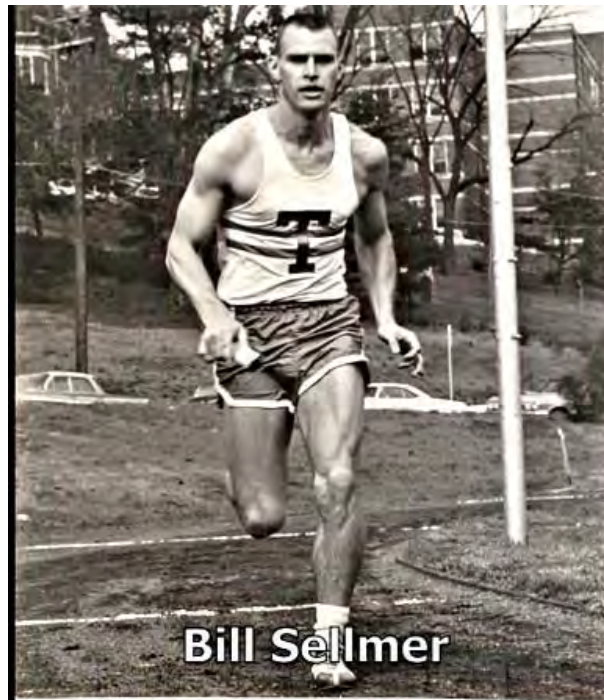


**INTERVIEW WITH BILL SELLMER
CONDUCTED BY TOM SCOTT
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2013
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

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TS: We're talking to Bill Sellmer. As an opening question, why don't you talk about how you got recruited to the University of Tennessee? If I remember correctly, you were in Atlanta, maybe Southwest High School.

BS: Right.

TS: You were a fabulous quarter miler in high school. It seems like you were running like 48 seconds or something like that.

BS: Actually, 47.3.

TS: Wow! That's really remarkable! So, I'm sure you got other scholarship offers. I guess this would have been the spring of 1962 that you were being recruited

BS: Right.

TS: So, why don't you talk about how you got to the University of Tennessee?

BS: I was very fortunate to have an excellent track coach in high school by the name of Ed Newby, who was a football player and track man at Auburn University [1951-55]. Ed came to Southwest High about a year before I did. I was in the 8th grade in 1957. Before I say this, Dave Storey came his senior year, coming up from Columbus High School in Columbus, Georgia, in the year of 1961 and 1962 for cross country and spring track. Over the course of the five years that I was at high school, 8th through the 12th grade—there weren't any junior highs back then—Coach Newby developed an outstanding track program, and we won everything every place we went. Now, we have to remember that this was still in the period of segregation. We were in one of the last classes of segregation. I don't think the high schools were integrated the next year, but it started the next year.

TS: I guess you were Fulton County rather than Atlanta public schools, and it does seem it took them a little longer to start desegregating.

BS: No, it was the same. Fulton County and Atlanta both were the same. Ed Scarborough was the city/county athletic director. We had two facilities where we ran our meets. Football was the same: Grady High School and also Cheney Stadium. Anyway, I was real fortunate to have Ed Newby as a coach. I was gifted and fast, and he built some skills on top of that. I was real fortunate. By the time I was a senior I had won the state championship three times and broken my own record twice in the quarter mile.

TS: Yes, I would think at 47.3 there wasn't anybody anywhere near you back then in high school.

BS: I was like 13th in the country. There were some kids in Texas and California, I think, and another one up in Oregon or someplace who was running. But the kids in Texas and California were ahead of me. There was a guy that was running 46.8 or something like that. There were a lot in about that same time. I wasn't even considering Tennessee. I had known two guys that went to Tennessee that were a couple of classes ahead of me, Gerry Purdy being one of them from Northside High, a javelin thrower, and another guy that threw the shot and discus that you probably remember that came from Georgia Military Academy. They said they really liked the school, but there wasn't much of a track program, so I disregarded it completely.

TS: No, it was awful before Coach Rohe arrived.

BS: So, I went into my senior year looking at Auburn, because my coach was from there, and Wilbur Hutsell [head coach, 1921-1963] and Mel Rosen were coaching. Mel was the assistant coach at the time [head coach 1963-1991]. I had been approached when I was actually a freshman from [Forrest] “Spec” Towns at the University of Georgia [head track coach, 1942-1975]. He said, “When you graduate, we’ve got a spot for you here at Georgia.” He didn’t mention it again. Of course, I didn’t know recruiting rules or anything else like that as a high school kid. Georgia Tech was interested. That spring I got offers, actually, from eleven schools. I was really fortunate. Coach Bear Bryant from Alabama made an offer—wrote me a letter. I kept that letter for a long time.

TS: Bryant wrote the letter? Did he want you for football as well as track?

BS: No, he said he wanted to start a track program, and he was trying to get some kids to come into it. I think he was just trying to get me, thinking someone would pick me up as a wide receiver as well. I’m sure that that was what he had his intentions on. But I had played football through my 9th grade year, and in my 9th grade year, they made a bunch of us young 9th graders varsity. We were an exceptionally talented class of kids. It wasn’t only Bill Sellmer, but I can name a half a dozen guys that were all big for the 9th grade and really talented. Marcus Baisler, who went to Florida on a football scholarship as a running back; Larry Haney who went to Auburn as a defensive end on a football scholarship; and so on. We had out of our graduating class eleven kids get full scholarships for athletics.

TS: That’s remarkable!

BS: It is for a graduating class of about 203 kids. Dave Storey and I were two of those. What happened was, as the spring went on and offers came in, I just set the letters aside; and the coach was responding, saying, “He wants to finish this year and consider things.” Back then, people didn’t make decisions like you do now before even you compete your senior year. But back then you waited until it was all over. The final meet of the year—the state championships at the University of Georgia—on May 21 or 23, whatever that Saturday was, Melvin Maxwell was running for Cairo, Georgia, who would be a teammate at the University of Tennessee in the single A classification. We were in the AAA, and then there was also a AAAA classification for the schools. Melvin won the mile in 4:17, barefooted, in 105 degrees air temperature that day. Can you imagine?

TS: No, I can’t.

BS: We had a quick thunderstorm in the middle of the day, and when it cleared, steam came off the track it was so hot. But Melvin didn't have enough money for shoes, and he ended up winning. I'm delighted that he ended up going to Tennessee. A great guy! I had a very good day. I ran four events and won all four of them. I ran on the 440 relay, the quarter, the 220, and the mile relay. I shouldn't have won the 220. I don't know what happened. I think it was a God thing. I was so wiped out after running the quarter—it was so hot—that I could hardly hear. I can remember backing into the blocks and asking God to help me get through this 220 yard dash. I had to be almost last out of the blocks, but I ended up winning the event. I don't know how. It was not my fastest time by a long shot, but I won it. Then, on the mile relay, we won and broke the state record.

What happened was, the day before that, because you go to the state meet for two days, qualification day and finals day, Friday and Saturday, well, on Friday, Coach Newby gets a call from this guy that has just been hired at Tennessee, like the Monday before by the name of Chuck Rohe from Furman. I didn't know Coach Rohe, but I knew Furman, and I knew they had a good track program. We had been up there to the Furman Relays and were impressed on how well it was run. Coach Newby said, "Bill, you ought to go up and take a look at this." What happened was we told Coach Rohe, "Look, we're going to be in the state meet this weekend, and we can't just back out of the state meet—we don't want to." He said, "Well, I'll send a plane down for you and pick you up in Athens and fly you up here, and then I'll fly you home commercial on Monday. I want you to stay Monday and go to class." So, Dave Storey and I and one other fellow by the name of Charles Campbell, who was the state champion in the pole vault, who ended up not having the grades to get in school, flew up to Knoxville. We left ten minutes after the mile relay. My dad was there. I didn't realize it, but I was going to be presented the Most Outstanding Athlete of the Year for Track & Field by Coach Towns and a scholarship offer at the same time. My dad was there to accept it.

We came up to Knoxville, and, I have to tell you, I immediately fell in love with the campus, because, to me, Tennessee at the time—most of the college—was on The Hill or around it. It was just before the building boom of the twenty-five square blocks. I just looked at the school, and it reminded me a lot of the Gothic architecture of the schools of the Northeast—Princeton and Yale and so on. The setting of the school, sitting in the turn of the Tennessee River and the mountains close by—it's still a beautiful place today. So, that got my attention. The new athletic dormitory, yet to be named Gibbs Hall—Coach [Bill] Gibbs was still alive at the time and hadn't even come to the university yet—Coach Rohe got us rooms in the athletic dormitory. He set it up for us to go to classes and visit and see how the students were treated by the professors, which I was very impressed with.

TS: What kind of classes did he send you to?

BS: Actually, he hooked me up with Herschel Bailey, and I went to a couple of business classes with Herschel. Then, I went up and met a couple of professors in liberal arts as well. So, we stayed all through Monday, and actually flew home on Tuesday. I came home, and Dad told me about the Georgia deal, but I hadn't heard anything from Auburn. I found out from my coach that Coach Hutsell already had three quarter milers on scholarship, didn't want to get a fourth, needed a long jumper/triple jumper, so he was going to take that scholarship and put it to somebody else. So, that eliminated one of my top choices right there. I had a chance to go to the Naval Academy, and I was always leaning toward the military. I knew that I wanted to go into the Marine Corps when I was in the 10th grade.

TS: Yes, your hair cut back then was Marine already, as I recall.

BS: I had three years of high school ROTC before I even came to college. In all the Atlanta Public Schools back then, you had to take two years, and the third year was optional. I opted for that because I was very military oriented, and I had an excellent Boy Scout Explorer Post that I was involved in that was hosted by the Third Army Headquarters in Fort McPherson, Georgia. So, all of that, and I just had a fabulous high school experience.

TS: The Naval Academy would have been perfect for the Marines wouldn't it?

BS: Well, I went up and met with Coach Jim Gehrdes, who was the track and field coach up there at Annapolis and asked him if I would be allowed to compete in any meet that I qualified for, and he said, "No." He said it depended on your grades; it depended on the needs of the academy; and so on and so on. I looked around, and I had the perception to see that back then, if you went to any of the three academies—and the Air Force Academy was very new, like three or four years old [established 1954] at that point—it was like going to prison for four years, because when you went your freshman year, you didn't see anybody. You didn't go home again until the Christmas of your sophomore year. I said, "The Marine Corps had another option called Platoon Leaders Course, and I know I'm going to be a Marine, so I don't need the academy."

I was thinking about how much I liked the campus at Tennessee. Chuck made us three promises. He promised that he was going to build a national ranked program. He was going to get a new track, because we really didn't have one. He was going to give us the opportunity to compete in track and field meets all over the country. So, you combine that with how much I liked the campus and I liked the school and I liked the way the professors

treated me, and that with a promise from a guy that I really believed that we were going to have a national championship program and we were going to get a chance to travel and compete against the nation's best. And we did. He fulfilled all of that. It took a couple of extra years on the track. That didn't come until my senior year. So, I decided to go to Tennessee and never looked back. It was the best decision I could have made. I still believe that to this day. I spent five years there—four years of eligibility and then a fifth year as a student coach finishing up my undergraduate degree, taking some graduate courses in geography, and also the first senior life guard for Ray Buzzard at the new Student Aquatic Center.

TS: Why don't you talk about your career at Tennessee on the track? I know you were on some really good mile relay teams. At least your senior year you won the SEC and you always placed in it in those three years that you had varsity eligibility. Why don't you talk about running at the University of Tennessee?

BS: A lot of us, being on the first team [of the Rohe era], have talked about Dean-Planter's Tobacco Warehouse. That was a big part of our training my first three years at Tennessee. I don't know how Coach found it, but he found it a month or two after we got to school. Our warm-up started being the two-and-a-half mile run over there to get to the warehouse. That winter we really put forth some of the toughest work that anybody can ever remember. I can remember you guys [distance runners] running forever on the 40 quarters, and us quarter milers running 20 quarters. I had some really good performances. I struggled academically in school that first year and ended up going to summer school after going to the Marine Corps, because I was in the Platoon Leaders Course Program where you went on active duty the summer after your freshman year and the summer after your junior year.

TS: How many weeks of active duty did you have to do?

BS: Six weeks. What they did was that they split Officers' Candidate School into two six-week periods. If you successfully completed that and graduated, you were commissioned as a second lieutenant upon graduation. I went on active duty immediately and went to the Officers' Basic School at Quantico for six months, where you really learned to be a Marine Corps officer—which we all did. Coppley [Vickers] went through OCS [Officer Candidates School]. He was two or three classes ahead of me.

TS: I think he graduated in 1965.

BS: And I graduated in 1967—I was in the class of 1966 but graduated in 1967. My freshman year, we were going around as freshmen competing in the

open events. Coach would take us every place that we could drive to—to VMI and the Winter Relays. I've got a story about that I've got to tell on the Winter Relays. The first year, because freshman couldn't compete as varsity, Coach went out and solicited football players to come in and fill a gap. You got runners like Jimmy Sullivan. He also got Dick Evey to do everything, because Dick was so talented, so big, and so strong. Dick Evey was 6'5", about 240, wore size 15 shoe, and his hand was equally as big—twice as big as either one of my hands—and super strong. His father was a professor of physical education at, I believe, Ohio State. I may be wrong about that, but I believe it was some university in Ohio.

Dick came down. He was an All American at Tennessee, All American defensive tackle, and ended up playing for the Chicago Bears [1964-69] and a couple of years for the [Los Angeles Rams in 1970 and the Detroit Lions in 1971]. He played right next to Dick Butkus. Dick could run, like, a 10.3 100 yards. Well, our freshman year we went up to VMI and the Winter Relays. The building was originally a horse barn that they had made into a field house that was for basketball. It retracted to have a four-lane track around the basketball floor. At one end you ran under the bleachers, and it was kind of like a tunnel back there. Well, Dick was running second leg on the 880 relay. Four runners went into that tunnel at about the same time, and only one came out, and that was Dick.

TS: Oh, my goodness! What did he do?

BS: Dick swung both arms out in both directions, and it just so happened that some of the runners ran into him, and he came around and handed off—and we were laughing so hard when he handed off—I think to Jimmy Sullivan, and Herschel Bailey was running the final leg—we were laughing so hard by the time that was over, I can't remember whether we got disqualified or not. But that's an Evey story. The other thing about Dick—he graduated in 1964, I guess. He was top recruited to the Bears [first round selection] after the football season. The time we got to know Evey—at least the two years—Evey took us under his wing and got us strong. He was our strength coach.

He took us down to Section X [in Neyland Stadium] where the weight room was. Coach took us into the Physical Education Department and got us working on a circuit course on different types of exercises, but Dick really knew weight lifting and strength, and those of us that got interested, which were about a dozen or so of us, he took some of the distance runners like Storey and Maxwell and got them on high repetitions, low weights, and the sprinters and quarter milers on a little more weight. He said, "It's what you do, it's how you do it and the repetitions you put into it." He's the one who really got us started and got us strong along with what Coach did on those circuit—ten different exercises in a certain period of time, and you would

go from one to the next and the next that built stamina. I wanted to tell that Dick Evey story because he was a big influence on me and he really increased my strength, which, I think, really helped my ability to run the boards in the indoor season.

Looking back on my career at Tennessee, I performed better in the indoor season than I did the outdoor season because of how Coach had us training. Us quarter milers—we were training hard in September. By the time the Christmas holidays came around, we were going to the bowl festivals. I can remember a couple of years we went down to the Orange Bowl Festival and stayed a week or two down there, hosted by the Orange Bowl, to run in a track meet at 10:00 o'clock on New Year's Day. He wanted us to get a really good time, so that we would be invited throughout the indoor season—which we did. But I peaked in the indoor season in three of my four years, until my senior year I got a little wiser, and really ran my fastest times indoors and my best performances, because I was spent by the middle of the outdoor season. That's why I did not do as well as I should at the SEC Outdoor Championships. Of course, back then, indoor track was hardly recognized, because we only had one indoor track in the Southeastern Conference that I knew of. It was always at the Montgomery Cow Palace. They packed down all the dirt and cow manure in there to make a four-lane track. I always did really well in the 600—I was nationally ranked in the 600—and, of course, ran the mile relay.

TS: What was your best time in college?

BS: The best time for the 440 yards was 46.3.

TS: That's great!

BS: Best time in the 600 was 1:09.6 or something like that. That got me invited to everything in the indoor season.

TS: It sounds like the 600 may have been your best race.

BS: Coach had me run the two-mile relay a couple of times. That didn't happen until I was a senior. Actually, I had eligibility through winter quarter of my fifth year, because I got hurt training in the snow my sophomore year indoor season. I didn't compete, so I had that quarter to go in, and that's how I got my fifth-year scholarship. My fifth year, he had me running the two-mile relay, and I didn't really know how to run it, but I had an indoor time, like, 1:53. Of course, Larry Kelly [1966-69], that fifth year, was already running 1:49.5 and so on. But I probably could have been as good a half-miler as a quarter-miler. But I didn't want it. I loved the quarter mile, and that's where I wanted to stay. I could have been too hard headed to make

the change, but he had so many good half-milers. He had Bob Redington and Henry Rose and others that could run the half mile and the mile.

TS: It sounds though that if you had concentrated on the half mile, you might have been really good in it.

BS: He had us quarter-milers running on the B team on the cross country team. This is one of the reasons that we were worn out at the end of the indoor season, because we were running hard. Some of our B team performances beat anybody else. A team and B team would either be 1, 2 or 1, 3 or 1, 4, something like that. Later on, after I got out of Tennessee and went on into the Marine Corps, I got roped into running on some of their 10,000 meter runs, road runs, and ended up having a pretty decent time at that. So the endurance factor was there for me, but that's neither here nor there.

But we really had a really tight group of guys for my class and the next couple of classes after me. We were the first team [recruited by Coach Rohe]. You were there before us. We all came in so energized, and I think the camaraderie was just so strong on those first three or four classes that came to Tennessee. I wanted to mention, from my perspective, how that came to be. First of all, we had a coach that was an outstanding recruiter, outstanding administrator, a really great motivator/leader, and, as far as a sprinter/quarter-miler coach goes, an okay coach. He was excellent in distance, but when it came to us, I probably had better coaching in high school.

TS: From Newby.

BS: And he [Coach Rohe] taught me a lot—taught us all a lot. Coach Rohe's greatest impact on me, and I think others, but I can only speak for me, is that, one, the work ethic that he put into us. He says that, when you come out, it's, "What a day!" And, "This is the best day of your life, and you need to do the best you can do in anything that you do today. Don't worry about tomorrow. Worry about today." So that work ethic of being able to run 20 quarters in 51 seconds or 50 seconds with a 220 jog in between was a killer. Only one or two of us finished. But he also taught us how to finish, and not only finish, but finish well. Those things have stayed with me all my life.

The other thing that even to this day—and we were all together with Coach two or three weeks ago—is his positive attitude. I've tried to get him to say adverse things about people, because I know he's felt that way, but he doesn't let himself feel that way long. He won't say anything other than a positive statement about anybody, and that's a great example of leadership, and I've always respected that. It's so easy, if you haven't been treated right, or certain things didn't go the way they should have because

of whatever circumstances, you can have a cynical or less than positive attitude toward it. But not Chuck Rohe—Chuck Rohe looks at it; he learns from it; he takes a positive from it; and he moves on. I think he taught us all that.

TS: You may have already answered this, but in Knoxville [at the mini-reunion in August 2013] you said that Coach Rohe's influence helped you get through your years in the Marine Corps. I wonder if you would like to say a little more about that?

BS: Well, his overall leadership and what I just mentioned—the work ethic, the perseverance, the diligence and tenacity that he built in us. And it wasn't only on the track. He wanted us to be that way in everything we did. He expected us to do well in the classroom—he expected it. When Jeff Clark came, Jeff helped institute the study hall system to keep people eligible. There was always a study hall. It was going before Jeff got there, and I think Jeff helped it a little bit, but having that camaraderie and having each other in there, you have that peer pressure to do as good as you can, no matter whether it was in the classroom or on the track. That certainly helped me, because I was not a strong academic performer until actually I got half way through the Marine Corps.

Having that tenacity probably kept me and my men alive in Vietnam. I wasn't in that many tight situations, but I was in 1st Recon Battalion—long range reconnaissance—and when you are out there with five other guys and no resupply and a country they say you are not supposed to be in—that's Laos and so on—and you get in a tight situation, your next action is second nature, because you've been trained that way since you were seventeen or eighteen years old as a freshman in college. Going through the Marine Corps with me there was never an issue of making it. It was an issue of whether you were going to break records or not in Officers Basic School and so on like that. I think Chuck really impacted that. After I came back from Vietnam, because of my experience in track and field, they made me the Marine Track & Field coach for two years.

TS: Is that right? I didn't know that.

BS: I had the All-Marine Corps team, which was a consolidation of Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune and also a couple of individual athletes who were from the air stations who were officers. Learning from Chuck's recruiting tenacity really helped me get the coalesced team together to compete against the other services of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Pat Pomphrey, another classmate of ours, was on the Air Force team. Pat was nationally ranked and did well and was still running when I got out. So you will have to get an interview with Pat Pomphrey, because he has some great stories to tell about that.

TS: Did you run any more after the Marines?

BS: The two years that I was the All-Marine Corps Track & Field coach, we went into the Inter-Service meet as underdogs, because the Army at the time—we're talking about the Vietnam years and the draft was on—so, so many track and field guys just went into the Army and went directly to the Army track team and didn't even go through basic or anything else.

TS: You're kidding! I didn't know that.

BS: They ended up on the Inter-Service team. The first year I coached, I was the Inter-Service assistant coach. The coach was Ralph Higgins. He was the 1956 [and 1960] US Olympic [assistant] coach from Oklahoma State [where he was head coach 1935-1968]. He was retired. Then, the next year, I became the Inter-Service coach, because Coach Higgins' wife was dying of cancer, and he couldn't do it that year. He came back later on. It was a great experience. But pulling all these guys together, I had to go out and recruit these guys from their assignments—what we call billets in the Marine Corps. I would go out to their commanding officers and say, "I want you to give me this pilot that the Marine Corps has invested a couple of million bucks in, and I want him for ninety days for the spring season. But, yet, you've got to carry him on your books; you've got to pay for him; and he won't be there to fly your airplane." But we got them, and we did well.

And when we went to Viareggio, Italy [1970] for the CISM championships—Conseil International du Sport Militaire—really a NATO championship that was formed at the end of the Second World War by General Marshall—General Marshall all of a sudden was in charge of all the armies of Europe, and they were not supposed to fight anybody because the Second World War was over, and he had two million soldiers—what was he going to do with them? So they created this Council of International Sports of all countries, and this was the Axis powers as well as the Allied powers—Germany and Finland and countries like that that may have been opposing us, but all of a sudden now we were competing against them, not only in track and field, but in the military pentathlon, orienteering, shooting, boxing, and a host of events that go on to this day.

The Marine Corps doesn't participate in them anymore, because when the first Gulf War came around in 1990, they did away with all their sports programs. I think they are looking now at rekindling those. But, anyway, I had two great years of experience doing that and didn't realize it until a couple of years ago—and I did this in 1970 and 1971—and in 1971 after the track season, I went back to the Fleet Marine Force 1st Recon Battalion and took over the same company at Camp Pendleton that I had in Vietnam and finished out my military career doing that. But three years after I left being

the track and field coach, Chris D’Orazio, a Tennessee graduate, became the Marine Corps track and field coach and did very well with it.

TS: So Tennessee had a monopoly on coaching the Marines in track, I guess.

BS: Chris has got quite a story. You should hear it, because he ended up being Mr. Semper Fit. He retired two years ago after working for the United States Marine Corps as a civilian for 31 years. I won’t get into his story. I’ll just say one thing. He was so well thought of and so important to what he did as he created the Semper Fit program in the Marine Corps that the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General [James F.] Amos, spoke at his retirement ceremony two years ago. He has got quite a story to tell. Just in essence, I’ll give you a glimpse. He went in and got out and then got his master’s degree at the University of Virginia in, I think it was in, physical fitness. I’m not sure what it was in. Then he came back and went to work for the Marine Corps as a civilian and ended up in the equivalent of a colonel’s job. He was in special services and physical fitness. He recognized early on that, at the end of the Vietnam War, the Marines had put so much emphasis on combat operations, that physical fitness had been set aside and the quality level of the fitness of marines was lacking. Chris put together a physical fitness program called Semper Fit—always fit—that is still used. He developed this over the course of years and years, and every marine now has certain standards that he has to meet that Chris D’Orazio designed, built, and got the entire Marine Corps from the commandant down to institute, and is the standard of excellence today. He affected 200,000 lives at a time with this. It’s really quite a story. [See “Father of ‘Semper Fit’ Retires,” *Quantico Sentry*, December 8, 2011; updated January 26, 2013, www.quanticosentryonline.com.]

TS: We need to track him down and do an interview with him.

BS: Absolutely! I’ve got all this information, and I’ll send it to you. I think I’ve probably said enough, but my time at Tennessee was formative in my life. I spent five years there, and I loved all five of them. I met my wife there, whom I’m still married to. We married in 1967.

TS: Well, you’ve got 46 years now.

BS: Forty-six years of marriage and two daughters who also went to Tennessee. So we’ve got quite a heritage there.

TS: Have you been running your own business ever since you got out of the Marines?

BS: No, I got out of the Marine Corps, because I wanted to keep a family. I loved the Marine Corps and what it was doing. I was very frustrated at the

time because Vietnam was winding down and the Marine Corps was being reduced from 310,000 to 190,000 in a little more than a year. I was a regular officer. I didn't have any concern about being surveyed out of the Corps. My performance had been good. But I got very frustrated with the lack of direction in some things that were going on. I got very frustrated in Vietnam, because of what Lyndon Johnson and his Secretary of Defense, McNamara, were pulling, because we were the eyes and ears of the Marine Corps, being recon. We were out there. This is a whole another story, but McNamara was lying to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he was lying to the American people, and this has all been substantiated now in books that have come out in the last couple of years. We knew it, and I was very frustrated with what was going on. Our servicemen were needlessly dying. We weren't accomplishing anything. We were spinning our wheels over there. So I'm became very frustrated. But I stayed another three years after I got back from Vietnam.

Then I got out and went to work for Carnation Company and didn't realize that Audry Hardy or one of the runners that did so well in the 400 meters actually was at Carnation before me. He had come and gone by the time I got there. I went in as a management trainee and spent eight great years with them. Then I ended up traveling 300 days a year as a regional vice president. I wanted to be with my family, so I quit that job and went to work for another company doing pretty much the same thing and ending up traveling 300 days a year with them. So I quit that without another job and didn't work for almost a year and then got into the performance incentive travel business, which I've been in since 1984. It's a very fun, quiet business to where we help corporations—manufacturers, distributors—motivate their customers and their employees to increase their performance and profitability. If they achieve certain goals and objectives, we take them on a travel experience. That can be anything from a weekend at Disney World to an East African safari. It's been a fun business. It's a positive business. I apply a whole lot of principles and values that I learned under Chuck Rohe at Tennessee, because everything is positive, and if you work hard, you'll get rewarded.

TS: I think one of the things I've been interested in on this project is that the athletes from back in the Rohe era have really accomplished a great deal in life and have been successful, and just about everybody gives Coach Rohe a good deal of the credit for their successes later on. We were anything but a group of "dumb jocks," I think, judging by what we've done since we got through school.

BS: Absolutely! I was fortunate. I had wonderful parents—wonderful father and mother that really lived the principles they talked about—and then having the reinforcement of good high school teachers and coaches and then the influence of Chuck Rohe and professors at Tennessee that were a

little different from the professors today with their little liberal attitudes. I grew up in a Christian community. I felt that the University of Tennessee really enhanced that experience because of all the Christian organizations that were on campus. I was a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes. I can remember Coach taking us as a team and visiting various churches around for at least the first three years.

TS: So those experiences were very positive?

BS: Very positive, very foundational, especially in the formative years of going through high school and college and having all that. Taking that—that's been my foundation through life. I'll be 70 years old this December.

TS: Well, you're just a few months behind me. I'll be 70 in eleven days.

BS: While, congratulations! I'll tell you what's amazing to me, having had the opportunity now to interact with some of our teammates, especially three weeks ago [at the August 16-17, 2013 mini-reunion in Knoxville] the number of guys that are in such good physical condition and the number of us even at age 70 who are still gainfully employed—even though we may have retired from a career of something else—gainfully employed with retirement not in the forecast.

TS: Well, Coach Rohe, I guess, is the example for that, still going strong at 82.

BS: Yes, we've all heard him say—I don't know how many Nike clinics he runs a year, but he probably puts in more man-hours on a daily basis for that than most people do in a primary career.

TS: Right. I think he's doing 17 or 18 [Nike Coach of the Year Football Clinics] this year, and that was only one of his jobs until he gave up the Capital One Bowl.

BS: Right, and that's a great story in itself. All in all, it was such a positive influence and reinforcement to me to have the opportunity to go to Tennessee under Chuck Rohe, having the opportunity to meet and become close to so many teammates and having the opportunity to live together in the athletic dormitory the way we did, all together there, we became brothers of a track and field fraternity, if you will. We can all look at one another today, and I don't think any of us have changed much, except for the color of our hair.

TS: Well, I think we've got a good interview. I think this will be a good interview for the website before long.

BS: I appreciate you putting in the effort to do all this, because this is a huge undertaking. I hope people do take a chance to go to the website and read through it or listen to some of it, because I think we really did experience a unique era with Coach Rohe at Tennessee.

TS: I agree with you, and I always admired you. I always thought of you as a straight arrow. That Marine bearing that you had back then, I just took that as an indication of the character underneath. I'm glad you've been so successful in your life, and I'm glad I got to know you at the University of Tennessee, and I'm glad I'm getting to know you again now that we're starting to have all these reunions.

BS: And myself as well. I really looked up to you guys that were ahead of us there. It's tough to be some place and have a new leader come in. But I think the way Coach embraced all of you guys....

TS: It wasn't a matter of a new leader. It was a matter of the first leader, because we didn't have any leadership before Coach Rohe came. It was exciting for me. All you guys that came in that year in the class that he recruited in 1962 pulled me along and helped me improve a great deal in those couple of years that I had there with Coach Rohe.

BS: It's all been good, and I do, again, appreciate the time and effort that you are taking on this.

TS: Well, I'm having fun doing it. Bill, it's been great to talk to you today, and I appreciate all the stories.

BS: Good; my pleasure.