

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH DAVID L. WAPLES

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

EDITED AND INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

for the

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Interview with David L. Waples  
Conducted by Thomas A. Scott  
Edited and indexed by Thomas A. Scott  
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TS: David Waples was Athletic Director from 1987 to 2010 and then retired and stayed this last year working on the history of the Athletic Department. Dave, we start all these interviews by just asking people to talk a little bit about their background, where you were born, when you were born, where you grew up, and things of that sort—where you went to school and so on.

DW: I'll be happy to give you that and hopefully make a long story short. I was born in Columbus, Ohio, where we lived on a farm which was 10 miles outside of Columbus, and five miles out in the country from where I went to school in Grove City. My father worked in the post office, and we lived with my grandmother, his mom. My grandfather had died in 1947, and so the farm was worked by our cousin who lived down the road, as we say in Ohio.

TS: Down the road a piece.

DW: Down the road a piece. It was a very idyllic childhood. You live out in the country, and you know everybody within seven or eight miles. You know all the farmers, you know all the kids, you play baseball from dawn to dusk, and there weren't any problems.

TS: Go rabbit hunting and that type of thing.

DW: I wasn't a big hunter, I just never got into shooting animals, but hunting and fishing was what a lot of people did.

TS: But not you? You were out there playing baseball.

DW: I loved sports. From a very early age (two or three years old) my parents used to take me to the Grove City High School basketball games.

TS: I guess you were a big Ohio State fan?

DW: I was, and still am, a big Ohio State fan. I always wanted to make a living in sports, but it wasn't going to be as a player. I wasn't a great athlete. I played football, basketball, and baseball in high school, but I wasn't a big star at any of them.

- TS: How are you defining a great athlete? Somebody who can get a scholarship to Ohio State?
- DW: Yes, someone who could get a scholarship to Ohio State (which two of my high school buddies did). I figured the only way I was going to see the Buckeye football games was by buying a ticket. The one thing that I regret in my childhood: the next farm down the road had a daughter who was a year older than me; so when she started to school, my parents started me to school when I was five. All the other kids were six, and so I was a year younger.
- TS: That put you at a disadvantage athletically.
- DW: It put me at a tremendous disadvantage, so in actuality I never had a senior year in high school because I was still a year behind. Anyway, I got a couple of scholarship offers from small schools in Ohio, but they were private schools, and there was no way that my parents could afford the difference. Then a family friend who had attended a college called West Liberty near Wheeling, West Virginia told me about the school. It was West Liberty State College then, but it's now West Liberty University. People think that's a nice private school; no, it's a state school. I visited there and met with the football coach and became a part of the football team. I played football four years and baseball two years.
- TS: What position did you play in both sports?
- DW: I started out as a quarterback in football and played the infield [2b/ss] in baseball.
- TS: I was going to say, you weren't big enough to play on the line.
- DW: No, I started out as a quarterback. Then after we got a new assistant coach my junior year, he switched me to flanker, which is a split end type of position.
- TS: Were you fast?
- DW: Well, I had good moves. In other words, I wasn't as fast as I would have liked to be, but I could catch the ball, and I had very good moves. You see a lot of these great kids today; they just run straight down the field, and somebody can stay with them. Their cuts and routes are poor.
- TS: By the way, what's your—NAIA or NCAA?
- DW: WL was in the NAIA as most schools were. Back then, if you weren't a major college or weren't a prestigious private school such as Rollins or Wittenberg, you were in the NAIA.
- TS: For the record, what years would you have been in college?

DW: From 1959 through '63. I got out in three and a half years, so I only had one senior semester. I graduated in January of 1963.

TS: But you started a year earlier to school so—what year were you born?

DW: November 14, 1941, three weeks before Pearl Harbor. Tom, I still remember having nightmares of Japanese planes landing in our corn field because of the fear that permeated everybody. I look back on that, and people say, “Well, we shouldn’t have used the atomic bomb.” I mean, there was such fear in this country—as a three year old I’m fearful—not of what I know, but of what I’ve heard.

TS: That would be a long way from Japan to the corn fields in Ohio.

DW: Well, you just never knew. They were firebombing Oregon.

TS: The Germans might be a greater threat.

DW: Well, this was the prevailing, obvious talk among people when I was a little kid listening to them.

TS: Sure, and then when you’re three and four years old...

DW: You’re very impressionable. Again, I went to West Liberty and had a great time. During my senior semester my old football coach who was then the athletic director asked me to run the intramural program, so I ran the intramural program for a semester while I was a senior.

TS: At West Liberty?

DW: At West Liberty.

TS: So that’s your first administrative experience.

DW: I really enjoyed doing it, and I also taught a portion of a class on sports.

TS: You taught a class as an undergraduate?

DW: Yes, as an undergraduate I taught part of a class on the history of sports. The A.D. sat in on it, and he said, “This is great.” I have very few talents, but that happened to be one of them that I really enjoyed.

TS: How did you get away with teaching a class? I mean, was this a credit class?

DW: Yes, and my friends were in the class.

TS: You had to grade them.

DW: It was a required P.E. class, and all the coaches taught. The A.D. just thought I would do a good job from being around me. He gave the grades.

TS: So you didn't have to worry about accrediting agencies?

DW: We didn't worry much about accrediting agencies there at West Liberty, I guess.

TS: How big a school was it?

DW: When I went there it was 900. I suppose when I graduated it was probably 1,500. You knew everybody, and we played in the West Virginia Conference. It was just a good situation. There were some eligibility questions among all the teams—I'll tell you a really quick story. When I was a freshman, we played Salem College out of Clarksburg, West Virginia, and we had a good football team. My buddy and I were seventeen, and everybody else was older. We had a lot of guys that had served in Korea that were just out of the service, twenty-four or twenty-five years old. These were men playing ball. We had a bunch of transfers from Ohio State, Pitt, Penn State, and so forth for one reason or another who hadn't made it, etc. Anyway, the game was at night in New Martinsville, West Virginia and we got beat and beat up. They had this big defensive end named Buck Grover, who killed us defensively and punted the ball out-of-sight. In November, one of the guys showed me a September *Sports Illustrated* story that said that the San Francisco 49ers had released two-year punter Buck Grover. That was an introduction to NAIA football. As a sidebar, West Liberty was great after World War II because that area was the best recruiting stop in the United States. If you read [James A.] Michener's book, *Sports in America* [Random House, 1976] he tells you that eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia, were the greatest recruiting areas in football.

TS: I know the University of Tennessee, where I went, recruited a whole lot of people out of the coal mines of Appalachia.

DW: Oh yes. Charley Trippi [originally from Pittston, Pennsylvania, All American football star at the University of Georgia]—and many others, yes. WL had great teams right after World War II because a lot of the guys that were at places like Tennessee before the War started wanted to come back home and go to school.

TS: Right, the GI Bill.

DW: Yes. WL had a great tradition. They had a twenty-two game winning streak back in the early 1950s, which was something because they were only playing about eight games a year. Anyway, I got to teach this class, and I remember being in the cafeteria one night, and Coach [Albert Michael (Al)] Blatnik—he was the

high school coach of John Havlicek and Phil Niekro at Bridgeport, Ohio—saw me.

TS: We are returning after a short pause where you mentioned that Coach Blatnik has just recently died [on 25 February 2011]. So, Dave, go on and tell your story.

DW: I get emotional when talking about Coach. I went back to see Coach Blatnik in 2009, and I'm so glad I did. He was like a father to me. Anyway, he's in the cafeteria eating one night and I'm in there, and he comes over—this is my senior year—and he said, “How would you like an assistantship to get your master's degree?” I had already gotten a teaching job in southern Maryland. A buddy and I had driven down there. [But] there were no [immediate] local jobs open because it was mid-year—it was in January 1963. Our former athletic director, which was his former coach, Dr. Joe Bartell, knew somebody at Temple University. To make a long story short, I got an assistantship there to get my master's degree and I finished in June of 1964.

TS: A degree in what?

DW: It was in health and physical education.

TS: What was your undergraduate degree?

DW: Physical education and history, a teaching degree. You had to have two subjects that you taught. You couldn't major in just physical education. All the guys that wanted to be coaches would have biology or history or math or whatever it might be so that they could teach. That has since gone away. They need to bring that back, Tom, because you can't get a job as a physical education teacher any more. But I went to Temple, and I remember that I had never been in a city as big as Philadelphia when I drove into it in late January of 1963. It was quite an experience, and during my time there, I arranged a couple of graduate assistant games against the faculty. Joe Winnick, who lived across the hall in my apartment building—I lived with three other graduate assistants, and Joe was a doctoral graduate assistant in physical education—comes in one day, and says, “Me and so-and-so and so-and-so just played three of the faculty in a three on three basketball game and beat them by about forty points.” I said, “Well, how many did you score, Joe?” He said, “I scored forty-eight.” I knew somebody on the *Temple News*; so I gave him this little tidbit; and he writes a big story on it: “Graduate Assistants Blast Faculty in Game.” Well, Tom, when I walked in the office the day after that story was published, I had two faculty members that were a little upset. So they arranged a three on three game with our guys, and they beat them pretty good. They said, “You give this story to your reporter.” I did, and he printed about a one sentence story in the paper. So they're still upset. To make a long story short, I organized this basketball game, five on five; graduate assistants versus the P.E. faculty. We had over 500 kids show up in South Hall in Philly.

TS: Each got to pick their best players?

DW: Each got to pick their best players. We did cheat a little bit. We got Temple's football trainer to play for us, but we didn't think that was that bad, and we beat them by one point. Then later in the spring I organized a softball game between the P.E. faculty and the graduate assistants (we lost 5-2). That was a tremendously professional group of scholars. Now you say physical education, that's for dummies. This group helped initiate what was the beginning of what now is called Sports Science. The first course I ever took at Temple was the Psychology of Sport. Of course, before, physical education was not what it could have been and not what it should have been. You took a lot of fluff courses, and you took courses that really weren't going to help you, but Temple at that time...

TS: It wasn't a scholarly discipline?

DW: It wasn't a scholarly discipline, but Temple made it that way. At most schools, to earn a masters degree, you took 10, three-hour courses, but at Temple you took fifteen, two-hour classes, and in almost every class a paper a week was required. I couldn't type, so it would take me two hours to write a paper and six hours to type it, and it was a mess. You're not getting much sleep and . . .

TS: Right, pre-computer and all that.

DW: Oh, yes, and if you make a mistake, and you've got to erase it, re-type it and keep it neat. But it was a tremendous experience for me, and when I got out of there, I decided to immediately pursue a doctorate because I wanted to coach. That's what I wanted to do, and I knew that if I got a doctorate, I could get my foot in the door at a university.

TS: But you wanted to coach, not be a professor.

DW: I wanted to coach, but not be a scholar. I wanted to teach. I knew teaching was going to be a part of it. I wanted to teach Physical Education, but I was not interested at all in doing research. At Temple they focused tremendously [on research]. My major professor was a renowned physiologist and had me collecting all this data for him. It interested me very little, but I did it because I was supposed to do it. I really wanted to go to Florida State for my doctorate. We had made a couple of trips to Florida when I was in college, and I wanted to go back. I wrote four schools about assistantships for my doctorate. I contacted New Mexico because [I thought it was] the land of enchantment—there's got to be something about New Mexico, the land of enchantment. I remember I had written and had received letters back from the four schools that interested me saying that I was being considered.

Time was moving, so one day I walk into the apartment, and one of my room-mates, Pete, handed me a letter from New Mexico. It said that they were still

considering me and so forth. He said, “This sounds pretty good; why don’t you call them?” I said, “Pete, I want to go to Florida State.” He said, “You haven’t heard anything real positive from Florida State.” So I got on the phone, and I called them. The head of the department said, “I really apologize. I meant to send you a letter. We want you to come to New Mexico. Will you come?” I said, “I will.” Monday I got a letter from Florida State saying they were offering me this, that and the other, and please call. I called the department head and told him that I had committed to New Mexico. He said, “Here’s what we can do for you above and beyond what they’ve offered you.” So I met with both department heads at the National PE Convention. I told Florida State that, “I can’t go back on my word to New Mexico. I gave him my word that I was coming.” When I told the New Mexico professor that, he said, “Well, we’ll match what they told you.” Before I went to Albuquerque, I had a tremendous deal.

I had a great first year at New Mexico. This was 1964-’65. Then the department head said, “I want you to pursue a Ph.D because you will represent us well.” I said, “No, I want to get an Ed.D.” It was because the Ph.D. required two foreign languages, and I wasn’t interested in doing that, Tom. I mean, I hope I’m not making myself look anti-academic, but I didn’t want to do it. Right at that time one of the football players that was in the dorm—I ran a dorm—said, “Hey, Coach Weeks”—Bill Weeks was the head football coach—“is looking for a graduate assistant, and I mentioned you; would you be interested?” I had gotten to know and talked with most of these guys, and I had all kinds of football stuff up on the walls and so forth. I said, “Sure.” So we went over and talked, and I remember Coach Weeks saying after we were finished, “Now, I don’t want to end up coaching the coaches. You’re going to have to just pull your own weight and contribute to the staff.”

So I just went back to the department head and said, “No, I don’t want to get a Ph.D. I’m going to work on an Ed.D.” Our relationship was never quite the same after that. But, anyway, I started working with the football staff. One thing I knew just from experience, just from working on a farm, that if you’re going to do something, you do it to the very best of your ability. I remember everybody smoked back then and everybody drank coffee, so every staff meeting I would bring coffee and cigarettes to all the coaches. I would come to the office early and leave late, while doing a lot of tasks to help the coaches. I got to do things other graduate assistants ordinarily didn’t do. For instance, I got to scout at Wyoming; they sent me and one of the coaches. Well, to be brief, I did not get a degree from New Mexico. I left there some hours short. I was there for two years, ’64-’65 and ’65-’66, and I regretted not getting a degree, but the football experience that I got was worth more than getting that degree. I went back to Ohio and taught a year. They had built a high school right next to our farm. In fact they bought some land from us to build the high school. So I got a job there for 1966-’67, saw most of the Ohio State football games, and coached football and helped the basketball coach with sports information, and then coached baseball as the assistant.



TS: Head football?

DW: No, assistant football and assistant baseball, though I was head JV coach in both sports.

TS: And then you helped with basketball.

DW: I helped with basketball in a non-coaching capacity. And, at that time, I contacted some people that I knew, and they helped me get a graduate assistantship to West Virginia University beginning in the fall of 1967. I had my foot in the coaching realm, and I was determined to get a doctorate. Well, Tom, I got a call. I was all set to go to West Virginia. This had to be in April or May of 1967. Coach Blatnik called and said, "I've decided to complete my doctorate at West Virginia, and I want you to come to West Liberty to coach and teach." "When I get done, you go. Will you do this for me?" I said, "I'll do it." So I went back to West Liberty, and I coached for two years (1967-68 and 1968-69) there. I was an assistant in football and the head baseball coach.

Leo Miller had been appointed as the baseball coach. After meeting him, I said, "Leo, I'd liked to be your assistant." He said, "Fine." So I started to tell him all the stuff I wanted to do, and he went to Coach Blatnik and said, "Dave's got some good ideas; how about letting him be the head coach?" I wanted to go on a southern trip and all this kind of stuff and Coach Blatnik gave me the job. That first year Coach Blatnik then told me, "We need a swimming coach and you're it." I wasn't a very good swimmer, Tom, and fortunately when people ask, "Did you have a good year?" I said, "Nobody drowned (we did finish second in the conference)." So that was a good year. Then next year the basketball coach asked me to help him coach and recruit and I got out of the swimming assignment. I left WL after Coach Blatnik returned with his doctorate and he secured an administrative assistant job for me at WVU to pursue my doctorate. I went to West Virginia University in '69 through '71.

TS: Blatnik had graduated?

DW: Yes, he received his doctorate. He had several prior courses toward it from both Pitt and WVU. I went to WVU and worked with Dr. Tom Sheehan, who was from Columbus. He had gone to Columbus Aquinas High School and got his Ph.D. from Ohio State, so we had a lot in common. I was his administrative assistant. I could tell you a thousand stories, but I won't. When I arrived on campus, the now deceased baseball coach, Dale Ramsburg—we had beaten WVU both of my years at West Liberty—asked me to be his assistant. The first year I said, "I can't be doing what I did at New Mexico." I brought in a lot of hours, so the second year I became his assistant. We had a great year. We were 27 and 6, but did not get into the NCAA tournament. We beat Buffalo, and they put Buffalo in. I don't want to go into that, but it was really heartbreaking for the players. We had some great kids, and it was a big injustice.

I wanted to coach again. I'm now leaving West Virginia in the spring of 1971, and I remember Dr. Peter Yost—he had been a star football player at West Virginia, and was the dean of the School of Physical Education—got me two or three jobs, but they weren't coaching jobs. I wanted to go south because I wanted to coach baseball. I took a job at Jacksonville State in Alabama for 1971-'72. I did not coach, [but] I got to know all of the coaches, real well. In fact, West Liberty got into the NAIA playoffs that year, and drew Livingston, which is now West Alabama. Charlie Pell who was later the head football coach at Clemson and Florida was the coach at Jacksonville State. He gave me a bunch of scouting reports which I sent back to West Liberty. They got beat, but anyway....

I wanted to coach, so I'm trying to leave Jacksonville State after one year. I'm in the South, and you may know this, but it's very difficult for somebody from the North sometimes to get into a southern university because they don't want them "damn Yankees" coming down here. So I think being at Jacksonville State in Alabama said, if this guy got a job at Jacksonville State, he's okay. There was an opening at Valdosta State. I had heard of them because they had very good baseball. The head of the VSC physical education department was a Temple graduate, so that helped me get the job. I became the assistant baseball coach under Tommy Thomas (the top winner in DII history). The A.D. then told me, "We're going into the NCAA. We need a cross country team, and you're going to be the cross country coach." I didn't know much about the sport, except it was running, so I became the cross country coach.

At the basketball games, they had a local person introduce the teams, and then that was it. So I told the A.D., "Somebody's got to announce the games, the fouls and all this kind of stuff." I started doing that, enjoyed it, and did it the whole time I was at Valdosta State. We became very good in baseball. They had been good, but we (Coach Thomas was a master coach) became even better and won the national championship in 1978. In cross country, the first three years I just recruited kids on campus because I was busy coaching baseball. Then some of the coaches started razzing me because we had done poorly one year. So I went out, and I recruited. We became very, very good. We were one of the best schools in the country in Division II. We finished eighth in the nation in 1976; eighth again in 1977; and third in 1978. Our budget was miniscule, but I was able to recruit good kids. I found, Tom, if you and I were going to play each other, you can have all the good coaches, but I'll take the good players, and I'll win every time. I still don't claim to know a lot about cross country, but I know you can get good runners and win at cross country. We did, and we got very good.

VSC changed presidents in about 1977. Dr. Walter Martin had been the long-time president there, and he retired. They brought in a fellow from Francis Marion [College] named Dr. Hugh [Coleman] Bailey. As soon as he got there, I tried to talk to him about starting football. "Well, we can't do that." I told him that West Georgia started football, and we could do the same thing. "Oh, no, no, no, we don't want to do that," he said. Well, one morning the phone rings at 6:30

A.M. It's coach Grant, the athletic director, a former Georgia football star, and one of the greatest all time people in the world. I could sit here for the next two days and tell you Billy Grant stories. What a guy! I mean, just a wonderful man. Fantastic athlete! He says, "Hey, boy." That's how he'd talk, "Hey, boy." He said, "Get dressed; we've got a meeting at 7:15 in the president's office. I think we're going to start football." Well, I walk in, and I'm sitting there with Coach Grant, and the vice president for business. About a minute later Dr. Bailey walks in, and says, "We're starting football. The SOB is starting football, we're starting football!" The SOB was a president named Dale Lick at Georgia Southern. For some reason, I have no idea what the rub was, but there were some problems between him and our president. They started football, so we're going to start football. He said, "Dave, how much is it going to cost?" Of course, I knew. He said to Sam Brooks who was our VP for business, "Sam, how are we going to get this money?" He said, "We'll just increase the student fees." He said, "Coach Grant, I want Wright Bazemore to be the head football coach." Well, Coach Bazemore had retired at Valdosta High School. He was the greatest coach in Georgia high school football history. In fact, he had been a Mercer teammate of Spec Landrum. He coached at Valdosta High School twenty-eight years.

TS: I remember when they were so great.

DW: They won thirteen state championships, and that doesn't count the times they were second. Well, he goes to coach Bazemore, and of course coach Bazemore doesn't want to coach. So he recommends two coaches at Valdosta High School. I quit coaching baseball in 1980 or '81, and we dropped cross country after the 1978 season. Tom, I was spending \$3,000 or \$4,000 out of my own pocket for cross country. We just couldn't afford it at the level that I had taken it. I couldn't do for the kids what I wanted to do, what they deserved, equipment and all that kind of stuff. We started football, and they brought in Jim Goodman to be the head coach. He was from the Air Force Academy. I had gotten over 300 high school seniors to visit VSC one weekend in the fall when the Air Force had an open date and helped him through the first summer, but I didn't want to coach anymore. I wanted to go into athletic administration.

Coach Grant was at VSC, and he was the greatest AD, as far as I'm concerned, in history, and there was just no place for me to go. I started looking around for jobs, and I wrote three or four places. I got a phone interview from this one place. I ran the intramural program for a year, and it was right in the middle of an intramural crisis. I wish I had the transcript of that phone call because it was probably the worst phone interview in the history of phone interviews. I had two guys I was about ready to shoot sitting in my office, and the phone rings. Anyway, I had applied for the commissioner's position for this new league over in Texas and Louisiana that they were calling the Gulf Star Conference. It had Southeastern Louisiana, Nichols State, Northwestern Louisiana, Sam Houston, Steven F. Austin, and Southwest Texas. Southwest Texas was the college of Lyndon Johnson, and it's now Texas State. I think that sounds so much better.

Well, my chances of getting that job were probably going to be about zero, but I applied for it anyway. I then got a call, and the girl on the phone was the administrative assistant to the president of Southeastern Louisiana. She said, “You’ve been chosen as one of ten people to interview for this job. We’re meeting with four in Dallas and six in New Orleans, but we’re not paying anybody’s way. Would you be interested?” I said, “I’d be more than interested.” I really prepared for this, Tom. There was no Internet or anything. This was 1983. But I prepared for this. I drove over there, and we were sitting in a room at the airport in New Orleans, and we started talking. Every time something would come up, I had something in my briefcase. Now I didn’t carry a briefcase, you know, but I did for this. I’d pull it out and so on and so forth. It was an hour interview, and we kept going on and on for about forty-five minutes. The committee was the athletic director at Nichols State, the vice president of Southwest Texas, and the president of Southeastern Louisiana, Dr. Larry Crane. After forty-five minutes, Dr. Crane said, “Let’s take a break. Dave, we’re going to keep you a little longer than normal, and I’m going to tell you something, if we don’t choose you for this job, you’re going to come work for me.” I said to myself, “I’ve got it made! I’ve got a new job now!”

I came back for the final interview in December in Dallas at the NCAA convention and got the job as commissioner. My office was in the home I bought in Lake Charles, Louisiana. It was a great job. In 1986, Lamar University, Arkansas State and Louisiana Tech dropped out of the Southland Conference to join the Sun Belt Conference, which meant the SLC was down three schools. We had seen Southeastern Louisiana drop football after the 1985 season, which made the other presidents irate because we lost an automatic bid to the Division I-AA championships. When this happened the Southland came in and grabbed our three Texas schools, which meant that we didn’t have a league any more. The league dissolved after 1986-’87, which gave me a year to look for a job. I had two early job offers, but declined both because they were up North. I then got a call from Bret Campbell, who was the assistant basketball coach here (at Kennesaw College), who had been a star player at Valdosta State. As the VSC announcer I nicknamed him “Soups”—you know, Campbell soups. So he was Soups Campbell. He’d make a goal, and I’d go something like, “Goal by Soups,” or “What a Soup!” Just all kind of silly stuff. He called, and said, “We’ve got this athletic director’s job open and I’d like you to apply.”

TS: He didn’t hold that against you?

DW: No, he didn’t hold that against me. I made him a household word on campus! He and Eddie Brown—Eddie became Downtown Eddie Brown. Sometimes we would go, “Eddie Brown, from the parking lot,” you know, if he hit a long one. But he called me and said, “This job is open.” I thought, “I love Georgia. I’m still vested in the Georgia system. Let’s take a look at this.” So I got an interview and did very well and ended up taking the job. It was quite a difference compared

to where I had been. Again, Kennesaw College was very small. Coach Landrum had no money. I mean, no money. He was raising money to run the athletic program.

TS: You were showing me the figures a few minutes ago before we got started.

DW: I'm not going to speak for Coach Landrum, but one of the things he wanted was a very well rounded athletic program. He started a lot of sports, eleven or twelve, and had to use part-time coaches for the most part. You just can't do that. It just doesn't work over a period of time. There were all kinds of problems, but I want to say this: He did a masterful job as athletic director. Everything when I walked in here was in place. Everything was there; all the infrastructure was there. The thing that was missing was facilities—and money. We were really hurting in those areas. He did everything he could, and I have the most admiration in the world for Coach.

TS: You showed me a figure on the athletic budget for 1987-'88, which would have been your first year. It was \$431,500.00, the entire budget for athletics. That's not a lot to operate on and pay salaries.

DW: It's not a lot to operate on, but, anyway, I walk in, and there were two great things right off the bat. Number one, we had a president, Dr. Betty [L.] Siegel, who understood what athletics could do for this university. She had this grandiose plan of taking this little old commuter school and making it nationally known. I know there were people on campus that said, "It's a waste of money. Why doesn't she stay on campus? We're a commuter school. We're serving this little quadrant. Let's just leave it at that." Well, that wasn't Dr. Siegel, so she knew what athletics could do. She said to me, "I brought you here to take athletics the same way that this university is going. I don't know anything about athletics. I'm trusting you to do it." I said, "Well, I think you're in pretty good hands, but we'll find out."

The other thing, we had this old crotchety guy who was the Vice President for Business [and Finance] named Roger [E.] Hopkins. In fact, we had a personnel director named Bill Wallace, and Bill said that he actually thought his name was "Damn it, Bill," because every time he walked into Roger's office, Roger would go, "Damn it, Bill!" But Roger was—and I get a little teary-eyed talking about Roger—the perfect person for Dr. Siegel to have because she was off a lot of time making hay for the university and making the university known, and he was back here running the corn picker and all that kind of stuff, bailing the hay, et cetera.

I got to know Terri Thomas [Arnold], his assistant, very, very well, and we became great friends. There were times I would walk over there because I needed something, and she would say, "No, no, not a good day." So I'd walk back to my office. The phone would ring on a particular day, and Terri would say, "Roger's got about a half hour. He's in a great mood." I would say, "I'll be over there in a

minute.” The first thing he’s going to tell you is, “No.” Then he’s going to say, “Hell, no.” Then the next day you might get what you want. He was an ultra-conservative, Tom, and I was a fiscal conservative, so we got along very, very well. But Roger Hopkins did as much for this university as anybody in the world, and I want that part of the record because he was such a great man. I think about him often. What a guy! I remember Coach Whitlock and I went down to see him when he was in a recovery place. It wasn’t a hospital; I don’t know what you call it.

TS: Rehab or assisted living or something.

DW: Yes, it may have been assisted living, and he was just so great. He said, “Guess who called me today?” We said, “Who?” And he said, “she [Dr. Siegel] did.” I’ll be darned. He died about a week later. It was just the saddest thing.

TS: It wasn’t hospice was it?

DW: No, you had to wear a mask when you went to see him, so they were afraid that he had something. It may have been some kind of a hospice, but there wasn’t anything wrong with him except he had this—whatever it was. That was a dark day. Great man! Anyway, when I first got here, we became very good friends in everything but money because you had to pry it out of Roger. I mean, Roger didn’t give me anything because he was a friend of mine, but he asked me what we needed. During his tenure, which ended in, I think, 1996, I never asked him for anything he didn’t give me. But you’ve got to remember I didn’t ask for very much.

TS: I think Roger must have gone to every baseball and softball game we ever had here.

DW: Yes, he did. What a loss to the university! One thing I said I needed after I arrived was to get the gym cleaned up. One of Coach Landrum’s biggest headaches was the relationship between Physical Education and Athletics.

TS: We didn’t have enough facilities for either one.

DW: Right. I remember Dr. Herb Davis, who was our faculty athletic representative and a great one for us—I want to say that was another guy who really was our friend—said, “How do you solve this age old problem?” I said, “I’m glad you recognize this because this is a problem all over the country, between Physical Education and Athletics, no matter where you go. The only way you’re going to solve it is have the same person running both departments.” Which they do some places. He said, “Well, that’s never going to happen here.” I said, “Well, then you’re going to have this problem.” And we had it. The one thing I will say about Roger, Roger was fair. He had to intervene two or three times to essentially tell the Physical Education people, “Hey, we’ve got an Athletics department, and

they've got a right to do this, that and the other." But I never told him, "The heck with PE; we've got to do this for Athletics," because I knew, number one, he'd never do that.

But the first year, he got the gym floor all reconditioned. The new lines were basically basketball lines. The other lines were put in muted colors. You could barely see them. He let me do whatever I wanted to on the walls. We put up this, that and the other [pictures, plaques, etc.] and made both the gym and lobby area very attractive. We got constant compliments on it. Even though we had just a very little bit of money, we did an awful lot with it. My philosophy when I came, Tom, was to win, and to do it right. If you're going to get the bang for your buck, you've got to win in the sports that people recognize. If you win in tiddlywinks, there will be a few tiddlywinks people out there that are really for it. If you win in football and basketball and baseball, then you're going to get that notoriety. I started putting our money into coaches' salaries and scholarships.

For the individual sports we had part-time people. That's not a good situation, but I wanted the best use of funds. In the spring of 1987—and I came here in July—Dr. Siegel and Spec and Herb Davis and Roger decided they were going to cut the number of sports down from about twelve to four, the two basketball teams, baseball and slow pitch softball. Now I consider slow pitch softball a club sport because it did not have a national championship. The NCAA didn't even recognize it, and the NAIA allowed only district play, so I considered it a club sport. Coach Whitlock was the coach and did a fantastic job with it, but I said, "Coach, we're going to get you a real team here. We're going to get you fast pitch as soon as I can get some money."

I want to throw in something about Dr. Siegel. To her credit, she never got involved in Athletics except sometimes when she would go to a party on Saturday night, and one of her friends or some community person would say, "Hey, here's what you need to do." So she would always get a hold of me Monday morning telling me what she thought we needed to do. She did this about three times about golf. Finally, I revived the golf team in about 1990 because I thought it was a good idea, and we needed to start expanding sports. We had Bill Hill on campus who ran the custodians out of Plant Operations. Bill was a good golfer. He had been a former professional baseball player, and a great football player in high school in Pennsylvania. He was a youth coach, so I made him the golf coach. We couldn't afford—we didn't even pay him. Roger okayed it, and Bill did a great job. You can look at the records. Bill passed away in 1996 or '97, and he had to give up our golf team in '95 or '96. He was a top coach.

Then we decided we were going to go in the NCAA—Dr. Siegel and I and Roger. So in 1992 we made application, and we got in the Peach Belt conference. We had a two year transition period, which was difficult. One of the coaches which I'm not going to mention said, "No, I'm not going to do that." I said, "Well, the train is leaving the station now, so you can either get on it and go with us or you

can find another mode of transportation.” But that was a great move for us, moving from the NAIA to Division II.

TS: So the coach wanted to stay with the NAIA?

DW: Well, it was a comfort level. He knew he was going to have to be playing better schools and better teams and so on and so forth, but it was the best thing that we did at that point in time. We didn't quite have the facilities or the infrastructure as far as assistant coaches and other personnel, but I told everybody from day one that we're here to serve the coaches and the players. Your job is to assist the athletes and the coaches, and my job was to make our program the very best it could be and get as much publicity out of it as possible and also serve the regular students. They're paying an athletic fee. They should have good teams, and we should present an opportunity for them to be spectators and have pride in their school. Most of our emphasis was put into the team sports. Not that we totally neglected the individual sports, but we did not have the infrastructure or the money to hire full time coaches. I did try to provide the budgets that could make everybody competitive. There's nobody that's ever coached here when I was the athletic director that could honestly say, “He didn't give me enough money to be competitive.”

TS: When we went to NCAA Division II, I'm sure we had to beef up the budget for that compared to NAIA.

DW: The budget was increased a little bit, yes, but, Tom, the one thing that was good about Kennesaw State, since most of our budget, about 77 percent was based on student fees, is that the enrollment kept going up, so our budget, without increasing fees, increased some each year. We always had one of the lowest athletic fees in the state....

TS; Oh, we had the student body.

DW: We had the student body. Now Georgia State on the other hand had many more students than we did, and their athletic fee was much higher than ours. Neither Roger nor I felt—you get to a law of diminishing returns, and Roger was just a great person in knowing how to get the most out of a dollar—that significantly increasing fees would guarantee winners. We could have increased the fees and kept up with all the other schools in the state and had a lot of money and spent a lot of money, but we weren't going to get much more than we got with the money that we had.

TS: Was the baseball coach full-time or was that a part-time position?

DW: When I came here, there were six people in the department including myself. The four head coaches (baseball, the two basketball coaches and slow-pitch softball) were full time. I was full time, and Mrs. [Glenda] Reagan, who was Coach



Landrum's executive assistant, was full time. So we had six full time, and then we had Mike [Michael D.] Redd who was a part-time trainer, and there were a couple of part-time or unpaid or volunteer assistant coaches. What I tried to do as time went on was to elevate positions to full-time [*Note: Athletics now has over 70 full and part-time employees*].

TS: So we only have one basketball coach period.

DW: Yes, we had one full-time basketball coach.

TS: Plus anybody who wanted to volunteer.

DW: Or somebody that wanted to volunteer. If we could find them something else to do on campus we could get them some pay.

TS: What do we have now, at least four [basketball coaches], don't we?

DW: We have four full-time basketball coaches for both the men and the women and a part-time operations director for each. That's the person that does the scheduling and gets the hotels and that kind of stuff.

TS: So things have changed.

DW: Things have changed, and they changed in the correct way. It just took quite a while to do that.

TS: But Dr. Siegel from the beginning said this institution is expanding; we want to have at least a regional reputation, I guess, at that time; and so athletics should match what academics are doing.

DW: Years ago, Tom, this was in the 1950s, they got a new president at the University of Oklahoma, and he endeared himself to the citizens of the State of Oklahoma by saying, "Folks, I promise you that I'm going to make the University of Oklahoma something that our football team can be proud of."

TS: Okay. Is that when Bud Wilkerson was the coach?

DW: Yes it was! [laughter] But Dr. Siegel expected the Athletics department to fly right along with her changes in the strides in the university, and so did I. It's just that there are some things you can't do if you don't have the money. We couldn't hire all full-time people, and so it's been a gradual process, and it will continue to be. We still don't have the kind of money that other schools have in the situation we're in here in 2011. We're in much better shape than we used to be, but I go back to that old thing I said about the law of diminishing returns. There's fat that can be cut out in anything and any place. As you expand, Tom, one of the basic things about coaching is that the great coaches make fewer recruiting mistakes. If

you're going to recruit twenty-five football players in a year, you better make certain twenty of them can play and are going to play. When you are an administrator like an athletic director, and you hire staff and coaches and so forth, you better make certain that most of them are pulling their load, that they're helping with solutions rather than creating problems. There is not a place in the world that you don't have people creating problems.

TS: Sure. In the news recently was a controversy between the presidents and the SEC football coaches over whether they're going to have twenty-five or twenty-eight recruits a year and the gray-shirting, where they sign more recruits than they have scholarships, assuming that some of them won't meet the eligibility requirements or won't show up in the fall.

DW: Yes, that over-signing business and gray-shirting is a mess because the one thing they can do and the one thing they've always done, is run off players. You can make it so inhospitable that the kid leaves, and that's a shame, but that's just the way the world works. I don't want to digress, but anyway....

TS: At any rate, the key to being a successful coach is to be a good recruiter.

DW: Exactly, be a good recruiter, and of course, you've got to be able to coach too, but I'd rather have the players. Anyway, we went in the NCAA Division II, and I won't go into much detail, but between 1994 and 2005 we rose to the top.

TS: Oh, yes, we won a lot of national championships.

DW: We won five NCAA national championships and an NAIA baseball national championship. I think we are still the only Division II school in history that ever won national championships in four different team sports. Now, there are people out there that win a lot of national championships. I'll give you an example. They say every year Stanford's got the best athletic program in the country, and that may be true when you consider that they're good in water polo, et cetera. If you take the sports that people out there really care about, look at Connecticut last year. They won the Big East and got into a BCS Bowl game (losing to Oklahoma). Their men's basketball team won the national championship. Their women's basketball team got to the Final Four. Their baseball team, I think, got to the Super Regional or at least the Regional tournament. But, they're probably not even going to be ranked in the top 25 of the best athletic programs in the country, you see, because of the way the system is judged. And, Tom, I'm going to be a little like General Patton now. I devised a system, a great system and sent it in. It was printed in the *NCAA News* that showed how you could load this to really get to who had the best sports programs. But as General Patton said—they didn't listen to me, they rejected it—but if you really did it the way it could be done, it would show what schools were best, emphasizing the most watched sports. But here's Connecticut, probably not even going to be rated in the top 25.

TS: Texas A&M seems to be winning an incredible number of championships.

DW: They are doing very well, but they would trade all of them for a national championship in football. Anyway, we won in Division II. We had great coaches. That didn't have anything to do with the athletic director; we just had great coaches.

TS: How many of the people that were here when you came are still here? Scott Whitlock, was he here when you came?

DW: Scott Whitlock was here when I came, and Mike Redd. Even though Mike is now the assistant registrar and still on campus. I believe those are the only two.

TS: I would think so. How much of your job is, I guess, recruiting good coaches?

DW: Well, the major job of an athletic director is making certain that the little fires that start every day, no matter what they are, are put out before they become big fires. The biggest problem you've got is personnel. If I didn't have to deal with personnel, I'd still want to be the athletic director. But I was here for twenty-three years, and I had a great time, and I got out when I needed to get out. But with personnel you've also got this budget issue all the time. The rest of it is a lot of fun to deal with. The larger you get, the more challenges, I don't want to use the word problems, the more challenges you have. We went from Division II to Division I, and when that happens, you have [more problems]. But, it was the best move we ever made.

TS: This was 2004?

DW: 2005-2006 was our first year in Division I, but we weren't an official Division I member until 2009-2010.

TS: It seems like [the probation period] lasted forever.

DW: We had a four-year transition period that didn't bring us to our knees, but it really impacted things

TS: That last year in Division II, the women's soccer and men's basketball won national championships.

DW: The year before the last year, 2003-2004.

TS: Oh, we did one more year as Division II?

DW: One more year, right. Well, the women's soccer had moved on. They didn't play in Division II that year. They played in Division I. The men's basketball team just had a bad end of the season or they might have repeated as the national

champions. We were at the apex or as people used to say, at the pinnacle of our success.

TS: So that was a big shock to go to Division I?

DW: It was a big shock, and we had some resistance. Some of the coaches weren't looking forward to doing this, but the big thing, Tom, about going to Division I—and this sounds stupid—is that ESPN ticker in basketball, which would include Kennesaw State. I used to have people the first couple of years call me and say, "Hey, I saw your score last night." Then, rather than playing whatever school you were playing in Division II, you're playing Notre Dame or you're playing Minnesota or you're playing Western Michigan. I mean, it just means the world to the players and students. Or you're playing Georgia Tech, or you're playing Georgia. It's just such a better situation for everybody even though you might get hammered for those four years. That four-year process was brought in, the NCAA said, to acclimate you. It was thrown out there to keep you from moving up. They're not interested in [more Division I schools]—because the pie gets cut to a degree in more slices, and you don't get quite as big a slice.

TS: So it's closed shop almost.

DW: It's sort of a closed shop, but people all the time gripe about the little schools, [yet] the big schools, if they wanted to, could get together and say, "Good-bye, we're going to form our own organization." We would all be back [where we were] in the NAIA again. When we were transitioning into Division II, those two years, '92-'93 and '93-'94, we were spending—which isn't a whole bunch now—thirty, forty, fifty thousand dollars a year on post-season play because the NAIA didn't give you much if any money for the post-season. If your tennis team went to the tournament in the NAIA, you paid every cent of it. They didn't give you a nickel. The NCAA paid for the post-season tournaments. It just made sense to move. For Division I, this is the first year that we ever got any of the money, and it probably adds up to two, three, four hundred thousand dollars. I just don't have those figures in my head.

TS: Because this was the first year that we could go to the tournaments?

DW: Right. Well, last year was the first year. You get paid a year in arrears; after the fact. When you go to work, you don't get paid that day; you wait a month. For some reason I think they want you to show up before they pay you. It was a great move, but particularly in men's basketball, it really threw bad things at us. I feel very badly about Tony Ingle losing his job [as head men's basketball coach], because Tony didn't forget how to coach. Tony didn't become a bad coach. Of the eighteen or twenty teams that made this transition [at the same time as KSU], Kennesaw State had about the fourth or fifth best record during the four-year transition. The schools that had the good records were the Dakotas because they are the flagship schools of the state, North Dakota, North Dakota State, South

- Dakota, South Dakota State. They all had pretty good basketball records because they could still recruit good kids. It was just a shame; it really hurt our men's basketball coaches' ability to recruit.
- TS: You couldn't recruit if you couldn't go to the tournaments?
- DW: Right, that's the first thing. Schools that hadn't been to the NCAA tournament since Lincoln died would say to a recruit, "Hey, why would you go to Kennesaw? You can't go to the NCAA tournament." Of course, they hadn't been there for years themselves.
- TS: They at least have the potential, the possibility.
- DW: I want to mention some of our coaches. I want to mention Scott Whitlock who is the dean of our coaches. What a great guy!
- TS: He became associate athletic director when we went to the Division 1, didn't he?
- DW: I believe so. I've got all that. I gave you a sheet with that on it. I think that's true. He was like my number one man. He had an office right next to mine.
- TS: Right. The 2004-'05 school year is when he became associate athletic director.
- DW: He was a senior assistant athletic director for a while. He was on a little higher level because he was, as I say, my number one man. The thing about Scott I'll say, he never hesitated to tell me what he thought, and that's good. He also accepted when I said, "Thank you, but I'm not going to do that." He's an excellent administrator and just an excellent coach. He won thirty different softball championships, I believe.
- TS: He started when it was slow pitch softball.
- DW: He started as an assistant and then . . .
- TS: Oh, so there was a coach before?
- DW: Coach Landrum relieved that coach, and then he gave it to Scott, and Scott just took off and did a great job. As I mentioned, the first year of fast pitch, he had never coached that sport, never been around it, and the little bit I knew is that the first thing you do is go out and get yourself a great pitcher and a great catcher. He fortunately had an assistant, Don McKinlay, who had been a baseball player here and was completing his degree. Coach Whitlock hired him as a student assistant. Don had a childhood friend up in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. We sorely needed a top pitcher, and he said, "She's pretty good." So Coach Whitlock on his word recruited her, and she wasn't just pretty good—this was Dyan Mueller.

TS: She was on the national team in Canada, wasn't she?

DW: No, I don't think she was. That was a girl named Colleen Thorburn, who later caught for us, that was on the national team. If I had one softball player to pick to either pitch the big game or to hit with two out and the bases loaded in the bottom of the seventh it would be Dyan Mueller. This girl had as much heart as anybody you could ever mention. Now, there are other people comparable. He got her, and he learned how to coach fast pitch softball quickly, and he's just been a marvelous coach. I can't say enough about Scott both as a coach and as an administrator and as a person. What a great guy! We were fortunate enough to hire baseball coach Mike Sansing after the 1991 academic year when our former coach left to take a job scouting for the major leagues. I had not hired Mike the year before.

TS: You had not hired him?

DW: I hired Steve Givens.

TS: That's the one that left to scout?

DW: Yes, he's the one that left to be a scout because of the money. The second time around I was smart enough to hire Mike, and what a wonderful person! A parent would have to be so blessed to have their son play for him. What a great coach! His record speaks for itself. In 1998 he compiled a 61 and 5 slate, which I think is the best record in the history of NCAA Division II, percentage-wise. Now I could be wrong. Somebody may have gone 37 and 2 or something like that. I don't know.

TS: This was better than our championship years then.

DW: Yes, the record was.

TS: You started to say Florida Southern?

DW: Florida Southern used to have great teams. Hal Smeltzly was their coach. He'd have two great pitchers, and they would only play twice a week. "[Warren] Spahn and [Johnny] Sain and two days of rain," you know, for the 1948 Braves. He was just a fantastic coach, won all kinds of national championships down there. Mike Sansing is a great coach.

We were going to start cross country in the fall of '92. We had no money to hire anybody, so I asked around, and they mentioned Tom [Thomas B.] Roper and

Dave [David L.] Morgan. I talked to both of them, and Tom just didn't feel that he could do it, so I asked Dave Morgan to be the cross country coach, because he had been the cross country [coach] before. On the official day that I was going to appoint him, he brings this guy over, and he's got a beard and so forth, and [Dave] said, "I'd like Stan here to be my assistant." I said, "Okay, I'm Dave Waples."

He said, "I'm Stan Sims. I teach in the Math department." Stan [Stanley G. Sims] had a beard then. He didn't look anything like a coach. We talked later on. He had coached track and football at Cherokee High School and had been a high school football player in Florida and also walked on at the University of Florida as a freshman. I don't know how long he lasted, but he was a walk on. Anyway, after year two I replaced Dave with Stan. David just didn't recruit very much, and you're not going to win without recruiting. As soon as he was designated as the head coach, Stan sent letters to 1,500 high schools in Canada to show he knew what was going on. We got some great runners over the years out of Canada. The first year he was the coach was our first year in the Peach Belt. He ran away with both the men's and women's championships, and I think both won region championships that season. He has more wins than any coach in our history, including both men's and women's cross country.

TS: Stan was still teaching math at that time, wasn't he?

DW: Oh, yes, and he's still teaching part time.

TS: So it was never more than a part-time [coaching] job?

DW: It was never more than a part-time job. In fact, there were years that Stan would say to me, "Take my paltry salary"—he didn't say paltry, he said—"I'd like to give some of my salary to my assistant." He had a part-time assistant. I said, "No, I'm not going to do that. I'll find some money for your assistant." But he has done just a remarkable job. He's won two straight men's championships in cross country in the Atlantic Sun. I can't praise him enough.

When we interviewed Rob King, for our women's soccer position, I knew within two minutes that he was going to be our new coach. Back then, Tom, everybody that was hired, I hired them. Starting in about 2004 or when we went Division I, I turned the hiring process over because we were getting so big, and I had so many things to do. It's much better when you do it yourself. Scott Whitlock, Mike Sansing, Mike Redd, and myself would do the hiring. We'd have a committee, and we almost always all agreed. We'd bring somebody outside the department

to help, but we knew what we were looking for. Rob came in and went undefeated his first year and lost in the region finals on penalty kicks. I still get on him about that. He could have won the national championship that year. Then the second year that he's a coach, we win the national championship. He has won three Atlantic Sun championships in Division I and gotten in the NCAA tournament twice. Of course, now he's got that state of the art stadium. There's no telling where we're going. He got us the college cup for next year (the national women's championship), so he's unbelievable. So I want to emphasize the contributions of Mike Sansing, Scott Whitlock, Stan Sims and Rob. In 1995 we had an opening for a women's basketball coach and were fortunate enough to attract the interest of Auburn-Montgomery's Colby Tilley. He had been a title contender in the NAIA for years. Mike Sansing came back after a break in Colby's interview and said, "We've got to hire this guy. I just went outside and saw that he drove an Alabama state car to the interview. He'll fit in great!" And, Tom, he has been great. We may have won the 1997 national title if our leading scorer hadn't been lost for the year with a back injury. Still, two of our players were named as the first basketball All-Americans in school history. Besides his coaching, Colby is one of the most honest, kind and wonderful people I have ever known.

I want to acknowledge Tony Ingle too because Tony really put us on the map. His championship was the biggest in the school's history because it was basketball and it was on national TV. So that 2004 team put Kennesaw State where it is right now athletically, and I want to give him, and them, all of the credit in the world for doing it. Because Tony was let go many people may forget his contributions, but he was a wonderful coach and a great person to be around. He provided so much help to our black athletes.

And our long-time assistants—I'm going to mention Frank Pitt in soccer, Don McKinlay who helped Scott for many, many years, and Bob Roman who was a baseball coach going into Division I. He's now an operations director for the Bailey Building and baseball. Those guys brought us all kinds of accolades.

- TS: Did you get any criticism from Dr. Siegel or anybody else over diversity or lack of diversity in the coaching staff? There are not a lot of women coaches, for instance, or African-Americans.
- DW: Tom, not that I remember, we didn't. When we went into the NCAA, we made a concerted effort to diversify. I will just say this. One of the biggest mistakes in the world that people make is not being out there trying to get the very best people they can hire and instead worrying about political correctness, diversity, multiculturalism and that type of thing. Again, if you go to a situation where you've got all women or you've got all men or you've got all coaches from Atlanta, that does not make that a bad place. But to answer your question, no. Nobody ever criticized us that I'm aware of, but when we went into Division I we tried to diversity things as much as possible. That sometimes works okay, and



sometimes it doesn't, because if you're out to hire a certain type person for a coaching job where you say, well, because of this, that and the other, we can't hire a person from this group or we must hire a person from this group, it normally turns out to bite you. I'm not going to get into that.

TS: Dr. Siegel didn't have any problems with that?

DW: Dr. Siegel's interest was in getting this university where it could go and not trying to make some political statement. I know some people prodded her about a lack of women coaches (we did have some women coaches), but we never had a conversation about it. When people go out on purpose and try to be politically correct, that's a political statement. No, she never came to me and said we need to do this, that or the other. We had previously had women as our basketball and tennis coaches. Other times, we tried to hire a woman for a job. For instance, I tried to hire a woman for our soccer job [two were interviewed]. I was bound and determined I was going to have a woman coach. The ones that were out there and qualified I couldn't afford. I called the coach at North Carolina and asked him, and he said, "I would recommend four women in the country to be a head soccer coach at a university. Can you afford \$150,000.00 to pay them?" I said, that's all our staff together makes." But no, she never did. If you want to ruin a good organization, go out and try to just limit the group out there that you're going to hire. That'll cripple you pretty quick.

TS: Once we went to Division I, did the reporting and supervision over academics change in any way, higher standards or whatever?

DW: When we went Division I we knew that academic support was going to be much more vital than it was. Mike Redd handled so many jobs for us and didn't get much credit for it, but he was our academic person by himself when we were in Division II. He [determined] who was eligible, what they needed, all this kind of stuff. We would get tutors, but they would be through the school. When we went Division I, we started an academic support group. To give you an example, I read a few years ago that 80 percent of Oklahoma's athletes are special admissions, meaning they didn't meet the admissions requirements. That is typical around the country. I'm not going to get into specifics, but you could name a school to me, and particularly in football or basketball, at least half or more, or maybe all of them are all special admits, meaning they did not meet the entrance requirements. Well, we've always had special admissions here. I don't think we had anybody ever rejected in Division II because of a low SAT because I wouldn't allow the coach to [offer a scholarship] to recruit players with poor scores. I would usually go to Nancy [S.] King [Vice President of Student Success and Enrollment Services] and—they usually had an English deficiency— say, "Nancy, this is what this person has; what do you think?" She would sometimes say, "They're too far off." I'd say, "Forget them; we can't bring them in."

But when and if we get football, we're going to have to double the size of our academic support. Now, we bought a building down at the corner of Campus Loop Road and Big Shanty Road that we now use for academic support. If things were the way they should be, Tom, you wouldn't have any academic support because you'd bring in students. Other than football and basketball and sometimes track, the vast majority of players are also students. Look at our golf team and our tennis team, all of those kids are students; our cross country teams, they're students. They also happen to be athletes. But then when you get into the big money and big name sports, you have a pool of great athletes that are all thinking they're eventually going to be professionals. Many aren't prepared for college or they don't want to go to college. When the NFL and the NBA start minor leagues, or schools restrict admission to real students, then we're not going to have these problems. The fact is, they don't have minor leagues. Baseball and hockey will say to somebody, sign with us and we'll pay for you to enroll in college to get your degree, but we're going to teach you how we want you to play baseball or how we want you to play hockey. Pro football and basketball are sitting back and making millions of dollars letting the colleges be the farm teams. Anyway, I'm venting on some things.

TS: Well, just this last year when Tony Ingle was let go—and all of this has been in the newspapers—academics was the reason [given], not the record of the basketball team.

DW: Well, we didn't have a very good won-lost record the last four years, but as I mentioned, we had one of the better records among the transitions teams. Tony's downfall was he tried to get too good too quick. He tried to win a national championship the first year we were eligible. Tony brought in kids the first three years that were okay academically.

TS: The first three years of probation?

DW: The first three years of our compliance, our transition period: 2005-'06, 2006-'07, 2007-'08. He did not renew many of their scholarships. That counted against us in this academic percentage rating [APR] the NCAA has.

TS: He wouldn't renew their scholarships because they weren't good enough on the basketball court?

DW: He did not feel that they were going to benefit his plan long term. Now, look what he did in Division II. You don't go in and say to Tony, this isn't going to work. You're not doing things right. So he did this for the first three years. He released a bunch of players. That's what's hurt us then, and that's what ultimately cost Tony. I finally went to him, and I said, "Tony, you can't release any more kids because we're getting murdered by the APR. Let's make certain that we don't bring in anybody that's going to have an academic problem."

Unfortunately, he did. He brought in some players that were top athletes, but border line academically and were special admissions. For one reason or another some did not fulfill their academic requirements, and that was sort of the death nail for Tony. Again, he didn't forget how to coach or anything else; it was just distractions. He got some players that maybe he shouldn't have brought in here, and he should have kept maybe some of the others. Hindsight's twenty-twenty, Tom. He should have kept some of the kids that he let go in those first three years. But, he brought in two good players from Kentucky, and one of them left because he didn't have enough playing time, and the other left because of his girlfriend, and both of those counted against us because they didn't stay.

It was just a combination of things, and with all the pressure Tony had on him, that he put on himself to win, if you look at the records in the A Sun the first three years, we were ten and ten, nine and nine, and seven and nine with players that were ultimately released. Then we brought in the supposedly good players, and our records [3-17, 7-13, 6-14] went downhill. It was a shame. Tony's a good man, and you hate to see that happen, but in the big time, a coach is going to get fired. A good friend of mine—I just spent a few days with him and his wife, and in his conversations he'd say, "Well, it was five years, or ten years after I got fired." It's just part of the game. If you're a coach it's likely you're going to get fired before you quit.

TS: How much of your job had to do with building relationships in the community and trying to build community support?

DW: Let me digress for a minute and tell you a major reason that we have been successful and a major reason that I hope we've got a good reputation is the support of the university. That's not only support of Dr. Siegel and Roger Hopkins and Randy [C.] Hinds and Dr. Papp, et cetera, it was professors. I had a professor call me up one time, and she said, "So and so on the baseball team has missed three classes and told me that they had games, and I looked at the schedule, and they didn't have games. What do you want me to do?" I said, "What would you do with a regular student that lied to you?" She said, "I'd flunk him." I said, "Flunk him."

I never went to a professor and asked for anything, and I hope none of our coaches did either. We had a great group of coaches and faculty at Kennesaw State University. I never saw any kind of effort to say that athletics was awful or that it was hurting the university or spending too much money. I'm certain there are people out there that would like to see no athletic program, but we got great support. When we moved from Division II to Division I, you have people coming out of the woodwork both on and off campus that know how to run the athletic program and know how to coach better than the people that are doing it. Let me say that to you, and that is prevalent all over the country. Prior to going to Division I we didn't have so much of that.

TS: They didn't take it seriously?

DW: Well, it wasn't that they didn't take it seriously; it just wasn't quite as important.

TS: But now you're a lot more important.

DW: Oh, we could start a club. If all of them would just donate a lot of money, we wouldn't have any budget problems. Again, both on and off campus. You asked about the community; always to have positive publicity, and always to make Kennesaw State be something the community could be proud of. You don't get that level of intensity at the NAIA or Division II level. Once we went Division I, we've gotten a lot more community involvement and support and so forth. Tom, people used to ask me, "What's the good thing and the bad thing about being in Division II?" Well, the bad thing is you don't get much publicity. The good thing is you don't get much publicity. In Division I, everything that goes wrong at Georgia or Georgia Tech is in the newspaper. At Kennesaw, for the most part, we haven't had the type of problems that they've had with athletes and arrests and that kind of stuff, but we've had a few things happen here over the years that I wouldn't have liked to have read about it in the Atlanta paper. It never even got in the Marietta paper.

TS: I think athletics is paralleling the campus at large that we're getting more negative publicity because people are taking us more seriously.

DW: Yes. Things happen. I said little fires. For instance, the parental involvement. They call it the helicopter parent. Well, they're prevalent in athletics too. A good coach will tell the parent, I'll talk to you about anything but playing time. Don't come to me griping about playing time because I'm not going to discuss it. I'll discuss it with your son or your daughter, but I'm not going to discuss it with you. So you've got parents, you've got alumni, and you've got people on your own staff. The one thing that I never saw here that I saw in a lot of places was jealousy, overt jealousy, between and among coaches and between and among staff. I never picked that up. It may have been out there. That was one good thing that we had a good department in which to work. But we're still growing, and hopefully down the road we're going to get a lot of publicity, and you've just got to take the good with the bad. I don't believe the old saying that bad publicity is better than no publicity at all. I'd rather have no publicity at all.

TS: Right. Has fundraising been a big part of the job?

DW: One of the things that I look back on and say I wish I'd done a better job on was fundraising. I wish we would have raised more money and gotten more infrastructure in fundraising. We've had several good gifts: Ron [H.] Bell gave a quarter of a million dollars a few years ago; Bobbie Bailey, a million dollars; Fred Stillwell, a million dollars; Caric Martin, a hundred thousand dollars; and there

are others. Please don't say is that it? There are a bunch of others. I just can't quickly think of them.

TS: Martin was the golf?

DW: No, that was the golf player.

TS: Don't we have a Martin Tournament or something?

DW: The Dot Martin tournament. Roy Martin and I started that tournament, I think, in 1994, and his wife used to work diligently. She passed away, and when she did, I named it the Dot Martin tournament. This is another Martin. Caric Martin, the banker, is a big basketball fan.

TS: I see. What percentage of the budget comes from external funding?

DW: I think about 23 percent; that would be off the top of my head.

TS: So 77 percent from the student athletic fee?

DW: I would say 77. That was the figure at one time, and I don't think it's changed that much.

TS: How does that compare to other universities?

DW: Well, the average they say is 94 percent when you combine student fees and institutional support. At Georgia their student fees are probably less than 1 percent of their athletic budget. If Georgia were to have a big athletic fee, more students would demand admission to football games because of the large fee. Georgia Tech, on the other hand, has doubled their student fees in the last few years because they aren't drawing 90,000 to the football games. The big schools have situations where they don't really need the money from student fees, and they don't want to feel indebted to the students, particularly in football.

TS: There are probably not more than ten or twenty of those in the country though.

DW: About twenty. I think they said twenty-two schools are self sufficient. Of course, they don't go into [the fact that] the stadium was probably built with state funds or partly state funds. I mean, there may be some debt service, but I don't think there's anybody out there that can conceivably run their program if they were a separate entity from the university or the state.

TS: What about the Foundation? I guess they built the soccer stadium, didn't they?

DW: It's my understanding student fees were the main source.

TS: Oh, was it?

DW: That's my understanding that student fees and a big contribution paid for it. I know that a construction company built it for about cost.

TS: So they just bought the land for it.

DW: I think that the Foundation sold bonds to purchase the land, with the bonds backed by a student fee. Fitz Johnson, who's the owner of the pro soccer team [Atlanta Beat], gave, but I'm not certain of any actual Foundation money.

TS: Talk a little bit about how football came to the state that it's in right now at Kennesaw.

DW: I had never been at a non-football school. I'd never been anyplace that didn't play football until I went to Valdosta State. As I told you, as soon as Dr. Bailey got to be president, I was on him twenty-four hours a day to start football, which he did. So then I got the job as commissioner of the Gulf Star, and then I was hired to a school [Kennesaw] that not only didn't have football, but only had four sports including slow pitch softball. Dr. Siegel, about the second time I met her, said, "Dave, what about football?" I said, "Dr. Siegel we're going to have a football program here, but we cannot do it now." Now Roger would go ballistic when you mentioned football to him, I mean, just looking at the money. Roger knew.

In the 1990s, after we'd gone Division II, Dr. Siegel and I talked seriously. She came to me one time, and she said that she had talked to the Troy State president, and they would play us if we started a team. They'd have their JV [junior varsity] team play us. I said, "Well, Dr. Siegel, let's really get down to the crux of this." Again, she was a very perceptive person. I never did try to, but you couldn't go in there and pull the wool over her eyes. She might sit there and listen to you, but in her mind was saying, "This doesn't sound right." So I never tried to. I said, "Dr. Siegel, starting football at the Division II level is just not worth it. We're not going to get any publicity out of it. It's going to cost us almost the same thing as it would if we went Division I. When we go Division I is when we need to start football." So that was one of the things that prompted her to want to go Division I. That was the real big thing.

She and I talked about this over a long period of time. The first thing we did was in 1999. Stan [Stanley H.] Dysart, the local orthopedic surgeon [M.D., Medical College of Georgia, 1981; MBA, KSU, 1998]—he's a big football guy—she and I met two or three times about football. Then she brought in some community people, some big hitters. We talked about what it was going to cost. Everybody agreed, we'd love to have football, but how are we going to pay for it? Of course, there was no answer there. I am not a big student fee guy, meaning I think you can tax the students, but I think there's a level where—and I know Earle Holley

[Vice President for Business & Finance], when he was here, was very concerned about fees in general. He was very knowledgeable about the fee structure and how it was ballooning, not only here but all across the state. Again, I'm not a big proponent of taxing the students to a great degree. That's how you have to fundamentally run your program, but when it gets to the point that it's outrageous or it's just too high....At some of the schools it is very, very high, both their fees and their athletic fees. But, again, you need some fees at least to run the program.

TS: Sure. Back to football, would you say that what initiated it was the conversations that you had with Betty Siegel?

DW: There's no doubt. We both wanted football, and we had that meeting in 1999 I remember, and there were a couple of others. In 2003 she initiated a committee to study going Division I with the idea that football would be part of that down the road.

TS: Oh, that's where Spec Landrum was coming in.

DW: Spec Landrum and Homer Rice, who was the former athletic director at Georgia Tech, co-chaired that committee. It was decided that we were going to go Division I and fast track, a man's sports and a woman's sport into DI with only a two-year transition period. We chose men's golf, and Rob King volunteered, saying, "I'd be happy to take the soccer team." They had just won the national championship. Money was the gigantic question. If T. Boone Pickens had given us \$168 million dollars like he did Oklahoma State, we'd have football right now. So it's not the idea of should we start football. It's do we have the money to do it? So when we went Division I, football was on the table. I know that if Dr. Siegel were here right now, we'd either have football or be going in the same direction. Then when she retired and Dr. Papp came in and mentioned that he was an agnostic toward football, which I think from a political point of view you couldn't say anything much better, you keep everybody on the edge of their seat. But I think there has been a lot of community support for it. There's a lot of campus support, and the plan is, I guess, to start football in 2014.

TS: I guess the last step is raising ten or fifteen million dollars?

DW: Dr. Papp said between eight and twelve million. Now that is going to be a challenge. I've got a good friend who is a fundraiser, and there's just not a lot of money out there that people are giving. Hopefully, it won't be a problem, but if you stick with that figure and say we're not going to start it unless we get that, then it's going to be rough. It conceivably, hopefully, will be done, but it's going to be difficult to raise that money, at least in today's environment.

TS: Right, the economy's not too good right now—although our comprehensive capital campaign has been super-successful.

DW: It seems to have been, yes.

TS: Maybe we'll be able to find the money.

DW: Hopefully.

TS: At any rate, you're not unhappy about the slowness of the process?

DW: No, it's all about the money. The one thing that is different in Georgia—in Florida, the state will help with facilities, but in Georgia they don't. Even though the Convocation Center is a building built by the state, it had an academic component and a community service component. It's not an athletic building—"Oh, let's build this for athletics."

TS: Right, we hold our graduations and high school graduations as well as having a few classrooms.

DW: Exactly, but the state's not going to build us a football stadium. They can't do that. In other states they can. I know [the University of] Central Florida has really benefited from some of the ways that they do things, and Florida Atlantic is on their way to building a stadium.

TS: What's your feeling about using the soccer stadium for football?

DW: I think it is fine. I think they can put temporary bleachers up to make it seat about 16,000. I look far down the road, and I see us being a I-A football team at about the same level of Georgia and Georgia Tech. But you've currently got six BCS conferences that are going to protect their turf. It's like a fraternity; once they got in, they're closing the applications. We need to put ourselves in a position where twenty or thirty years from now we can be at the BCS level or just below.

TS: Well, there are some mighty good mid-major, as they call them, football teams around it seems like.

DW: There are. I know that the two lowest level I-A football conferences, the Mid-American and the Sun Belt, play a lot of what we call guarantee games, where they'll get between half a million and a million dollars to play somebody, which certainly helps with the budget. You get beat on a little bit but....

TS: Well, Georgia State was playing Alabama last year to support their budget.

DW: They only got \$400,000.00 out of that.

TS: That's not good?



DW: That's not as good as I would think that you could get. Now, if you move to I-A then you can get that up to about a million.

TS: So we'll be willing to be a sacrificial lamb for a University of Georgia or somebody.

DW: That's not the way that you would want to put it. If, you say well, we're going to be a sacrificial lamb; that sounds bad. Let's say we play [the University of] Georgia. Ask the students about playing the Dawgs. Do you think they'd be excited about that?

TS: Well, we beat Georgia Tech in basketball last year.

DW: We did beat Georgia Tech in basketball.

TS: Didn't beat anybody else after that, but....

DW: That is unbelievable what happened there.

TS: I thought we were pretty good.

DW: Oh I thought we were going to do it.

TS: Well, we've beaten Georgia and Georgia Tech in baseball.

DW: We're very competitive in baseball, nationally. We had three teams from our league make the NCAA tournament last year. Had we had a little better year in non-conference games, we could have done it too.

TS: What's kept you at Kennesaw all these years, twenty-four years now?

DW: I came in and wasn't planning to stay here—not planning to leave, but I'd get some calls from people. Then I got a divorce, and in 1989 I met a girl in the registration line. Now she was older; she wasn't a real young co-ed. She was older, and for some reason it was a nice March day after a very bad winter, and I saw her in the registration line. After pondering this, I went in the library, came back out, and walked up to her and said, "Hi, I'm Dave Waples. I'm the athletic director. I hope you don't think I'm too forward, but I'd like to ask you out." Before she could really say anything—I did not notice one of the girls standing right behind her was a cheerleader—and she said, "Oh, you need to go out with him; he's a nice guy." I should have rewarded her with a scholarship! This girl, Mary Downs, said, "Okay, here's my phone number; give me a call." After being married to her, it was fate. She had a sixteen-year-old daughter, and she had a great job. She didn't want to move, so the longer we stayed here, the more the roots grew.

Even though I had some opportunities, calls and so forth, throughout the years, I was very comfortable. It was like at Valdosta State. I stayed at Valdosta State for eleven years, and if I had tried to fulfill my wish, which was going into athletic administration, I would have stayed there four years. But I was having too much fun. That's the way I've gauged my employment throughout the years—how much fun I was having. It's always been a lot of fun, and that's what's kept me here, being married to Mary and also the fun I was having. You're around guys like Mike Sansing. One of Mike's great statements—I would say something, "Now, Mike, this or that is coming down the road." His answer would normally be, "Is it going to change the price of beer?" I'd say, "No." He'd say, "Well, I've got no problem with it." That's Mike Sansing's sense of humor. But when you're around guys like Stan Sims and Rob King and Mike Sansing and Colby and Tony, you have a good time. Of course, we were winning, which makes it more of a good time.

It was just a great place to be, Kennesaw State, and it still is a great place to be. Any time you get bigger, you're going to have more challenges. You recruit personnel, and you hope that you've done a good job recruiting personnel, and that always doesn't happen. You're in the History department, and I know throughout the years there were people in the History department that you wish got in their car and drove to Idaho and never came back. That's in every department, every place in the world, and what you've got to do is minimize that, minimize those people. As I said before, you need people helping with the solution rather than being the problem.

TS: What are you proudest of?

DW: You know, they asked Bob Feller that: "Bob, what was the biggest win you ever had?" He said, "World War II." Right during the prime of this guy's career, [he served] four years. Ted Williams, six years. And these idiots are out here grumbling about making four million dollars a year. I'd like to wring their necks. I think it's the success and reputation that we [have achieved]. And when I say, "We," I give credit to the university itself. I can't tell you how many times at ball games, even other athletic directors would say, "If you've ever got a space for me at Kennesaw State, I'd love to come to Kennesaw." We just had that type of reputation. We were in a tremendous growth area. We were in a place that the enrollment grew, funding from the state became more, so being at the right place at the right time. Scott Whitlock characterizes our success as catching lightning in a bottle. If you look back on it, most other schools that win national championships—Clayton State just won the women's Division II basketball championship, and they threw a celebration and are still celebrating, but we had six of those. It got so commonplace.

Tony Ingle was very good friends with John Wooden [legendary UCLA basketball coach] and in fact started a *John and Nellie Wooden Award* out in Utah, which was the only one that Coach Wooden would attend because his wife

was involved. Tony told me one time, I think it was after the 1972 national championship when [UCLA] got upset by North Carolina State, they came back to Los Angeles and Coach Wooden told Tony, “If one person ask me a hundred ask me, ‘Coach what happened?’” Here, they didn’t win the national championship, so “What happened?” Sometimes that would happen with us. People would say, “Softball, sort of a down year.” I said, “Yeah, we only got seventh in the nation; it’s a down year.” Or baseball, “What happened to baseball?” Well, we just got to the finals of the region; it’s a down year.” So it was just being at the right place at the right time, having two great presidents, getting lucky hiring people, because that’s what it’s about, and then having the support of the community and the support of the school.

The one group—and this was under Roger [Hopkins]—that you cannot work without the total support of, is Plant Operations. There were times, years and years ago, that if we needed something, they dropped everything they were doing and came over and got our stuff done because they were wearing our baseball hats and they were wearing our t-shirts, plus they liked us. That was the most important thing. I just saw one of the plant guys today that I’ve been friends with for years. You’re not going to win without those people. When you say, how does that make any difference? It makes all the difference in the world because when a recruit came on campus, he could see this. He was brought around and the plant guys would say, “Hey coach, who you got?” And the coach would take him over and introduce him, “This is Joe Jones, a pitcher out of Albany.” That’s the type of thing that makes for a great situation, and I would hate to ever see us lose that. Hopefully we never will, we’ll have this camaraderie.

The school’s gotten a lot bigger. We’re in Division I. I don’t know everybody on campus now. There are a lot more rules and regulations. When we were in Division II everybody complained about me being a fiscal conservative, cheap and tight and so forth, and I took that as a badge of merit, but we didn’t have to go through every hoop in the world to order a basketball. Now it seems like it’s been two days, and you have to have the signature of President Obama to get a basketball. Just too much red tape going on, and a lot of it has dealt with the problems the state has had with p-cards and people ripping off the system. So they even get down and mess with the innocent people. It’s a lot more complicated today than it was. I miss the uncomplicated era.

TS: Well, what should we have talked about that we haven’t talked about?

DW: Tom, I don’t know. We could go over all the championships. I think the major message was the fact that this has been a team effort, the university being a major player in this, and then the people at the university. You’ve got people like Ron [Rondall H.] Day, who’s the financial aide guy who will go out of his way to help us. When I say help us, not doing anything for us, but he’s accessible to us and realizes what our problems are. We’ve had three excellent vice presidents. We had Roger, and nobody in the world is ever going to replace Roger. Roger was

Kennesaw State University. Earle Holley was a great friend of ours, and Dr. Randy Hinds is just super, super. Bill Hamrick [former Registrar], Terry Faust [former Financial Aid Director], Kim West [current Registrar] are just a few people who made great contributions to KSU. Also, I've got to again mention Nancy King [former Vice-President for Student success] who is our friend and a tremendous administrator. And you've got faculty members like Tom Scott who ask you how you are doing and are truly interested. If he ever got anybody in his class that wasn't doing what they should, he's going to call the coach, or he's going to call the AD. He's not going to give that guy anything. In fact, he may hold him to a little higher standard because Tom Scott was an athlete, but he's going to make you aware, and that's the big thing. Most of our coaches, when they are made aware, this kid is going to be running those stadium steps or doing something at five o'clock in the morning because he didn't do what he was supposed to.

You get people who understand, whether it's in the book store or wherever it is. I miss those situations. I miss the fact that you used to be able to park and didn't get a parking ticket. I loved Roger because Roger would park his car any place on campus he wanted to, and Ted Cochran [Director of Public Safety] would not say a word. Now, you've got people that Ted doesn't even know giving out traffic tickets. It's a lot different than it used to be, and I'm not going to say the good ol' days; the good ol' days are in front of us. This university has started at the bottom and gone in an upward trajectory, and I see them not missing a beat as long as the people that are running the place understand they don't know everything and understand that they've got to work.

Things don't just happen. You just don't plant a seed and it grows automatically. You've got to get out there and work with it and tend it. But I told you I think most of the things that I would want to. I've emphasized our coaches, and I've emphasized the people that have made it successful, and that's what it is. It's difficult for coaches to understand when you're coaching or out of coaching that it's not only these kids playing for you right now, it's the ones that played for you ten years prior to that that come back and introduce their wife and kids to you or their husband and their kids. Or you find out that they've got a medical degree. That's what it's all about.

TS: Well thank you very much.

DW: I enjoyed every minute of it.

TS: I did too.

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