parents, and is still true

of most the parents that, that live in the two communities of Ceredo-Kenova that make up Ceredo-Kenova High School. And consequently, they have outstanding uh, athletics, the program is real, a real good program under Coach Ward and Coach Craycraft, and it will always, in my opinion, continue to be so because of the tradition that they have there for good athletics.

In the eighth grade I decided that I was going to become a high school coach, because I liked the high school coach that we had there at that time, and I just pointed in that direction. The Coach at that time was Tom Dandalle who later became the basketball and football coach here at Marshall University. He was from Fairball, Minnesota and had played, and did play pro football with the Ironston Tanks which was one of the original pro professional football teams. And he'd play on Sundays and work with us youngsters at Ceredo-Kenova on basketball and football during the week and taught mathematics and he was uh, a great person and a great teacher. And I, I said to myself, if I can be a athletic coach and be anything like Tom Dandalle, why I uh, uh, my life objective will be fulfilled and I set out to do. And I remember that recall that began in the eighth grade. So, I went on from there to Georgetown and had the chance thereto play against Coach Dandalle's team, when, when he was coaching here at Marshall. They defeated us 7-0, but we gave them a real good game and on there wasn't any such thing as a moral victory. That's like kissing your sister, you know, Coach Grebe. But at any rate, why, uh, Georgetown playing uh Marshall, and playing uh them to that close of game, we felt that we had done real well. And we played some real fine teams and had had some good football teams at Georgetown, and uh, it was my intent to play uh football and coach football. and uh, fact of the matter is the only reason I went our football at Kenova for, was just because every every kid, uh, male had to go out. And uh, when he went

out, he would either be cut off or kept and we, we were short on talent so I was kept, I guess, more or less, to be, be kept in shape to play football. And then when I went to Georgetown College, why, I went with the idea of playing football, and did play football. I went out for basketball, the uh, uh, basketball squad was a little thin as far as guards were concerned. They only had one guard, a young man, well he was young then, uh, Harry Lancaster who is now the Athletic Director at the University of Kentucky. And, and Harry and I seemed to work out pretty well together, so I got a chance to play basketball at Georgetown, so I played a guard with Harry, and we had a good time and really enjoyed it and I learned a lot about basketball and the fundamentals of basketball, but I, when I got out and started coaching my first thought was to apply for a head football coaching job, which I did and was very much interested in football, and uh, loved to coach it. And but after being in it after 23 or 24 years, why uh, those, uh October and November nights got pretty cold you know, so I, I decided it would be smart for me to get in on the inside and so I started coaching basketball and basketball only.

G: Uh, Coach when you were talking about being at Georgetown, what do you remember about the way you all traveled to games. You know, the transportation and the type of games then.

W: Well, we well we, rode in that particular time, we played Cincinnati, Ohio University, St. Xavier and Louisville and teams, teams of that caliber, Western Kentucky, and we traveled in a couple of, I guess you would have to call them limousines, but they were owned, they were owned by the taxi cab company there in Georgetown and and anytime they had a funeral or a wedding or a athletic contest, I don't mean to say that there is any relation there, but uh, uh any rate we, we would rent these two large limousines, limousines and we'd take off in these limousines. Big, black jobs you know, and in some cases

all we needed coming back was the hearse in front of us. But in lots of cases we came back without the, any need for any hearse at all because we, we represented Georgetown during that particular period very well.

G: Coach, did you meet your uh, wife at Georgetown, or how did you meet her?

W: No, when I went to coach at Madison Scott High School in Madison, why, she was working in a dental office, as a dental assistant, you know, cleaning teeth and all that bit, and uh, it just happened that when I got off for lunch, she was off for lunch and we happened to eat lunch at the only place in town there is, was to eat lunch at that time, uh the Drug Store you know. And uh, she, uh attracted me and uh, and uh, I don't think I did her because I offered her a ticket to a football game. And in fact, I sent her a free pass, a uh, season pass to our football games and she sent word back that she wasn't interested in seeing my team play, or for that matter seeing any team play where I was involved and from that, I don't know she got, uh, uh, seemed to lose her vision a little bit, it dropped from 20-20 down a little bit, and somehow or other we got together and she became very much interested in athletics. In fact of the matter is I suspect that she's a much better coach than I, uh had a great knowledge of talent and uh, sometimes Coach Grebe, why she may know a lot more about it than I, so when I had to cut my eldest son from the varsity squad when he was trying out at Huntington High School she felt she knew enough to know that he had no business being out from the squad. In fact, she was just about ready to cut me off too, you know. Ha Ha. But it uh, it did work out very well because he got to play and our younger son got to play some. It was not, not uh, that they haven't been stars but they have participated and belonged and been a part of and that's been the important thing. They get to be a

part of something, and uh, they are interested and dedicated and they gain a lot not only from the standpoint of maturity, but they gain a lot from the standpoint of the friends that they make, the associates that they come in contact with throughout the state and throughout the tri-state, throughout the various collegiate areas that their particular teams play in. And the, there is nothing better than that because you can always reminisce you know, and go back and say, why I have a friend that lives in Louisville, Kentucky because uh, he and I played together in college, or played against each other or uh, uh, there's a tie there that's always binding. And this is the one thing about athletics that a lot of people seem to over-look that seems are life-lasting and and are certainly very, very beneficial and I don't know where else you could find anything that's any closer uh, of a tie than your participation in athletics.

G: Coach, what do you, of course, remember about your mother and father and your childhood. Did your mother and father both work? Or did just your father and what did he do?

W: Well, my father was in the lumber business, eh in Kenova but in reality he was a farmer. He came from a farm in Gulba, Illinois and uh, got into the lumber business and came to Virginia because of the hardwoods, the white and red oak and maple and they began to produce flooring which was a very important product then. You didn't have as many plastic and concrete and various types of floors as they have at the present time. Your house just wasn't much of a house if it didn't have hardwood floors you see. So he got into the flooring business but he still farmed quite a bit around and about the lumber mill. In fact, Coach Grebe, at one time he had a, he had fifty-four head of big bone, Pole and China Hogs. His lawyer had given him one sow, you know, and she had a litter of 15, and he just kept on and kept on.

He wouldn't be uh, become so closely attached to the animals that he wouldn't get rid of them. Then he got into the registered Jersey business as far as cattle are concerned. He was just always a farmer at heart, but he eh, made his living on the lumber, lumber business. And my mother had been a nurse at St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago, and my father met her because his mother was in the hospital there at St. Luke's. She had come from Scotland, come from Edenburg Scotland, when she was eighteen years of age, and had come over here and became a uh head nurse at St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago. And uh, she never did work other than just help people in the area of nursing or sickness, or anything of that nature. Unfortunately she, uh passed away when I was fifteen and uh, then my father, uh, he remarried but uh, it was eight or nine years after my mother's death that he remarried. My sister and my two brothers remained at home with my father and the housekeeper and uh, I and my sister went to school in Glen Ellen Illinois which was a suburb of Chicago, with my father's sister, our aunt, took, took her so she could go to school there and give her uh, a little bit of the mother's care which was essential. She now lives in Harrisburg, Virginia and she has a couple of youngsters, one is a Presbyterian minister, the young man, and the daughter is a graduate of Converse. And I think uh, well I don't think, I know she is married now to a young man that, that is working in the area of selling hospital supplies, and so forth.

G: Coach, going back to your high school career, who were some of the people you played against who might be familiar names to us. And was there any games in high school that really stick out in your mind?

W: Well yes, there was always, it was always a great game when Ceredo-Kenova, at that time there wasn't any classification like they have now, you know, there was just

everyone in the same position. There wasn't any A class, B class, or double A class or triple A class or anything of that nature. And it was always a great game when Ceredo-Kenova got together with the Ashland Tomcats, or when Ceredo-Kenova played the Huntington Pony Express. And at that time there wasn't any Huntington East, so that when you played when Ceredo-Kenova played Huntington High School that meant they were playing the entire city. And a lot of the individuals who are still around here like Dr. Kincaid, uh, Hunter Kincaid, a uh dentist here in town was a very outstanding athlete at Huntington High School and Raymond McCoy that was a track coach, one of the outstanding track coaches in uh West Virginia. Raymond McCoy was playing for Huntington High School at that time, and uh Wilbur Sortet who uh, worked at Inco and is now retired and played, played end for the Pittsburgh Steelers, he was the end for Huntington High School. And the captain, I, I recall was the first year, the year I was a sophomore, and the first game that I started happened to be the first game that we played was against Huntington High School. I started at full back and the uh, our coach had the habit of appointing co-captains even back then so I had the opportunity to shake hands with the Huntington High captain. The Huntington High captain, played center for them and his name was Ben Schalwatzner. And Ben Schalwatzner has become a pretty big name in the football coaching ranks because he's been very successful at Syracuse, as you know, and he's had some great, great backs up there-uh, Conska who is playing at the present time, Jim Brown who played for the Cleveland Browns and uh Ben, Ben has been an outstanding personality in the football coaching world, and was a, uh, good football player. However, that day we had the pleasure of putting it on them 19-0 so that has to be a very memorable occasion and uh in the realm of high school football, although we were uh, always classified

as being in the upper three or four in the state in football. Not because because of the material necessarily, but we had a great coach, Coach Tom Dandale, and in basketball, Coach Tom Dandalle was there at Ceredo-Kenova High School seven years. And out of seven years, six of the years we participated in the state tournament in basketball, and uh, we didn't have, we would get down into the finals and semi-finals but we never could really get to uh, win, win the championship. However, we uh, had great times and we represented our community and uh, uh, made a lot of friends throughout the tri-state area. With the Ashland Tomcats we had lots of good battles and we so won some and they won some but I would say that just off hand, I haven't looked at the records, but just a little bit up on us. Because they did have tremendous teams then and tremendous coaching and uh, and uh, really were very enthusiastic that the years. 1928 they won the national championship in basketball and Coach Anderson down there and great players one of which was Coach Ellis Johnson. He was a great athlete, a great football player and a great basketball player. And not only was he a All-American in high school, but also gained All-American recognition at the University of Kentucky. So uh, so truthfully, my my experience in coaching has been involved uh, closely tied in with Kentucky and West Virginia. Because actually, Coach Grebe, I know you, you are a uh great great Blue Grass man and being from Louisville and everything, but I lived in the last house in West Virginia before you get to the Big Sandy River. So I didn't have too far to go or I would have been a Kentuckian too.

G: Coach what was the first time you remember seeing a Marshall team play and uh, where were they playing the games then?

W: The, the first game I recall seeing Marshall play, involved a young man from Ceredo-Kenova and that, that

was really why I came to see them play. Any they played in the old girls' gymnasium, that's on campus now, and uh, uh, we call it the old girls's gymnasium. At that time, why it was a fine, fine facility to play basketball in and uh Ceredo uh, Marshall was uh playing as never I can recall Salem College. And uh, that would be in 19 and 23. And that's quite a while ago, uh, that's when you were an the sands of time. Ha. And uh, but any way, Coach Grebe, why the game as I recall was real close, it was 21 to 20 or something of that nature. Now, now that sounds kind of ridiculous, but let's go back a little bit. When I was a senior in high school in 19 and 29 we, we were playing uh against Huntington High School in the finals of the regional in an over-time 21 to 20. So back then you see, it wasn't a matter, a lot of people way, it was a matter of defense, well, it wasn't a matter of defense, it was just a matter of lack of offense. Now you didn't have every place in the world to, to, to practice shooting you see, you uh, uh, didn't have television that you could watch these excellent players play and there just weren't that many places that you could go out and practice. When a young, young man now could go, uh, out on a drive, uh drive way or just out in the park or any number of places and find a back board, we had backboards up on the garage but usually they had barrel hoops up you know, and or you would take a coat hanger and make a hoop out of it and play, shoot a rag ball or uh some type of ball that you could find. They, they just didn't practice you see, and the knowledge as far as the coach, uh uh of the junior high or the grade school, you just didn't have, you had history teachers, or no reflection on history teachers, but biology teachers or chemistry teachers or somebody that just happened to be interested in young people, and the advancement of young people, and therefore they would say I'll give my time, and try to help this individual to become, a uh, basketball player or football player, and that was, that was t way. There just wasn't that

much equipment or facilities in order to improve upon your talents and skills which you may had. So uh, we used to, when they schocked the corn in the fall, you know, put it up in schocks around Halloween time when we'd practice blocking and cross body blocking and cut off blocking and should blocking and all that. We'd practice on those schocks. When they'd set up the corn schocks, why, uh instead of getting out there and trying to shoot the mice and rats, why we, we'd put our cardboard shoulder pads on, which they really were just with a little thin piece of leather over the top of them, and no cant lever and all that business like they have now, and we'd go out there and bust them you see, uh, to get our practice as far as blocking was concerned, positioning, cross body and all that business.

G: What about football, of course, I think they used to play right out there in front of the girls' gym. Did you ever see a game out there?

W: The game I mentioned a minute ago where, where Coach Schwaltzer was playing center and we beat them 19-0 was on that field. It, its at the present time the girls' intramural field or the uh, uh, I guess its called the softball dizmond, where they play softball now. And that's exactly where it was played. We, we didn't play it at Fairfield until the following year. They opened Fairfield stadium then, and we played at Fairfield, and uh played Huntington High School and that particular game was 7-7. Uh, we weren't fortunate enough to defeat them. That was two years later, rather than one year later, it was two years later they opened Fairfield. We went to Fairfield and played, played there the first year against Huntington High School and it was 7-7. The next year we played there at Fairfield against Huntington High School it was nothing to nothing. If you'll notice now we've played three straight years, Ceredo-Kenova played three straight years against Huntington High School, uh, at Huntington. You

see, uh, they would not come to Ceredo-Kenova. That was out of the question, you see. It's its a whole lot like like Marshall University at the present time. We can go to Marquette and play Marquette all we want to. We can go to Kansas and play Kansas all we want to but, we're not going to get Kansas in here so our fans can see us play them. And uh, we're not going to get Marquette in here so our fans can see us play Marquette you see. Oh, I think they would come, if we would come up with fifty thousand dollars so something like that you know, but that's not going to happen. But, but we can get a lot of good big teams, we can play big teams as long as we play at their place. Well, that's exactly the situation then was then Coach. We could play Huntington High every year, which we did, they had to play at Huntington, not at Ceredo-Kenova.

G: Coach, I, I've seen some pictures of your teams when you were coaching in high school. I notice the crowds down in the fieldhouse. Were the crowds a lot larger possibly at one time in high school basketball here then? And what's the explanation for that?

W: Well, I'll, I'll tell you one, one thing. When I started at Huntington High School coaching, we played on Saturday night and we scheduled all of our games on Saturday night and Coach Henderson was here at Marshall, and, and for some reason or another he liked to play on Tuesday and Friday's. And uh, uh, for some unknown reason why, they had good good crowds on Tuesday's and Friday's, but they didn't seem to get the crowds that you got on Saturday's you see though. So, uh, uh, you see, we played teams on Saturday, Saturday night like Wheeling, and Charleston and Logan and Williamson and Princeton and uh teams that descrip-uh, Weirtown and teams of that description, Parkersburg. And they'd come in and we, we'd fill uh, the Fieldhouse on Saturday night you see. Uh, we played a lot of teams like upper Arlington when Jack Nickalus was playing at upper Arlington. We

played upp Arlington, we played Columbus East, Columbus South, Columbus West, we played Dayton St. Veers, and we played a lot of teams where we had to travel and uh, uh we had good good crowds. Uh, then Cam observing this, he said well, the thing to do is schedule Marshall games on Saturday nights, so he began to play on Saturday nights, and uh, the crowds got to the point where they couldn't fill the demand for the the uh tickets for the Marshall games you see on Saturday night so then, uh, we, we the high school had to go back to playing on Friday and Tuesday.

G: Coach, uh going back a little bit on Marshall now, what do you remember, of course, about the Mid-American Conference, the scandal and the dropping? What things do you remember about that?

W: Well, of course, uh, I, I uh had a lot of real good friends and still classify them as friends and uh, I always felt it was mutal with people like uh Tates Locke and Mr. Schorer the uh president, athletic director at Miami. I don't think there's anyone closer and more dedicated and interested in the athletics than Bill Rohr, the athletic director at Ohio University. Jim Snyder and I have, are great friends and a lot of them connected with all the schools, we, we were real great friends and I always felt it was mutual. However, we were competing in, in a situation where you had basically Ohio schools, one school form Michigan, of course, and one school from West Virginia. And we were never able to show the facilities or hold , hold the meet, the spring track meet here. So facility wise we just did not enhance the image of the Mid American Conference. Uh, personality wise, talent wise, we could od very well where we were i n sports such as gold, uh basketball where you didn't have to have so many individuals. Football, uh, it takes many more individuals you see,

and they would have walk ons at Ohio University or Miami or Kent for that matter, or Toledo or any of those schools to compete with our individuals which we were scholarshiping you see. So I'm not bitter, have never been bitter towards the Mid-American Conference. I recognize that they had a point and I recognize that we had a point. I think, we, we were looked upon as sort, sort of a door, doormat and they, they liked to compete against us in some, some sports and in some sports where we were pretty much on an equal kee, like in basketball, they weren't too anxious to do that you see. But nevertheless, I do feel that we did not, as a university, we did not enhance the image of the Mid-American Conference, uh, facility wise. And uh, this in itself made them constantly aware of looking, looking for some way to bring about our default, or bring about our demise, or our membership, as far as being members of the Mid-American Conference. And their hopes were, of course, I think, that they could get larger people or people like the University of Cincinnati or Bull State or some of those schools that could financially compete with them and offer the image that they wanted for the Mid-American Conference and uh, rid themselves of us, and uh, and uh, uh, get the people in there that had the financial backing. Well, this didn't turn out exactly like they hoped it had, I'm certain of that. Now I don't know that it turned out so badly for us. Personally, I feel that, that we benefited to a large degree by being an independent. And I think unless we can get into a strong, sound, uh, conference that's going to enhance our image, then, I don't think we should do anything but follow the same course that we are on and that is be a representative, independent uh, uh, university in uh, inter-collegiate athletics.

G: Coach, uh, one other thing I wanted to ask you about

was the airplane crash. Of course, its always going to be uh, but since this is being recorded for time, and might be heard 15 or 20 years from now, what do you remember about the airplane crash and your feelings and reaction when you heard about it?

W: Well we had just started basketball at that time and, of course, that was the situation where I was, had just become the Head Coach. Uh, uh, the friends that I lost and the coaches that were on that, ill, ill-fated plane and the young men, uh, there's no way that I can in words, can express my true feelings. This had a lot to do, a lot to do with my decision to ask to become associate coach. Because of uh, some of the people that were on that plane. Dr. Proctor, uh, Mike Visteria, Happy Heath, Dr. Ray Hagley, who incidently Ray Hagley was one of my fast break men at Huntington High School, a very fine basketballplayer and a very fine person. But, these, these individuals they uh, were the back bone of our Big Green structure. And uh, not only from the financial point, but the fact that they gave of their time, their effort and were dedicated individuals, who would travel anywhere, at any time to fulfill any endeavor that Marshall University was attempting. There were many others, Dr. Chambers, uh almost all of them, in fact, who were lost were dedicated Marshall individuals all the way. They, they didn't draw the line anywhere. They would do anything at any time to assist in the proper up-lifting of this University on any level, not just athletics. The coaching staff was a great coaching staff, great young men, Frank Lowry, and uh, uh, Sorty Moss. Of course, Ricky Tally, all of them were great, great people. And the players, well they, they were just superb. They were comparable to the group we've had in basketball here for the last two or three years. They were that type of people, they were class. In other words, Shobridge, and those individuals, uh, Sanders, uh, uh, they were

people like, like our Bill James and Mike D'Antoni and Ty Collins and Randy Noll, and uh Orsini and Barry Driscoll and uh people of that sort you know., Jo Jo Hickman. They had real class and were real fine young men. And when you lose that many in one, one second or two seconds in the history of Marshall University, it's really difficult to overcome. Uh, I uh, unfortunately, uh, or fortunately, I guess you would have to say, we had started basketball practice on, I, didn't, didn't go on the trip and generally I traveled with that group and we traveled before to various football games. But since we had started basketball practice, why we were having practice that afternoon and I was painting a ceiling at the house when Lowell Cade at the Huntington Publishing Company called and asked what type of plane our folks were on, and mentioned the, the name of the the plane, and I said I'm not sure they went on that plane; because that type of plane, or that company's plane because we had, had never used that, that company's plane. Uh, and I certainly hope it isn't true when he told me that one was down and looked like all were lost. Well uh, immediately after Ernie Salvatore and said said he felt it would be a good idea to get to Marshall as soon as I could. I came up here to the offices and there were two people here at the offices when I arrived. Of course there were all kinds of telephone calls coming in and many from the parents wanting to know what they heard, what they had heard on the radio also. So it was a very hectic, hectic night and uh it's been hectic ever since as far as I personally am concerned.

G: Coach, one last question before we stop. Is Marshall at one time was put on probation by the NCAA for recruiting violations. What do you remember on this.

W: Well that was for football. That was on, on, a recruiting

violations in football, not recruiting violations in basketball. Uh, that, uh was brought about primarily because of the over enthusiasm of, of many of our fans. They wanted to jump from the, they wanted to jump from the Ha caliber of football that, that we could afford upto the champagne type you know. In other words from beer to champagne. In other words they wanted to go to champagne right now. Well, when that happens and and you get somebody to come in that's been in the pro ranks he's going to set it up on the pro ranks in his recruiting you see. So he's going to just have try out camp and have people come in and try out and run the forty yard dash and if they can do it in such and such he's going to say well, you're the guy for us you see. So that, that, that was the case I think where several of our fans, and we had enough of them at that time, that were no longer satisfied with the blowing the head off a mug of beer. They wanted to, to get up in the champagne you see, and uh, consequently they, they put pressure and force on the administration and uh, uh of the university and the administration of the athletic department to get out and get the job done and get that pro team in here and get rolling.

G: Okay Coach, we appreciate it very much you taking time to speak with us and I'm sure that it's very much appreciated by Dr. Galgano and the History Department.

W: Thank you very much Coach, I want to say that anything that I could ever do to assist you in any way and at any time, Coach Grebe, in any capacity which you may be in, I, I uh, will do my utmost to uh, uh assist you and help you, and uh, because I know that you're a very deserving, and as for Marshall University I personally feel that I've given what I can give and if there's ever any time I can give any more, or if I can continue to give, I'll do that too.

G: Thank you Coach!