

**INTERVIEW WITH HARRIS D. (BUD) FORD
CONDUCTED BY TOM SCOTT
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TS: Bud, I understand that you're a native of Knoxville and a 1962 graduate of West High School and that you went straight from there to the University of Tennessee. I think while you were still a student you got involved with the athletics department. Will you talk about how all that came about?

BF: Well, it is kind of interesting. I'm a local yokel for sure because I've never lived any place in my life other than Knoxville, Tennessee, and certainly haven't been involved in any other school than the University of Tennessee. I graduated from West as you mentioned in '62 and went to the university. I was taking a business retailing degree. In the middle of my junior year I was working part-time at Kroger 739 sacking groceries, a front-end guy and a clerk on the register, just doing a bunch of stuff. [UT Athletics Department business manager] Gus Manning came in. He had been my neighbor. In fact, I had been Gus Manning's paper boy. That's my claim to fame. He told me that [sports information director] Haywood Harris had a part-time position in sports information, and he thought I should go over and talk to Haywood. Well, I went up and talked to Haywood. So that junior year I worked both jobs. I worked as a student assistant in the sports information office, and then I worked at Kroger.

TS: So you were getting paid in the athletics department?

BF: Well, I was getting minimum, not much.

TS: But it wasn't an internship.

BF: No it wasn't an internship. It was an hourly deal. I was getting a little bit. We figured it out one time. It came to eleven cents an hour. It was \$75.00 during football season, but once football season ended [athletics director] Coach [Bob] Woodruff dropped it to \$40.00 a month, and Gus said I was being overpaid! My senior year I decided I wasn't going to be able to handle working at Kroger, so I stopped working at Kroger and worked totally with the athletics department. I graduated in '66 in June. Coach Woodruff hired me the next day as the first full-time assistant and obviously I worked there from 1966 until I retired in 2011. It was about forty-five and a half years. I would have made fifty. I was trying to make fifty. I thought that would have been a good mark. I had planned and the university had agreed that I could be the historian. Then with the change of athletic directors that went by the wayside. So I ended up with only forty-five and a half.

TS: That's a pretty good career.

BF: It is a good career. There were a lot of good times in there, a lot of times with track, and a lot of times with the other sports. When I first went to work, one of the main things I was involved with was covering the "other sports," so to speak, from a SID standpoint. We were a two-man shop. Haywood Harris was doing all the football stuff, and that was more than enough, so I had basketball, basketball travel, baseball, track, and every sporting we had, tennis and golf and swimming and all of them together. Then we began to expand the department and picked up some students. We got some graduate students, but in the beginning it was Haywood and me, and that was who we were. There were a lot of things going on. That was a time when I first came in there that the athletic department was moving in such a big way. In '64 Coach Dickey got hired, and the football team began to do well. Coach Woodruff, the athletic director, was willing to support our other sports. We had a bunch of urban renewal on campus. In 1966 we built the [Tom Black] track, because we really didn't have a track. The track that they ran on through the ages was a cinder track in [Neyland] stadium with probably four or five lanes.

TS: It wasn't much.

BF: Bu it was a cinder track, and that's where we used to run. At one end of it, which is kind of funny, there were stands that went across the track. So if you were running the 440, and you ran around the curve, you were running under these stands. Then you came back out, and that was kind of unusual. But a lot of people said they'd wait there and rest a little while because they couldn't be seen. Certainly the building of the track, the building of the aquatic center, the building the Stokely Athletic Center—all

of that first really big building project for athletics was taking place when I first started working.

TS: So Haywood Harris was primarily in football?

BF: Haywood primarily did football, but we teamed together on a lot of things. He didn't like swimming because he said he was allergic to chlorine, and track outside was sometimes freezing. He didn't come to track unless I forced him, telling him I needed some help. That's kind of where we were.

TS: Okay. As sports information director you're writing press releases?

BF: Right.

TS: Writing the real stories of the meets?

BF: Well, probably the best word to describe it is the sports information office was the link from the athletic department to the outside world. That could be a fan, a newspaper, or a TV station. We were that link. If they wanted information, they would contact us. If they wanted to cover events, we credentialed them. We would write press releases, pre-meet releases, and post-meet releases. We did all the results, did the statistics, posted all of those, and did the media guides that talked about our teams. We did ticket promotion, did flyers for season tickets, did a bunch of different things involved with trying to promote UT athletics in a way that was pleasing obviously to the department and also to our fans. Then we expanded through the years. It certainly changed, but basically you're the link between the public and the athletic department.

TS: Right. Now didn't basketball become a big focus for your time for the next twenty years or so?

BF: Right, for about twenty-six years I travelled with basketball. What's unique about that time is I could cover basketball, and I could cover home football games and some road games if they didn't interfere until we got into December, because basketball did not start until the beginning of December.

TS: Oh, now they start in the middle of November.

BF: Now they start in the middle of November, but back then they didn't start before December and ended at spring break in March with the tournament. Baseball practice and track did not begin until spring break. They would go either to the Florida Relays or somewhere else on spring break to compete in outdoor track. We didn't do much indoor track [on campus] until we built Stokely, but had some indoor meets, and outdoor track didn't begin until spring break.

TS: We practiced in the winter in the Dean-Planter's tobacco warehouse.

BF: Yes, that's right. Then baseball was generally started in spring after basketball season, and tennis and golf and those were basically spring sports. The expansion [of sports seasons] made it very difficult for two people to handle it because the new football schedule got moved a little bit and basketball comes back into November. We now have golf playing in the fall, and we have swimming matches now in the fall. They didn't start generally until January 1, but now they've got some meets in December and some in November. The tennis team was competing in a fall schedule, and your track is obviously all year long. You've got cross-country, and you've got indoor and outdoor track. So we had to expand with the times so to speak.

TS: How often did you travel with the baseball team or the track team?

BF: I always traveled with the baseball team during their spring break because they would play six, seven, eight games, and you needed to be there. I didn't always go to every road match, but certainly covered every home game. It just depended on where they were going. Sometimes a manager would keep the score book, but I did travel quite a bit. Particularly if they'd go to Riverside, California, for instance, they'd play seven or eight games. Then, yes, I obviously needed to go. And I'd get to most conference games. We did not travel with track, and we didn't travel with tennis and golf. They would call back in their results to us. Then we would write the release and give it to the newspaper. Either the coach would call directly to the paper or he would call us, and that's how that work in that time. A lot of schools were doing it that way. Then it became important that a media person go with that team, and so we started having our contacts, as we called them—track contacts, golf contacts, tennis contacts, whatever. They started going with every team, and that helped. It was hard for the coach. The coach would run a meet or run a match, and he wants to feed his team and get back home. Cell phones weren't all that prominent back then, you know, but he would get on a phone somewhere.

TS: I remember Chuck Rohe getting on the phone and calling in results.

BF: He would do that from time to time; he certainly would.

TS: Tell me about Haywood Harris.

BF: Haywood was the last person hired by General Neyland. He was hired in 1961. Gus Manning, who is ninety-two now by the way, was hired by General Neyland in 1951. He was at that time sports information director, so Gus was sports information director from '51 to '61.

TS: And didn't he replace Lindsey Nelson?

BF: He replaced Lindsey Nelson, and the guy before him was a guy named Jack Joyner. There were other guys there. There was a period of time from Gus

Manning to Haywood Harris to me [as sports information director] that covered sixty-one years there.

TS: From 1951 to 2011.

BF: Right, there was a period of time when the SIDs, Sports Information Directors of Tennessee, were Tennessee grads. In '61, the general wanted Gus to become the business manager, handle tickets, travel, do a lot of other details. Gus knew Haywood because he had been working at a Charlotte newspaper and had also worked at the *Knoxville Journal*. Haywood had been helping some in the athletic department, so Gus talked General Neyland into hiring Haywood. Then Haywood hired me in '66, about five years later.

TS: So you and Haywood worked together for about thirty-seven years.

BF: A long, long time. We had a really great relationship. Haywood and I were two different kinds of people. Haywood was a tremendous writer. He had tremendous journalism skills—vocabulary, could write things. I was a doer and fixer and able to go get something done. So we complemented each other. The things I was strongest in he was probably weakest in. The things he was strongest in I was weak. I didn't come up in journalism. I wasn't a great writer. It would take me a whole lot longer than Haywood [to write something], and he had such a way about him. He and Gus Manning authored two books, excellent books on Tennessee athletics [*Six Seasons Remembered: The National Championship Years of Tennessee Football* (UT Press 2004) and *Once a Vol, Always a Vol: The Proud Men of the Volunteer Nation* (Sports Publishing 2006)]. So we were a good complement. I didn't want his job, and he didn't want my job, and we worked together for a number of years.

When Haywood decided he wanted to scale back, I was fortunate enough to be named the sports information director and move from there, and that was good. I've always told people, "If I were being hired today, I wouldn't get the job based on my resume. I would get the job based on my experience." These young people coming in, their resumes and what they've done and what they're capable of doing, are way beyond what I was doing. I started with a Royal typewriter and Telecopier. We had carbon paper to make copies of things. The world changed. I think Haywood's and my greatest attribute was, as it was changing, we may not have wanted to change, but we found students who did want to change, and we would bring those guys in to handle that stuff. It was a very good complement. I respect him greatly, and I miss him dearly because he passed away too soon [on June 2, 2010, at age 80]. He was a great man. Nobody like Haywood.

TS: Tell me about Chuck Rohe and your relationship with him.

BF: Chuck Rohe was obviously a dynamo. He was hired from Furman University where he was a track coach. He comes in and was Coach Doug Dickey's football recruiter [after Dickey was hired in 1964] and track coach [1962-1971]. We had a long way to go in both football recruiting and track. Rohe was and still is to this day a dynamic kind of guy to get people to do things, to sell things, to push your program, to say, "Yes, we can do this." I just remember him coming, and there was always a stir when you were around Coach Rohe. Of course, Haywood and I would pick at Rohe a little bit. If you got him agitated, he'd stutter, "Bah, bah, bah." He'd just start stuttering. We were probably unfair a little bit, but we'd get after him about certain things. But we certainly respected what he was doing and how he built that track program. There are a lot of interesting stories about what we were doing and particularly running in a tobacco barn. He goes out and finds Dean-Planter's tobacco warehouse. There are certain limitations within that facility. Number one, I guess it's more of a three-lane track. I don't think it was a four-lane track. But it was a full 440 yards. It was a big old building. You could run 220 straightaways. You had plenty of space in there. But it was a home court advantage particularly on the circle races. If you were running 440 yards, 880, a mile and stuff, when you went around a curve, if you knew right where the poles were that were holding up the roof, you could just nudge somebody. He's got a choice, he's either going to hit the pole or go around the pole. So it was a little bit of an advantage. Then when he started thinking about it, Haywood asked him questions. You know, "Coach you're not going to have all the field events in there are you?" He said, "Well, I don't think we can do the pole vault because it's not high enough," and we couldn't. So he said, "What are you going to do about the triple jump and the long jump?"

TS: What do you land on when it's a wood floor?

BF: It was a wood floor. Well, there was a loading dock, and so they filled up a truck with sand. They would run and jump off the loading dock into the truck of sand—kind of unheard of, into a truck. Long jumpers then were going 24 feet maybe, maybe less. So you weren't going to get somebody jumping 28 feet out there into the end of that thing, you know. It was a flatbed truck.

TS: Triple jump would be a big jump.

BF: I don't know that we did the triple jump indoor. We could have, but I know we did the long jump and the high jump. We could throw the weights and the shot, but we just couldn't do the pole vault. But it was an interesting building and was greatly used. And let me tell you, it was cold. It was cold in that building.

TS: I remember.

BF: There was no heat in that building. There was no need to have any heat in it. It was just a tobacco warehouse that was used through Thanksgiving. Once they sold all the tobacco that was being produced in this big warehouse that Dean-Planters owned, there was nothing in there until the next tobacco season. They did a few events, and so Rohe talked them into doing it. Unfortunately, it did finally burn down.

TS: Is that what happened?

BF: Yes, it caught on fire and burned down.

TS: Probably the reason you didn't heat the building.

BF: That's right. But Rohe was certainly ambitious in a lot of different ways, and probably to some extent forced us to improve track in a lot of ways. He found Tom Black and encouraged him along with Coach Woodruff who was very active in that too. I know at times Coach Rohe probably exasperated Coach Woodruff quite a bit, but he did encourage Coach Woodruff, and we built a track. Once we got the Tom Black track then we were able to make improvements and keep moving on. Rohe had a great deal to do with it. The next point that Rohe did was probably the most important point in Tennessee athletics in that he was confident that Tennessee could do dual sports—that we could recruit certain players with speed who could be on the track squad, be good national competitors, and also help the football team. Back then, if you were on a football scholarship, you could compete in any sport; all the way down the line, it didn't matter. If you were on a basketball scholarship you could compete in any sport below basketball, but you couldn't play football. Rohe had a quantity of these guys that were signing football scholarships and also were running track. Then with the elimination of the number of scholarships it was helping the scholarships. You had a guy with a football scholarship, and that freed up money to recruit another track guy. He did that very well.

TS: Are you saying they can't do that anymore?

BF: They still can't do that. If you're on a football scholarship you can play down, but you can't play up. Basketball was the same way.

TS: Up until a few years ago we were still having dual athletes.

BF: Right. The second part of that dual sport was the change when we started recruiting black athletes.

TS: I wanted to ask you about that from the sports information director perspective. How did you all cover the integration of athletics at UT?

BF: Well, you know it was occurring. The South was probably the slowest [in recruiting] black athletes. There was an incident at one time where our

basketball team forfeited a game because we were playing Duquesne and they had black athletes. They'd never played against black athletes, and so we didn't play. You look at that now and think, that's kind of silly isn't it? Well, at that time it wasn't silly. But I recall Coach Rohe kept encouraging Coach Woodruff that we can find the right kind of person, the right kind of athlete, and we can bring them in. [He said], "We need to move forward with it." Part of that was Lester McClain who came in in 1967 [and played varsity football from 1968 to 1970] as our first black athlete. He was not the first to be recruited. We had recruited a guy named Albert Davis, and Albert Davis didn't qualify. Lester was going to be his roommate. So Lester comes in, and he becomes our first African American player and did an excellent job. He is a high quality person to this day, well respected. Then follow that up with Audry Hardy and James Craig [recruited in track in 1967]. When they came to campus they were quality guys. That movement obviously impacted both our football program and our track program as we went along. The first real great dual sport recruit was Richmond Flowers, the most highly recruited player I guess that we ever had. Coach Rohe convinced him, and Coach Dickey allowed him to compete in track and be on the football team. He was All-American football, he was All-American track, and he was a national figure. That opened the door for a bunch of other dual sport wide receiver guys. Anthony Hancock was a hurdler [1978-1982], Willie Gault was a hurdler [1979-1983]. Just move on down the line, and those are things that Rohe really put into place.

TS: How did integration of sports go over with the public? Did you get a lot of negative feedback or was it mostly positive?

BF: Condredge Holloway [starting quarterback 1972-1974 and current Assistant Athletics Director for Student-Athlete Relations and Lettermen] talked about that. Lester has talked about it. There were a few athletes—Bernard King [UT basketball star, 1974-1977] felt like that maybe when he was a black athlete here there was this type of negativity, racism. I don't think the other high quality guys we recruited [felt that way]. There was some of that going on, but they were such quality people they in some way didn't let that bother them. They were able to overcome that. There was an incident with the track team one time where they went into a restaurant coming back from the Florida Relays, and they would not serve our black athletes. Our whole team decided, "Well, I don't think we will eat here." And they got up and left and went to another place. There were a few of those instances, but generally speaking, as I look at athletes, an athlete was an athlete. I didn't see black, I didn't see white, and I didn't see any type of nationality. I see, "Here's an athlete, he's playing on our team, and we've got to go from here." The first black athlete on the basketball team [1971-1973] was a guy named Larry Robinson, really high quality guy. He transferred from Ferrum College. It wasn't something on the inside that we were feeling. It could have been a public perception out there, but inside it was like a unit and a team, and they were able to work through that.

TS: I know Coach Woodruff was slow in coming around.

BF: He definitely was.

TS: I was wondering whether he was slow in coming around in part because the athletic department was taking a lot of heat from wealthy contributors or from the public at large.

BF: Well, I think Kentucky was the first school that had integrated with an African American on their football team. Mississippi, Tennessee and others followed pretty quickly. Kentucky had one player who played the year before, and that kind of opened the door, so to speak, in the South.

TS: So you didn't get negative comments?

BF: I can't recall that there was a lot of it, but I was working at the time, and I just didn't hear a lot of it. I think if there was negative feedback, it was the fact that a lot of times those athletes were better athletes than some of the other guys that you had on your team. They were stellar athletes because of their ability. The guys that were coming in early in those sports were top quality students. They wanted an education, and they weren't folks who were getting in trouble, so to speak. They had a point that they were trying to make, and they wanted to graduate, and they did.

TS: Let me ask you about another kind of integration in the athletic program. Quite frankly I don't think it entered my mind once when I was at Tennessee that we didn't have intercollegiate sports for women. I think we had one woman that played golf.

BF: Ann Baker [Furrow] was the first women's athlete on scholarship. Coach Woodruff gave her a men's golf scholarship in '64 and she was also the first recipient of the Robert R. Neyland Academic Scholarship. Our coach at the time was a guy named Lloyd Foree [1954-1967], and she did compete with the men and was a very good golfer. Through the years she was the Knoxville Golf Association champion, played in state tournaments, and was an excellent golfer. But she was the first woman. One thing, the university made what I think was a very wise decision, because I think there would have been a lot of animosity in our women's programs and it may not have been the success it was if the university had not made a decision that they were not going to put the burden of expenses on the women's athletics on the [men's] athletic program. They were going to find a way to make this competitive Title IX deal happen, and they implemented it first through student funds or the student activities fee. What happened on that is they generated about a million dollars on that student activities fee. Every student had an activities fee, and part of that fee went to women's athletics. When they started the program they started as a separate program. The men were operating as we were, and the women were operating [separately]. As they grew what happened was that the

funding base began to become difficult. As the program grew that million dollars or whatever it was, a million and two, they could no longer take . . .

TS: It wasn't enough money?

BF: It wasn't enough money. So the men started supplementing a certain amount of money to the women's program, and that continued all the way until about 2011 when they decided we were going to have to consolidate. There was a women's sports information director named Debby Jennings [1977-2012]. They had a women's athletic director as well, Gloria Ray [1976-1983] and then Joan Cronan [1983-2012]. What happened was the men were concentrating on our sports, making that happen, doing what we could and not worrying because the women had the ability to do what they wanted to.

TS: Oh, you didn't do anything with women's athletics?

BF: I did nothing with women's athletics.

TS: So it was all with Debby Jennings?

BF: The only time I was involved with women's athletics was if we played a double header basketball game, which we did a few times, and when we had combined men's and women's swimming meets, combined men's and women's track, or combined tennis regionals, whatever those regions had both men and women in it Debbie and I worked together to coordinate whatever it was for that particular championship. But on the whole she was doing all of their sports, and I was working with Haywood doing all the men's sports, and we did not cross over. There wasn't a jealousy point there because they were operating separately. That's what allowed Pat Summitt and the rest of the women's coaches to grow where they weren't hindered, if that makes sense. They weren't under somebody, and to me that was a wise move. Now, financially, it got to the point it couldn't operate that way, and that's when they combined. That's about the time I was ready to retire too.

TS: So you're saying, all the way up to 2009 you were able to operate on that student activities fee.

BF: With monies coming from athletics.

TS: Right.

BF: And what they were starting to generate too. They had started to generate funding in basketball and generated some soccer money and stuff like that. They had a boosters club. They were taking donations. So they were generating some dollars, and the Athletics Department was supplementing that, and then they had a student activities fee which was about \$1.2 million, I think.

- TS:** Are you saying there was not an athletics fee before women's sports began?
- BF:** There was an activities fee, but I can't say when it was. They did increase that fee about the time women's sports came, and they were gaining some money from that. I paid an activities fee of some kind. The activities fee allowed you to go to the student center; it allowed you to go to the rec center; you could swim in the pool; all those things. So there were activities fees, but they weren't very much. Then that fee has increased, and part of that fee went to athletics as well as being split up to support those other units. Athletics used to get a dollar for every student ticket that was used. We got a dollar for football and basketball, so there was money like that coming back, and the women received a pretty good chunk. I think at one time it was about \$1.2 million.
- TS:** In 1985 you became the sports information director if I understand correctly.
- BF:** Right. Hayward became the associate athletic director for media relations.
- TS:** So what was your title from '66 to '85?
- BF:** Assistant sports information director and then associate sports information director. Each one of those levels was just a raise. You got a raise when you changed the title. When Hayward went to associate AD that was a raise for him. I became the sports information director, and when Hayward retired, I became associate AD for media relations.
- TS:** Right. There was somewhere in here where you were called assistant AD for sports information.
- BF:** That was at the time when Hayward was still working. It was basically a title change to reward us financially. There weren't a whole lot of job changes there. We were hiring people too. We would hire in and then manage that in different ways. But for the whole time that Hayward and I were together, he was the boss, and I was the guy helping him.
- TS:** Of course, Coach Rohe stayed until 1971, and then Stan Huntsman came in after that. Did that affect your job in any way?
- BF:** No. I tell you what. I had the greatest respect for Rohe and also great respect for Stan Huntsman. Hayward called him the Dutchman all the time. Dutch was what he called him. I really respected Coach Huntsman. When you look at Rohe's record of the twenty-one championships that he won, and then Huntsman comes in after Rohe leaves. We'd already won fifteen in a row of the SEC titles indoor and outdoor. Then Huntsman just picked up right where Rohe was and took the program and moved on. He never finished lower than third in any outdoor championships. Huntsman did a great job. Two of the things that I think helped Tennessee track along that

way was when we started the Dogwood Relays which later became Sea Ray Relays, and we also had the Tom Black Classic. Both of those meets were national meets. We were on line with Drake and the Florida and the Quantico Relays. When we started the Dogwood Relays we were getting many of the top athletes to come here and compete.

The Tom Black Track was always good, but we were lacking in support area. We didn't have a good press box, didn't have a timing booth, and we were using a pavilion building that had a couple of bathrooms in it. We didn't have concession stands. It was a struggle. So we needed to improve those facilities. But those meets really helped during that time. They attracted world-class athletes that came to compete, and we were competing against the best. We had athletes on our team that were matching them, so that was a building piece. Chuck started it, and then Coach Huntsman came in and expanded on that for a number of years. I can remember one thing Chuck did. We built this track in 1966. Chuck comes in and says, "We're going to have the NCAA championship in 1969." Haywood said, "Exactly where are you going to put everything?" At that time we didn't have a press box. We had the pavilion building on one end that had some restrooms, but we didn't have many stands. We didn't have much at all. How are we going to do this? Well, that was a magical thing. I was running heat sheets about three o'clock in the morning every night during that event, and I was wondering, "What are we doing?" But we held that '69 championship.

We used rooms in the physical education building. How we pulled that off at that particular time is one of Rohe's great miracles. But that did put us on the track map because we did TAC championships later. We had conference meets all the time, and that aided us in how we operated the Dogwood Relays that turned into Sea Rays and then Tom Black Classic, so those big meets were there. You may recall that [on April 6, 1968] we had a dual meet on Tom Black Track against Villanova, and we drew 9,000 people. That's the largest attended meet I think we had. Those NCAA championships [1969 and 1995] were spread over days, and if you add them all up it would be that many people. But that was a high point. That was people coming out wanting to watch football players to see how they would do in track. We were running Richmond Flowers and those guys. And they would come out to see the 100 and 200 and 440 relays [with Olympic champions such as John Carlos]. And we had some great milers [like Marty Liquori]. That was a building point. That was an excellent meet at that time that Villanova meet.

TS: Why don't you talk about your role as athletic department historian? You've done an incredible job of archiving the records from year after year after year. Why don't you talk about that? How did that come about?

BF: Well, I guess that was one of the strengths. I've always been a kind of accounting/numbers guy, and the history part of it was always important to

me. I also saw when I came in, not to be critical, but that wasn't Haywood's strength. When I went in and started working there, I'd pull out a drawer and there'd be something in this drawer. I'd pull out a drawer here on the left, and it'd be the same thing. I was trying to figure out, "Why do you have that pile in two different drawers?" He would say, "Well, that way I can find it." So I began to straighten up the files and in that process creating files because you have a need that would come up. If I would do something that I felt was valuable then I would create a file for that. If I would write a story about a football player like Hank Lauricella then I would save that and put it in a file on Hank Lauricella because I figured sometime it's going to come up again. So I started All-American files in football, track All-American files, just a bunch of things. Then obviously the results of the meets were important to me. I tried to file all those results. A lot of times I was cutting out newspaper articles, where the coach would call it in and they'd put it in the newspaper. I was pasting them on 110 pound index, and I was putting it in a file titled "Track 1963." When you go back to look at records, that's what you're looking at. You're either going to microfilm or you go to that '63 file, and you could go through there, and I'd have something on every single meet that we would have that I could do it. That's kind of what happened. And I did that with other sports. What I found out was most of the records in track and the other sports started around 1925 or '26. That's about when we started track programs. They ran real good up until the War, and then World War II came along there was a changeover in personnel. They did not compete some teams because of the War. Even football was disbanded a year, basketball and others. When they started back up after the War, then some of the other sports didn't start immediately. Track didn't start back until 1947. So there was this hole. To be honest with you from '48 to '61 there was a huge hole. Gus's era. I hate to tell him that, but it was Gus's era. Gus's answer was General Neyland told him to worry only about football and basketball, and so there was a hole there. That's always bothered me. So I started trying to fill that hole in, and part of this historical stuff I've kept, and that's kind of what it is.

TS: There were some pretty good athletes even though they may not have been on very strong teams.

BF: They were. Ed Murphey at that time [1954-1957] was a good athlete [SEC outdoor mile champion in 1955, 1956, and 1957]. We had Howie Moss who was six feet seven inch high jumper [SEC outdoor high jump champion in 1961] and played on the basketball team, Herb Neff played basketball, and he was a high jumper [SEC outdoor high jump champion in 1950 and 1951]. Doug Atkins played basketball and football [and was second in the high jump at the SEC meet in 1952]. We had a bunch of dual sport athletes then that are interesting. So I tried to build that hole. My goal was when I retired I was going to do an all-time, all-records book that had every single meet, every single event, basketball, track, wrestling, whatever it was into one records book, all the competitions. That's what I had planned to do,

When I retired or I would say when [Athletics Director] Dave Hart decided not to honor agreements the university made with me, we were moving into a new building. We were moving out of Stokely. I was in Stokely Athletic Center from 1966 until the day I retired. All those records were in different places in Stokely Center. We had a concession stand and lower storage areas, and I knew where all those records were. We had established that we were going to build a new football end of the complex. Sports Information was moving in there. We were going to have a file area that all this material would be brought into. That was planned. About \$100,000.00 worth of the up-to-date filing system that was on tracks that would go together and lock just like the Howard Baker Center and just like libraries were doing. It would have been state of the art. Well, that was planned, and when Hart decided he didn't want to do the historian thing, those materials have been moved three times. In that process they've been taken out, put in a box, moved, and put back in a file cabinet. They weren't put back the same way they were taken out. In my research just this last week, I think it's all there, but it's hard to find. If there was a disappointing thing in my career, it was the fact that they didn't allow me to finish that job because I wanted to sort all of that. Since I was gathering it for 45 years, I was the only person who actually knew what was there.

When I started, you didn't have PDF files; you didn't have scanning; you didn't have any kind of copy. What you had was what you had. You had a photocopy of it or you had a printed item. There was a lot of printed stuff I saved. If I had a media guide that I produced, I saved ten of them because I didn't want to lose it. So there was a lot of that stuff. I guess the filing system for libraries now is three hard copies, so I would have perused that down to three hard copies. Then we would have scanned it and bring it up to today's world. But that didn't happen. The new guy that came in disbanded the filing system that we had. They didn't do that, and now what you have is a room no bigger than a cage, and all that stuff is in some file cabinets and boxes and not very good shape.

I told Dave Hart I'd do it for nothing. He did not want me involved, so I didn't do it. The new person they've hired [in July 2015] is named Ryan Robinson [senior associate athletics director for communications]. Hopefully we can get to where [we work together]. It needs to be done, not for me or for the guys who are there, but it needs to be done to preserve the history of the University of Tennessee. More than anything else that's why it needs to be done, and I need to be the guy to do it because I've got the fifty years, and nobody's got that many besides Gus. Haywood is deceased. He would have had it. But nobody has that experience. I'm not bragging about it. I'm just saying it's just a result of working so long. A lot of schools have historians. At the University of Mississippi, Langston Rogers retired [in 2010 from the position of senior associate athletics

director for media relations]. He's their historian [on a part-time basis as special assistant to the athletics director for history]. David E. Housel [director of athletics emeritus since 2006] does a lot of historical stuff for Auburn University, and there are several guys in my field who worked a long time at one school who had this position because it's a good thing for them to do. But that's the disappointment. I feel like I really let my school down a little bit, but there wasn't anything I could do about it. The times changed, and we were combining departments, and that was the way it went.

TS: But you're at least somewhat hopeful for the future?

BF: I am. I've been much more involved lately. In fact that's why I was able to collect some of the recent historical material.

TS: What about www.utsports.com? Did you have anything to do with creating that?

BF: At the time electronics were really changing, and the World Wide Web was coming in and e-mail, and the university decided the best way to approach this endless monster out here was to take one of my employees and allow them to develop the website. The first off was a guy named **David Graham and then Jeff Mueller**. A couple of guys who had worked for me started doing the website. They had the talent and so I just let that go. It was a little beyond me. I didn't have time to fool with it. I had a bunch of football stuff going. Coach Fulmer and all that, and so it built from there. We were able to obviously do a pretty good website, and then we started a broadcasting department. Here's where part of that comes in.

For a number of years I was custodian of all the football films. We used to do highlight films, and we had a storage area down there. If somebody wanted to borrow a football film, we had a check-in and check-out system. I was historian of all of those football films, checking them in, full game films and everything else. When we got the broadcasting department, then they took those films. What was unique about it was we had films back in 1928 of Gene McEver and Bobby Dodd. We had a record, historically, with films that nobody else had. We had all those films, and they're now in Broadcasting. So they've been taking those sixteen millimeter films, transporting them into discs, DVDs, and other things. Our archives of historical stuff is unbelievable. At one time the only film that we didn't have was one of the '56 Georgia Tech game [Tennessee 6, Georgia Tech 0]. We finally got a copy of that. And the '59 LSU game here [Tennessee 14, LSU 13] where we stopped Billy Cannon [on a two-point conversion attempt]. We got that one back. One thing that happened, we started looking for the 1950 game films, and there weren't any touchdowns there.

TS: Somebody cut them out?

BF: Yes. General Neyland wanted to make a highlight film, so he cut the touchdown plays out. We found the highlight film and were able to put it back in. There were some games missing, but we had a lot of games in that. I did that.

TS: Are they all digitized now?

BF: Most of them are. Starting in 2000 we began to do the modern thing if you know what I'm saying. Whenever I would take a photograph of somebody from 2000 on it was a pdf. We took a digital image, so I had prints of people up to 2000, and then 2000 was a turning point. Earlier the equipment wasn't there. The [digital] cameras weren't as good. Even though you had digital before 2000, when we got to 2000 you started to have pretty good equipment. So we started doing everything digitally then. Track is the same way. You started going out and shooting visual stuff, and you could move that around a little easier. I've got files of prints down [at the athletics department]. For All-American players there are five, six, seven prints in his file. Now what happened was, if I went and looked for an old football player or an old track star, and it wasn't digital, I made sure I scanned it. Now I had his image. Eventually, most of those we did. We did all of the All-Americans in football, all the All-Americans in basketball, and we included a lot of track guys. All those pictures that we have on the Rohe era website were ones that I had scanned, and that's kind of how that transferred. If I touched it I moved it to the new [technology].

TS: Do we have films of any sports other than football?

BF: There is some other filming, a lot of basketball games, and there's some track stuff there.

TS: How far back?

BF: Ernie Robertson was the videographer for the university. He did some track meets. We'd come out and shoot some Dogwood Relays and Sea Ray Relays. We didn't shoot every meet because financially those sports didn't have it in their budget to do it, but we did shoot some things, and we did take some pictures. An interesting thing we have a photographer that used to come in from Dallas, Texas, and his name was Jim Laughhead. He made Copley Vickers' picture in the track and Bob Redington. He was in for a football day, and you all were practicing, and Coach Rohe had several of those athletes come down there, and we made those pictures. One of those was a pole vaulter named Kodres; is that right?

[Copley Vickers joins the interview at this point]

CV: Ray Kodres [second in the pole vault at the 1964 SEC outdoor track and field championship meet].

BF: Yes, there were several guys that we made some of those old pictures with Jim. He'd come in and shoot these pictures.

TS: For films?

BF: This was actually photographs, because there wasn't a lot of track action. He did some guys running up the track and other track action, but all you used to have was just head shots. You were lucky if you had that. So we started the track file.

CV: Did they by any chance take a video of the 1969 NCAA meet here?

BF: I think they did; they did video that. I'm not sure, but Broadcasting may still have some of that. We should search and see what they've got over there.

CV: John Carlos [single-handedly won the meet for San Jose State].

BF: John Carlos, right. I view my career as moments in time. Things that you see that you're not going to see again. The other night I went to the baseball game, and I've covered baseball for about fifty years. The first time I saw somebody hit for the cycle in order happened at that baseball game.

TS: Cycle in order?

BF: In order, a single, a double, a triple, then a homerun, and Jordan Rodgers did that the other night [April 1, 2016] against Kentucky. He hit for the cycle. To me that's a moment in time athletically. Now, we've had two other guys hit for cycles. One of them was on the road, and I didn't see that. How many ninety-nine yard runs have you seen? I've seen one. I saw Kelsey Finch go ninety-nine yards against Florida down there [in 1977]. We were down there on the one-yard line and he broke one and went ninety-nine yards. Ivory Crocket, 9.0 100-yard dash world record on the Tom Black Track, a moment in time. I saw Dave Edgar, swimmer [at the University of Tennessee, 1969-1972], break the 50-meter world record in our pool. Moments in time. A three overtime game: we were playing basketball against Mississippi State in 1967, our first championship in basketball with Ray Mears—a three overtime game, and we won it. Widby was playing. Tom Boerwinkle played every minute of the game. When I look back at all these events, and somebody asks, "Who were your best athletes," well, they're all out there. I look at those things I've seen that I may never see again as being important things.

CV: That would be a good book.

BF: It probably would be. There are several other of those things that are interesting. The first time I went to a College World Series [1995], R.A. Dickey was pitching and he's still pitching [for the Toronto Blue Jays], but

R.A. Dickey throws thirteen innings almost, and we beat Oklahoma State to go to the College World Series, first time since '51. Well, I wasn't working in '51, so you know, things like that are moments that you don't forget. Tommy West [Tennessee football tight end, 1972-1975], I always kid him about this, Tommy West has the longest non-scoring touchdown in Tennessee history.

TS: Non-scoring?

BF: Non-scoring touchdown.

TS: How can you have a non-scoring touchdown?

BF: Well, I mean longest play without scoring. He got knocked out. It was eighty-three yards, and he gets knocked out at the one yard line. I kid him about that. So he has a record for the longest non-scoring pass play. I said, "You still have your record Tommy." Of course it's a bad record. Things like that, I think those are important. One time I did a thing for the Sports Hall of Fame talking about who I thought were the best athletes. Obviously, I think Peyton Manning is probably the best athlete all-around. Condredge Holloway was a legend before there were legends, I believe that. He was a legend before legends. He was the first black quarterback in the SEC. I think Ernie Grunfeld [1973-1977] was the most savvy basketball player I've ever seen. He couldn't jump as high; he couldn't do anything; but he knew how to play the game; and I really thought he was a great player. Edgar certainly as a swimmer. Richmond Flowers fits right in there. I mean Richmond with all that he was doing at that time [track and football] fits right in there with all of those guys. Ron Widby is the only four-sport letterman at Tennessee.

TS: I know football and basketball [All-America in football 1966 and second team All-America in basketball 1967], what else?

BF: He lettered in golf and baseball. He hit .300 on the baseball team one year, and he lettered in golf. Four-sport letterman. Richmond was close on the number of letters won. Widby would have three in football and three in basketball because freshman weren't eligible then. So he had eight [including baseball and golf]. Richmond had seven letters, **Bob Fox** was in there with about five letters. Not that many guys have been able to do that. Now in the 20s and 30s there were more guys doing it, but you didn't have as many sports. But just little things like that.

TS: Well, it sounds like you thoroughly enjoyed your career at Tennessee.

BF: I definitely did. That's for sure.

TS: Did you ever play sports yourself?

BF: Never. I was a manager. I was too small. When I was in high school as a senior I was five feet one inch. From my senior year in high school until my freshman year in college I grew five inches. The reason for that was my birthday is October 8. When I was going to school you could start school at five years old. So I was behind. If I had been born in December, I'd have been six and I probably would have been my regular height. I didn't grow until I got out of school! I was five-two or something. I grew about five inches that one year! It's what it was. I was a manager at West High School. At West High School, the baseball field was close to the tracks. I don't know if you remember, but if you know where Tobler Lane is and the high school, the baseball field was backed up against a creek and backed up towards a little mountain area there. Well, I lived in that project right beside West High School. It's called Sutherland Heights. All the kids played baseball on that field. Well, Coach Wright let me on the baseball team because he said I was the only one that could find the baseball. When they'd foul a ball, it would run into the honeysuckle, and it would run down towards the creek or down towards the railroad track. When we were playing ball we had to go find the ball. There was a certain way that they would roll. So he said, "I'm going to put you on the baseball team." He gave me a uniform. I picked up the uniform, and underneath it was a scorebook and a pencil. So I was the travelling scorekeeper. And then Coach Wright who played basketball at Tennessee. . .

TS: Are you talking about the Coach Wright that coached the UT baseball team [1963-1981]?

BF: Bill Wright, the baseball coach, but he was also a basketball coach at West High School. We won the city championship in '61, and he was the baseball coach at West High School. When I was getting ready to graduate he was hired in the athletics department as academic counselor and baseball coach because Coach George Cafego was coaching baseball in that time period, and he really didn't want to do it anymore. So Coach Wright was hired then. When I started working in the athletics department there was Coach Wright again. So I was his baseball travelling guy. That's another reason he would always let me keep the score book or whatever, and I travelled with baseball because of Coach Wright. So that's kind of a tie-in too. Gus's paperboy and Coach Wright's scorekeeper.

TS: All right. I think that may be a good thing to end on.

BF: That's good. We probably could have ended it a long time ago.

TS: Well, thank you.