

Oral History Interview: George Pawlush, 2019 April 24

Participants:

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Transcribed by: Kara Beerley, Fall 2021

Tim Gilmour: [on phone] Hello?

CB: Tim! We have assembled. It's Chris. And we have sort of stumbled into talking about George Pawlush's days at Wilkes and his upcoming book about Rollie Schmidt and his football teams of the 1960s. So, let's start officially. Tim Gilmour is joining us now, and Suzanna Caley is handling us technically. George Pawlush is our victim today and Jim Rodechko, Bob Heaman, "Mike" Michinlini and myself, Chris Breiseth. It's the 24th of April, and a beautiful, sunny day in Wilkes-Barre. George, I think you know the general purpose of this project. And we were thrilled to get you both, as an alumnus and as someone who is very invested in the history of athletics, which we haven't really touched on, except peripherally. So we'd like to talk to you a lot about that. But before we get into that, give us a little bit about your career.

GP: My career.

CB: Starting at Wilkes, and what you did here.

GP: Well, as a student at Coughlin high school, I wanted to write for the school's newspaper but wasn't selected. So the first thing I did when I got to Wilkes was to join the Beacon staff. I started as a beat writer, covering the 1965 football team. In following years I also worked in the public relations office covering sports information. During the mid 1960s the school hired a part-time person from the Times Leader to handle sports publicity. However, I continually became more involved. I handled a lot of duties. I started off as a political science major, and wished I could have been a history major, but unfortunately I couldn't hack the language requirement, so I switched to business. Which actually, later on, really worked out, because later in my career, I was responsible for managing a big budget, so having a finance background really helped.

CB: Let me stop. What was the language requirement to be a history major?

GP: You had to take either German, French, Spanish or Russian,... And you had to take four semesters of it. There was just no way that I was going to deal with it.... So I switched to accounting and then to business. And that's how it was.

FM: Was Hugo Mailey...?

GP: Hugo was there, along with Phil Tuhy... and Harold Cox was teaching at the time. Anyway, I graduated in 1969 and following graduation, and through the efforts of Art Hoover and Rollie Schmidt, who campaigned to create a new position in sports information. They had to convince Dr. Farley that I would be of value to the college. During my undergraduate years the football team won 31 of 32 games and entered the 1969 season with a 29-game winning streak. During that time, there were only a few games televised nationally. Beginning in 1968 as our streak grew, it was not uncommon to have our score announced at halftime or at the conclusion of these games. Wilkes was the subject of many articles in national publications, such as Sports Illustrated. It was a great experience. But, unfortunately, at that time, we didn't have fax machines, computers, and the many volunteers to handle the demands. This was a situation that I really got into. During the summer, as a student, I created statistical histories for all the athletic teams at Wilkes. Once I started my position on a full-time basis I gradually got more involved with public relations. I worked under "Pop" Clewell, Tom Moran, and Doug Rubinstein, before becoming director of public relation in 1977.

GP: When I became the director of public relations, the college was facing huge financial challenges. I was here for three years. It was a tough time that I remember.

CB: That was the only time.

[Laughter]

FM: In the 1970s, no one was adding positions to anything.

GP: In the late 1970s I got to know Ben Badman, who was on the Wilkes Board at that time. Ben was the president of the Wyoming Valley Hospital. During those years there was a plan to close the Wyoming Valley, Pittston and Nanticoke Hospitals and merge them into a new hospital that would be constructed on the east mountain in Plains Twp., that overlooked the Wyoming Valley.

CB: NPW.

GP: Yes, that was the NPW Medical Center. Tom Moran did part-time public relations for the group and when he left the area and moved to Connecticut, I assumed his job as a contractor. Eventually, when the three-hospital group began having problems financing the project, the Geisinger Medical Center got involved. It was a great experience, attending community meetings and being there while the new hospital was being constructed. So that's when the sports part of me sort of graduated into real public relations. I was actually the first employee to be situated at the hospital in the summer of 1980. We had a lot of different events for the grand opening of the hospital in April 1981.

I wrote about my experience promoting NPW, prior and including its opening, and submitted it for competition to a nationally recognized healthcare public relations organization. I included the challenges we faced and the steps we took to overcome them. Then I realized that I wanted to reach for greater opportunities. I answered an ad in the New York Times about a job at Yale-New Haven Hospital in New Haven, CT. I may have been naive but I felt that I could do the job. What turned out was that there were 13 final candidates for the job and I was the last to be interviewed. I got the job and asked myself - "What do I do now?" I had advanced from NPW to Yale University's medical teaching hospital. I realized that I couldn't go back to NPW. I just got to do it. My biggest challenge was with the staff that I inherited. I was in the middle of a revolution between the staff and the person that I reported to.

Everybody was fighting each other. My biggest job was basically to get everyone to work together and be the buffer between them and my boss. That was basically my big job. Once I accomplished that... I had other challenges too, learning the Yale-New Haven culture. You're at Yale and all of the sudden you've got to dress a certain way, and your clothes had to be very corporate. So, this was sort of a challenge and a rude awakening. But we did it. My wife helped dress me.. [Laughter] We went up there with young children aged 5, 2, and 1. We sold our house in Forty Fort for \$44 thousand and bought a similar, maybe a little bit better house, for \$75K. We really had to suck wind and get a second mortgage. For a couple years it was tough, but the middle-class community that we lived in was a very progressive community. I had three good years at Yale-New Haven at a time when there were a lot of things happening in healthcare. Yale was a beta site for the MRI machines, where the new diagnostic tool was being studied. They were one of two or three hospitals in the country that were performing liver transplants and we did the first heart transplant in New England history. 1984 was the height of the AIDS epidemic, and New Haven was a hot spot. We had to learn how to treat Aids patients in house. We had to decide how to hospitalize these patients. Should we spread them out throughout the hospital or quarantine them at a central location? In addition, we faced a major strike by our food service workers. So, I got a pretty good education with all of those experiences. I talked to a lot of people, made a lot of contacts. I worked through it, and it all ended well..

One day, I got a call from a person, who was the director of public relations at Danbury Hospital. She said, "What would you be interested in for your next job" blah blah blah. And I met her at her house, and we talked. She spoke about her CEO and what he was like. And so we went through everything and she said, "Sounds good." So, she brings out a book that she wrote and inscribed it. I noticed a picture of her family on the back jacket and I said one of the people in the picture looks like Mary, from the singing group - Peter, Paul and Mary. It turned out to be that she was Mary's mother.

FM: For god's sake.

GP: Yes, I had a lot more responsibility at Danbury Hospital and a nice bump in pay. I stayed at Danbury for 10 years.

CB: That's when we met.

GP: Yes, that was from 1985 to 1995. It seems like everyone experiences bumps in the road and I had mine in 1995 when all of the sudden, PR became passé in healthcare and marketing became the word. I was downsized and was jobless for about a year. But anyway, I never lost a paycheck. I interviewed all throughout the country. I was willing, at that point, to commute to New York City, which would have been five-to-six hours a day. So, when I heard about an opening at Greenwich Hospital, the commute didn't seem that long. After getting the call for a final interview I traveled to Greenwich and met with some board members. At Greenwich, the director of public relations is a very visible position in the community. And it was big because many leaders from the corporate and entertainment worlds live in Greenwich and use the hospital for their needs. And I remember one of the trustees who interviewed me, a former president and CEO of Kaufman's Pittsburgh, and a board member of CBS and Gillette, asked me where I summered. [Laughter]

GP: So I pulled out, "Cape Cod," because I was there for a week two years before, that's where I summered! He was really a nice guy. He had played football for Princeton in the early 1950s with Dick Kazmaier, who was the 1951 Heisman Trophy winner. My senior staff colleagues at Greenwich were for most part, all first generation college graduates. Many were brought up in blue collar homes. I was at Greenwich for 16 ½ years and retired in 2013 at 66. Since then I have kept myself very busy.

CB: How have sports helped you with that guy from Pittsburgh?

GP: My career was really launched by my sports involvement at Wilkes. I am very thankful for a great undergraduate experience at the college. Unfortunately, I wasn't the greatest academic student here.

CB: Really?

GP: No, I wasn't. I was too involved in extracurricular activities. I was in student government. I worked in the PR office. I was president of the Wilkes Circle K for three years. It was a community service organization that included about 90 members, mostly commuter students. I was involved in my church and its fraternal organizations. I think that many people had the impression that I was just all about sports. I worked on most Sunday afternoons, getting the results and statistics to the NCAA and the various athletic conferences to which Wilkes belonged. We didn't have internet or xerox capabilities those days. As a full-time SID, during the athletic seasons, I would be at the office many nights waiting for the coaches to call in the results of their competition. The Wilkes-Barre Record and Sunday Independent refused to take any of the stories over the phone and I personally had to take the stories to the sports desk. If I didn't, there would be no mention of it in the next day's papers.

This helped me develop a work ethic that would stay with me for the rest of my professional career. When I arrived at Yale, the staff wasn't used to working at a steady pace. I got a lot of pushback. They told me "You're going too fast, you need to slow down." Even though I may have been naive, I was determined to succeed. I think the big thing was that I refused to lose. This is where the people skills that I developed at Wilkes kicked in.

CB: You just said something as an echo of so many Wilkes graduates that I've talked to who were part of the era that came before me. First and foremost, Dan Kopen. The story he told was he went off to, was it Barnes?

GP: Barnes.

CB: And eventually Washington University of St. Louis.

GP: Yes, that's where he was.

CB: He didn't know how well educated he was. He assumed that all these people who were coming from Yale and Harvard would be ahead of him. And they got through the first marking period, and he was number one. And all of the sudden he realized, as much as he was apologetic for coming from the Valley, and coal, and Wilkes, that he was better prepared than the people from the elite institutions. That sounds, from your story, that when you go to Yale, New Haven, you got a sense, a little bit of apology, but that there was a point in which you said, "I can do this."

GP: And I can't come back!

CB: The point is, was there a moment where your own self-confidence clicked in at Yale, New Haven and said, "I'm as good as anybody else."

GP: I had a pretty good relationship with doctors. As you know, doctors are like faculty at a college, they have big egos and all that. It took me about a year, and I got a lot of good feedback because there wasn't really much of a program before I arrived. We initiated a new magazine. And I have to tell you, it could have been my last magazine. What happened was that a person who had just been named COO at the hospital, was being featured. My whole staff had spent considerable time proofing the magazine. Unfortunately, after receiving advance copies of the publication I discovered that his name below his picture was mis-spelled. I said, "Oh my God..." I learned a valuable lesson. We ended up trashing a number of copies. So, after my first year there I pretty much had established myself at Yale. I didn't play the games, I just went in there and did what I thought was needed. It was a tremendous learning curve, and I put the time in and everything worked out. With me, relationship-building has always been the key to success in every job that I have had. I currently serve on the board of Osborn, a continuing care retirement community in Rye, NY. Jack Miller was the chairman of the board and invited me to join.

FM: In home care?

GP: Yes. I'm chairman of Osborn's home-care subsidiary.. I've gotten pretty involved in homecare. And I surprised myself as a PR guy on a few hospital administrative staffs I learned that I knew more than I thought about health care management. I have developed an interest in my ethnicity. It has eye-opening. All my life I thought that my ethnic roots were Russian. And, what I found out was that my ancestors really came from an area in Eastern Europe--and it doesn't have a formal name, but informally, it was called Galicia. It is located in the Carpathian Mountains and it includes what is today southeastern Poland,

western Ukraine, and a part of Slovakia. And basically, this is the place where many people, who settled in the Wyoming Valley, came from. It was once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They call themselves Carpatho-Rusyns. Unfortunately, for many centuries they have been the minority groups in the countries where they have been included. And they have been victim to ethnic cleansing at times. My mother's father and mother came from Poland and almost their entire village came to America and settled in the Miners Mills section of Wilkes-Barre.

FM: I'll be damned.

GP: They became miners, and probably the second generation, became the first generation to go to college. So that is the big population, Carpatho-Rusyn. We recently hosted an Andy Warhol exhibit here at the college. And, I suggested we invite a speaker who could talk about Andy Warhol. His parents came from Slovakia, where they were known as 'Warhola.' About 100 people attended the program that was paired with an art exhibit. So, in addition to my ethnic research, I ran road races during my late 30s and 40s. I gave that up when my two boys started playing baseball in the 1990s. Before moving to Connecticut I was involved with road running in Wyoming Valley and was the founder of two long-standing local races - The Cherry Blossom Run and the Forty Fort Memorial Day Five Miler.

FM: running?

GP: Yes, I was actually the first varsity cross country coach here in the early 1970s. After my sons finished playing baseball in the 1990s, I served as the chairman and tournament director of the Connecticut American Legion baseball program between 1999 and 2005. It was an interesting experience where I had to deal with parents, umpires, coaches, and everything. Then it got to a point where I asked myself why am I doing this? Initially, it was a lot of fun, but then got tedious when I had to travel from Greenwich to the other part of the state for the tournaments. I'm still partially involved in the program.

CB: So besides all that, what did you do for fun?

[Laughter]

GP: Well, as I told you, while at Greenwich I spent four hours a day commuting to and from Cheshire for work. I'd leave my house at 5:30 am to beat the traffic. Otherwise, it could turn into a three hour commute. So I got there by 7 am. People didn't come to work until 9 so I had those two hours to work on personal things. When I got home at 7:30 pm, I was done for the day. But no, I always had to keep myself busy. I was sort of tied in with everything. In my office I had a family picture, another of my son playing baseball and finally one of a coal breaker. So, most of the new people coming into my office could identify with one of those three things! So, this helped to start our conversations.

CB: Good. Let's get back to Wilkes, when you were a student.

GP: Right.

CB: And particularly, we ask everybody who knew Dr. Farley, if there is a sense of him, or what kind of portrait you can provide us of him and any interactions that you've had with him.

GP: You know, it's hard to believe, Dr. Farley, was 71 when he died and many referred to him as the "Old Man". And I'm 72 and I don't see myself as an "Old Man"!

CB: It's all relative.

GP: Yes, In his final years he had to deal with a major turning point in what was happening in society. He was very conservative. I remember hearing stories about a guy and a girl who were walking down River St. holding hands, and Dr. Farley approached from behind and separated their hands. There's probably a lot of things that he never realized was going on here, But, I think George Ralston kept everything in-sync.

CB: Separate. He kept it away from Dr. Farley.

GP: I researched back Wilkes back to its beginnings 1933. In 1950 Dr. Farley strongly supported an athletic policy that was approved by the board. It included a desire to play athletic opponents that shared our philosophy as it relates to scholarships and academics. About our relationship with King's during those early years. We ended that athletic relationship in the early 1950s because Kings offered athletic scholarships for their lone two sports - football and basketball while Wilkes did not. They had a completely different athletic philosophy. During the 1950s the college would endure many tough financial years but sports programs continued. I remember talking to Gene Roth who me about his first year of law school at Dickinson. He was so excited that Wilkes was coming down to play football against Dickinson College. When the 20 or so players came off the team bus most were dressed in similar uniforms while some had a different uniforms.

[Laughter]

GP: Most of the players that I talked with from the 1950s really loved to play football even though they were getting clobbered every week. This was a big part of their life. And many have told me that those experiences impacted their professional careers. And about Dr. Farley -- many students didn't talk to Dr. Farley. As a very active student I didn't know a lot of students who ever spoke to him. But he knew about Circle K. I remember in one of his last years, we needed a place to work on our state Circle K newspaper. That year we produced the quarterly state-wide newspaper for Circle K clubs. He learned about our need and said, "Use my office" So I knew that he respected our organization.

Dr. Farley became head of Wilkes (then Bucknell Junior College) in 1933 and for three decades had great support from his trustee board. Our campus was relatively peaceful during the early years of the Vietnam conflict in the late 1960s. But clearly things had changed in society. Most of the board members were local or out-of-town people with a close connection to Wilkes-Barre. This began changing after alumni and younger area professionals were added to the board. Today, there is a greater diversity in our board membership that includes young and older alumni, and community leaders.

FM: What is Circle K?

GP: It is a service organization that is part of the Kiwanis International family. We were sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Wilkes-Barre. It only included male students.

FM: The college actually excluded any clubs that limited its participation to students. So there were no fraternities, there was no Christian endeavor, there was no identifiable group. Circle K was a service organization. It had no ethnic base, it had no particular identity that would set them apart, they were service. So he tolerated them. But not if it were exclusive or committed to a particular view of anything, political or religious or anything else. The whole early identity of the college that we have come to recognize in these history sessions is how fragmented and distorted the culture that this Valley was when the Junior College was founded in the 1930s. Coal mining was an extractive industry. It was cruel, it was not unionized. Management had no interest in helping people work together. The more they fought, the less likely they would be to unionize. And so the college was formed by some very interesting community people, and people who had roots in the Valley, like Harold Stark and some of the others who realized that times were changing. And the Valley had to change. And post-World War II was that big instrument of change. And we keep puzzling about how did these guys in the 1930s make that commitment to start a two- year college here? And then World War II, 1947, when it became four-year, it had a built-in population searching for educational opportunities. The parents had sacrificed, your generation and mine, they sacrificed everything to give their kids a better life. And they came from Europe, they came from post-World War I Europe where societies were so structured and so bitter against each other. Nobody wanted people to work together. But Wilkes was an interesting place where everybody was taught to respect the other guys' view and feel free. The freedom you had as a student would be unheard of at Yale! Because they were all from the same culture. You don't realize they were all male, all white, socioeconomic class, all the same. They didn't know what the outside world was like. And kids at Wilkes like Dan Kopen who said, "I had a better education than the guy who came in from Harvard." They did! Because their education gave them that kind of freedom of mind, like you just expressed so beautifully. It was a learning environment. It was not here to teach you a particular way of life, or a particular dogma, or a particular system. You were taught to think. And given the freedom to do it! And I love it, that's the thing!

GP: But you know, I can tell you, the success of the football team did a lot to promote a better understanding the College's impact on the community. This began in 1965. And again, many of these players were first generation college students who came from many ethnic backgrounds. And they became one big family. They loved each other, they partied together, they were close. Day and dorm. We had day students hang out in the dorms, Again, the issues that these guys faced. Many of them came from working class families with limited resources. Students had work to afford their books and other essentials. Talk about tuition, when I started, tuition was \$850 a year, which doesn't seem like a lot. I think I got a loan for \$300, so I had to come up with \$550 for the remainder of the tuition.

FM: My salary, which was the third highest on the campus, in 1955 was \$4,000 a year.

GP: Wow. But for Wilkes, right after WW2, the GI Bill came into being. This was an interesting time, because we grew from a two-year to a four-year college. But when the GIs started arriving in 1946, our census grew from 400 to over 1000 in just one semester. And the challenge was to renovate existing

buildings to accommodate students. Since a majority of these new students were local there was not a lot of pressure to house dorm students. The priority was academic space. But then, in 1950, it went the other way. The Korean conflict began and many potential and current students were obligated by the draft to join the military. The national educational governing body also strongly suggested that we build a gymnasium. Fortunately, we had property and the gym opened in late 1950. We really needed a gym, because prior to that we were using the South Main St. Army, GAR high School Gym, the YMCA and even St. Stephen's Episcopol Church for our indoor athletic programs.

CB: Two things. One, let me throw out this insight that I had talking to the guys on the winning football team. Because they did hang together. So anytime Rollie or John Reese would have some excuse to bring guys back, they would always be back. They were part of the same tribe. And the point that they made to me was that they had all fought each other in high school football. I mean, just vicious competition. And they all got here, and it was the only football program at the college level in the Valley.

So all of the sudden, they came from being adversaries to being blood brothers. And the other thing that kind of flowed from that,--and your characterization of Rollie will be valuable--was they partied on their own. That's what his rules were. They had their beer parties the night before the game as well as the night after. And they basically coached themselves. I heard that expression over and over. "We coached ourselves. We knew what we wanted to do and what we could do, and if we were behind, we knew how we could get ahead." So they had this kind of confidence in each other and a kind of organizational pattern that I would defy you would find ever at Yale or Harvard or Cornell. And it's all part of the way they moved from this very competitive high school environment. Which, in the days before college was important, the high school for these mining families, this was the way into a new world. And athletics was the kind of cutting-edge for boys to really experience something besides working in the coal mines, or on the railroads or whatever. So the story that you're telling, and you're putting it in cultural and economic terms, which I think is great.

Wilkes really shows a dimension of the Valley population coming into a new era through its kids. And, athletics was a way--for these kids and for the spirit of the school--they helped consolidate that. And the sense of unity of the college. I went to UCLA. The only thing that pulled us together was football at the Coliseum on Saturdays. And we were in the tens of thousands and we were in the card section, and that was the most "college" thing I did in my four years there. So athletics plays that role, but the role it had here, I think you could argue, comes close to being unique. And King's doesn't have it. And I've told the story almost every time we're on this, one monsignor had me come over to St. Mary's for lunch, that's the first time, I will express, I ever came to St. Mary's. He said, "We developed Kings to save Catholic boys from Godless Wilkes." That was it. So even the Kings-Wilkes rivalry in those early days, including the snowball fights, were a very important dimension of the ethnic and religious.

FM: And he said exactly the words! Those kids who had fought each other in high school, hated each other's guts, who were encouraged not to like anybody, suddenly were brothers. And that didn't just happen by accident. That's why there was no separate society for this group of students or that group of students. I don't think I ever appreciated that part of its history until we started to talk about the history. But I see now that a lot of those policies of that board and Dr. Farley didn't want division, we want collaboration. We want understanding. The old Quaker philosophy. How many Quakers influenced that

group? So your reflection of cultural change from the perspective of sports, which to be perfectly honest, we've been working on for a few years now, until your name came up and suggested we talk to you, I had never really thought about that effect of sports. And I lived through that 33 game, or 37 game, I thought it was 33--

GP: It was 32 games.

FM: winning streak, and I remember Wilkes playing Ithaca College that was being broadcast on radio, and Anne Marie and I would lay on the bed in the bedroom while the kids took a nap and we took a little break ourselves listening to the football game. There was always a reward for scoring a touchdown, of course.

CB: Tim, come on in.

TG: So George, as you can see, we're extracting as much from our former presidents as we are from our guests, but maybe we should get back. I don't know if you had a line of thinking that you wanted to share with us. And we were really interested in that. It would be interesting to hear you talk about that football team and what you saw and Rollie's role in it.

GP: Yes, thanks Tim. First of all, I was born in 1947, so I was in the first year of the post-war baby boom. I started at Wilkes in 1965 which was the first year of college for many other baby boomers. Our 1965 senior class at Coughlin was one of the largest in recent years. The golden era of high school football was from about 1935 to 1970, when the local high school jointures came into being. In the 1950s there were almost 40 high schools playing football in the area. For high school athletes football, basketball--and baseball too--was an opportunity to get a college scholarship. A case in point is Charley Trippi, whose father was a miner. He didn't want his son working in the mines. Charley went on to be an All-American football player at the University of Georgia and was inducted in both the College and NFL Halls of Fame. And I would say that three or four top high school football players who came out of the Valley were from mining families. And they had an opportunity to advance. And there were a lot of other players who had that opportunity.

There were only a few people who really knew Rollie. He was a very private person and kept to himself. But I'll tell you, I've learned a lot about Rollie, and the guy was brilliant. Many people never realized that because he was soft spoken. He never raised his voice. But psychologically, the guys may have thought they were running things, but they weren't. He was the tactician. In preparing for the next week's game, Schmidt would have some of his staff scout their next opponent and exchange game films of previous games. Then he would develop a game plan and distribute it to his players. Several have told me that they knew exactly what they were facing that Saturday because he had them scouted perfectly. The other thing Schmidt took advantage of was two-platoon football with separate offensive and defensive units. Until the new NCAA rule became effective for the 1965 season, teams had "limited substitution" and were only able to substitute one player per down. We had 29 freshmen coming in 1965. He was very good at evaluating talent. He put his most athletic players on defense. He took the other guys, who were equally, and installed them on offense.

FM: Joe Wiendl.

GP: Yes, I can talk about Joe... Just as an aside, there are two members of the football team whose numbers have been retired - Joe Wiendl, and Teddy Yeager. Both those were recruited by John Reese to wrestle as was Bill Staake, who was an outstanding punter. Those three guys didn't know anything about Wilkes football when they came here. Joe came because--actually, he was born here, and his dad worked in Scranton. Wiendl applied here following from high school but wasn't accepted. He ended up going up to Cheshire Academy, which is two blocks from where I live. He stayed there a year. Up until that point, he had only lettered once in football as an offensive end. So when he arrived at Wilkes, he checked in and thought, "Well, the team was 1-6 the year before, I've got a good chance to make the team." In wrestling, he was national college division champion. He was the football team's starting safety for four years. John Reese discovered Teddy Yeager while he was refereeing a wrestling match at Southern Columbia High School. The AD there had graduated with John from Kingston High School. So he suggested that Teddy would be a good wrestler. He was 5-7 and 145 pounds but hadn't received any offers to play football. So, in addition to wrestling he decided to go out for football. He told me that he would give it a year and then concentrate on wrestling.

It ended up that if he had stayed in wrestling after his freshman year he would have had to beat future wrestling All-Americans John Marfia and Andy Matviak. Right before the 1968 opener with the University of Vermont, the expected starter at tailback, Dave Kaschak got hurt. We scrimmaged Princeton in pre-season and Teddy didn't get one handoff. He was a surprise starter versus Vermont, and took the first handoff and ran 67 yards for a touchdown. It was totally unbelievable. Both Joe and Teddy were also baseball players and played together on Rollie Schmidt's final year as baseball coach in 1969. I know some people felt that Rollie wasn't a great recruiter. There weren't too many small college coaches at that time who were, because of their teaching responsibilities and having to coach other sports. Recruiting really became important in the mid-1970s when the NCAA created Division 3 for non-scholarship schools. Many of our MAC opponents like Lycoming ramped up their program and made their head coach, full-time, and hired full-time assistants to help in recruiting. Wilkes didn't have a full-time assistant until 1992 when Frank Sheptock was hired to assist head coach Joe DeMelfi, who was working full-time in the admissions office. We were the last team in the MAC to have full-time coaches. Soon after Sheptock, we hired a second assistant - Butch Jones, who 20 years later became the head coach at the University of Tennessee. Both Sheptock and Jones recruited student athletes from out of the area.

CB: More about Rollie?

GP: Getting back to Rollie, he was a great tactician. There were so many stories. Some thought Rollie wasn't paying attention. Some felt he was aloof. But, he knew everything that was going on. He set the course, he let assistants run the practice. He delegated responsibility. From his first day as football coach in 1962, he was super safety conscious. After the 1965 pre-season we never scrimmaged in practice again after a player broke his leg. The player was in the hospital for many months due to infection and several corrective surgeries. And with the exception of scrimmaging Princeton each year in pre-season, Rollie ended live practice. But he was so organized. Every minute of practice was accounted for. He had a way

of pointing out mistakes during games. If you did something wrong. Well, I'll tell you a story about Tony Cardinale, who you all probably know.

TG: Yeah.

GP: Well, in the Vermont game, in 1968, a player from Vermont was giving Tony a tough time, so Tony gave him an arm and an elbow on a kickoff. And when Tony came back to the sidelines, Rollie said, "Anthony, there'll be no more knuckle-sandwiches here." And similar stories. When he wanted to make a point, it wasn't Joe, it was Joseph. And that's how he would make his point. But he was the guy who ran the show, make no mistake. During the streak Wilkes had some great middle linebackers who called defensive signals - Al Yatko, Brinley Varchol, and P J Kane. Tony told me about a time when Rollie called a time-out right before the end of the quarter. Tony came over to Rollie and said, "Why are we calling a timeout? It's gonna be the end of the quarter." And Rollie pointed to the endzone and the flag. It was blowing the wrong way. We want to kick in this quarter because we had to wind on our back. And that's how precise he was.

He did a lot behind the scenes to keep his kids in school. Rollie found out that John Kerr's girlfriend had to drop out of Wilkes and was going to move away. This information came from Art Hoover. And so Rollie's wife, Marge, helped John's girlfriend, now his wife, get a full-time job at the bank where Marge worked. Another player found out that his girlfriend was pregnant and that he would have to leave college to get a job. And I don't know if this was legal at the time but during the summers he worked for Addy Asphalt, managed then by his assistant coach Chuck Adonizio. There are other stories. He was a surrogate father to at least three guys who had terrible home situations. And this one I'm going to include in the book. I talked to Paul Adams. And Paul was an average football player. He wasn't a star. He got in on the kickoff team. He told me about an experience he had practicing on a very hot day. The players were in their t-shirts. And Paul was sweating. Really, really sweating. And Rollie came up to him and he said, "Are you okay?" and Paul said, "Yeah, I'm okay." but he kept Paul out, and at the end of practice, he told Paul to go over to Hottle's and get himself a good meal, and give him the bill the next day. And Paul was just one of the guys on the team. But, Rollie knew something about every guy on that team.. And he cared about everybody. I talked to Ron Grohowski who graduated in 1965, just missing the golden era. Ron was down in Florida at one of our alumni events. And there he met Rollie, and they talked. Well two weeks later, Ron received a picture in the mail from Rollie. And shown in the picture weren Ron and two other teammates. I think Ed Comstock and someone else. And they had been named to "Who's Who in Colleges and Universities." He saved things and kept track of everything and knew what everybody was doing. But just the information I've gotten from the people-- I didn't realize the depth of knowledge that he had as a tactician, as a coach, and as a psychologist. Unbelievable. And this was the Rollie that only a few people knew.

CB: Which helps explain, we talked last time about the Bobby McBride death. And the impact that had on Rollie. What you just said about him makes it all the more compelling what a tremendous blow that was to him. And everyone says it affected him for the rest of his career.

GP: But it's very important to note, in our whole history, as far as football, we may have had to skimp on stuff, but we never skimmed on equipment. All eras, even from the beginning, we always had the safest

equipment. What happened to Bob--it just happened. And Rollie did all the things to prepare for games--including neck exercises. He made sure that the helmets were the best you could get. There were other injuries. We lost a guy in the 1965 pre-season to a broken leg and then there was Bill Stinger, who ruptured his spleen later that year in the Muhlenberg game. He almost bled out. Rollie and Tony Turchetti rushed him to the Sacred Heart Hospital. Stinger never played again but was a student assistant coach the next year. And, there was assistant coach John Ewastation who died in an off-season car accident. And then Bobby McBride. And yes, all these events really affected him. There was nothing he could have done to prevent Bobby's death. But it did affect him later on. He was always concerned about injuries and his players' health.

FM: The guy who was a marine corps pilot and was killed in California.

GP: Neil Dudurka. I'm going to include him. He was a marine corp pilot, who in 1960, ran into problems with the jet that he was flying. Rather than eject himself over a populated area in California, he steered his plane to an open area where it crashed and burned, probably saving the lives of many people on the ground.

TG: Jesus Christ.

GP: --and he died two days later. And actually, a scoreboard at Schmidt Stadium was donated by the Letterman's Club to his memory.

CB: Anything about Rollie as a golf coach? Because that's what he was when I got here.

GP: Rollie didn't take up golf until the early 1960s. And Rollie, when he did something, it had to be perfect. And there's so many stories about Rollie. I remember John Zimich telling me that he wanted to learn how to play golf. But, he wanted to be good. Marvin Antinnes told me about a time when he traveled to Atlantic City with Rollie for a football convention. He brought his golf club with him and he would take 150 swings each morning. Everything with him was about technique. He just kept working and working. And the same thing with football.

TG: Yup.

GP: He believed in muscle memory. It was repetition, repetition, repetition. So when you get into a football game situation, you automatically do it. And that was really his technique. It was the same for golf. It was all technique. How you hit the ball, how you approach it, how you visualize it. If you make a bad shot, you have to figure out how to make it good. And it was the same with football, When you get into a situation and you might have to compensate. And the two work together. Before he was the golf coach, he was the baseball coach. In his last year, they were MAC Northern Division champions

Rollie never played high school baseball. He took up softball in the late 1950s. He played for the Hudson Polish-American team in Plains. And he was one of the best fast-pitch pitchers in the area. However, that came to an end after two years, He was hired by Wilkes in 1962 to coach football and baseball and teach

physical education and health. He gave up baseball when Welton Farrar retired as golf coach. Bernie Vinovrski was the person who really gave me a lot of insight on Rollie's golf game. couple times--

CB: Tell me about him.

GP:-- As an aside, Bernie supposedly retired. He was the vice chancellor of admissions at Fresno State University. He wanted to retire. But now he's a consultant for Texas A&M at San Antonio, which began with a graduate program. They wanted to start an undergraduate program so they hired Bernie as a consultant. So he travels to San Antonio from Fresno a few days each month. He is also a consultant for a pharmacy school in California that caters to international students. While working at Fresno State he periodically traveled to Southeast Asia to recruit students.. Bernie and his wife, Marcella have opened their home to a group of these foreign students. They call him "father" and Marcella "mother." I know Bernie really helped Joe DeMelfi recruit when both were at Wilkes in the 1980s. This is very similar to the role that Art Hoover played in the 1960s. I don't think that many people were aware of what he did behind the scenes.

CB: I'm going to see him, I think in Fresno, this summer. We went to Taiwan together.

GP: So you know about his knowledge of Southeast Asia?

CB: All I can tell you is he was not into any food that was not Old American. He couldn't take the Chinese food. He lost weight. Which for Bernie, was not something you could risk, because he was a string bean. Anyway, given this coaching issue, you must have talked to the generation that came in under George Ralston.

GP: Yes I did. Some, but not many.

CB: My favorite story of alumni events would be to talk about when they had barely enough people to put eleven players on the field. And when someone would get injured, and they'd be lying out there, and George would get out there and say, "Get up. You're embarrassing us." And I, at least twice, somebody in the audience said, "That was me!" Tell us what you learned about George Ralston.

GP: Well, I mean Ralston coached all three sports. And he was the athletic director, biology teacher. He just did everything. And he was great. And from his players, there was one guy that I particularly wanted to meet and that was Charlie Jackson.

TG: Yeah.

GP: And Charlie played basketball for Ralston in the early 1950s. Charlie steered many students to Wilkes. He brought a lot of soccer players to Wilkes in the early 1960s including four from the Gubanich family.

CB: We'll pick it up. Charlie Jackson was here a lot in my era and he was still sending his kids. And who was the young African-American guy? Teddy.

GP: Teddy Travis-Bey. Teddy was offered a scholarship to play football at Ohio State. And when his father died, he decided that he wanted to be close to his mother. And Charlie grabbed him, brought him up here. He met Ralston and that was that. I loved George Ralston. And Bob knows this, but Ralston's secretary was Peggy Jones. And my wife, Carol, worked for Dick Raspen in financial aid. Peggy, unbeknownst to me, thought we would make a good couple. And, I was pretty shy at the time, and it wasn't easy for me to ask girls out. Peggy said to me, "There's this girl that really would like to go out with you," and then she did the same thing to her. So I went, and I said, "Well, this girl wants to go out with me, what the heck?" And then one or two dates, and now we're married!

CB: Now that is a Wilkes story.

FM: What about the barbeque during the flood? I was never really conscious of... I remember when Frank Carlucci came finally to straighten out the whole mess of the flood recovery in the Valley. He used to play tennis on our tennis courts just to relax for a little bit. The tennis courts were wavy and that was a challenge for him.

GP: Well, here's what I found out.

CB: You were here during the flood.

GP: I was here during the flood. And you said, in that July, "We will have all our athletic teams playing in the fall and we'll have the field fixed. We will have sports." And we did.

CB: Thank you, Dr. Michelini.

FM: Who was the quarterback from Mocanaqua?

JR: Simonson?

GP: No, that was Mike Barsky.

FM: What was--I'm always increasingly aware of the impact on their communities. What was their image or perception of Wilkes? And obviously a lot of it was colored by whether their kids went on and came here. Were they really interested in Wilkes because they had a kid playing!

GP:. During Rollie's first ten years here, we were blessed with some great quarterbacks. First we had Rich Roshong who played three years for Rollie. He was the MAC Northern Division MVP in 1965. Joe Zakowski came in as a freshman in 1966, as did Rick Simonson, who had to sit out as a sophomore after transferring from Davidson. In 1967, we had both Zakowski and Simonson. When Zakowski was injured during the 1967 and 1968 seasons, Simonson filled in for him. So, Simonson probably started half the games during those two years. Both were outstanding quarterbacks who I believe could have competed at a higher level.

We also had Joe Frappoli as a back-up. He was part of the glue that kept everybody together. After Zakowski graduated in 1970, we needed to find his replacement.. We had three candidates - sophomores Mike Barsky and Jeff Giberson, and junior Dennis Brew. Rollie was undecided who to choose. So he gave them all a start. And, before you knew it, we opened the 1970 season 0-3-1 with a very talented team. Giberson ultimately ended up as the quarterback, and he continued on in 1971 and 1972. Later in the 1970 season, we won big games against undefeated Alfred and also Muskingum. Once Giberson graduated we began having difficulties at that position. It is important to have that person as a take-charge leader. And we just couldn't find that quarterback. Our defense was always good even up to Rollie's final season. They were tough and kept us in most games.

The team came back in 1971. They were 6-2 and actually were leading in Lambert Bowl balloting before losing to Indiana State of PA in the season finale. A couple of things happened in 1969 that would later impact Wilkes football. The NCAA had designated a limit for male students at an institution. That number determined whether freshmen could play varsity sports. Up to this point, Wilkes had continually remained below this level. The NCAA dropped the rule altogether in 1969 but the MAC voted to keep it intact. For the first time, we were over the cap. So for the 1969-70 academic year, our freshmen were ineligible to compete in all MAC sports. We were the only team impacted by the MAC rule and it eliminated the next year. This was a lost year where we were unable to give freshmen a chance to gain varsity experience.

CB: Now we're deeply into the football golden era. But tell us the scope of your book. What's the shape of it?

GP: My vision includes having a number of sidebar articles, which are 400-500 word stories, about people, events, and major highlights that have framed Wilkes College football history. There will be a chapter that will tie football into our mining history. I will address the growth of high school football in Wyoming Valley and then the birth of intercollegiate football here in 1946. Another chapter will focus on Rollie Schmidt. I'll talk about our golden era, which I say occurred between 1965 and 1971. Things changed for Wilkes football after 1971, and it was not just on the football team, it was this whole campus. It was like Vietnam--you know, the community service. This campus was always involved with community service, but this was no longer practiced. it was just like somebody had switched off a light. And starting in 1972, Wilkes football changed. Some players felt they knew what they had to do and didn't need coaching. The closeness that once had existed among all team members was lost. I didn't realize this until I began talking with guys from each era, and then it became very clear. When talking to the guys who played from 1965 to 1971, you felt the enthusiasm. And then talk with those after 1971, and you sense a completely different attitude. It was more about the individuals and less about the team.

CB: I would say for my timing in those years, and I was at Williams, we moved from the kind of cohesiveness that you were talking about because the anti-war movement moved in. Long time programs couldn't be sustained. Kids got involved in other things. Then I went up to a brand new campus in Illinois in 1971. And they were just losing that cohesiveness, but they were still cohesive. Then the Vietnam War came in big, and that blew us apart. And we had to rediscover who we were. So what probably happened here was a delay from what was happening in the bigger cities and from the more elite campuses.

GP: And then you had the flood. And that just changed. And then you had the draft, you had a whole bunch of things happening in those early 1970s.

FM: You were the first one--you did not attribute the change to the flood.

GP: No.

FM: Which most people tend to do. It's very difficult to appreciate how the culture was changing in this country during that period of time. And it makes the evaluation of my presidency more difficult for me, no less anybody else. And Dr. Farley knew that was coming. Because I remember talking to him and his relationships with Dan Kopen and with students. Dan Kopen was the first student leader in 1969 who confronted Dr. Farley about administrative things. And that was a shock. And you know Dan and some of his ideas. He kept finding erratic ways.

CB: He kept confronting me on administrative things.

JR: He confronted a lot of people!

FM: And so there was a kind of change that was totally overwhelmed and superseded by the flood, which was survival.

GP: But you know, during your administration in those years, we were a family. A team. We all came together because we had to have the college open in September.

FM: That's right.

GP: And everybody just pitched in. it didn't matter if you were faculty, student, whatever. It was really a family and I don't know how many years we were able to do that. At that time we still had a lot of faculty that had been here from the 1950s. By the way, I mentioned Circle K before. One of our members was Jack Ryan, who is now the president of King's College. He was in our Circle K club. [Laughter] Jack was going to get married, and he decided not, and went to the seminary instead.

CB: That was a Wilkes-King's transition that was probably more important than the other!

JR: George, I have some impressions about the team from 1965 to 1971, see if you agree with any of them. It's an interesting thing, I had a lot of those players in class. They were good students.

GP: They were.

JR: They were very good students. And they were concerned about their academic work. I remember Frank Galicki came up and argued about his test grades.

GP: Frank Galicki?

JR: Frank Galicki. And the other thing I noticed about them during my first three years at Wilkes, 1968 to 1971. I have more contacts with those graduates than any since then. I still keep in contact with them. They include Harry Hoover. Frank Galicki, Teddy Yeager. Ed Burke, and Garf Jones. They were a family in a sense, but they kept it together after their playing days.

GP: Well the guy who played a big role in keeping the team together was Pepper Merrill who arranged the after-game parties at the Nanticoke Legion. If the party wasn't there, it was at Danny and Pat Malloy's house in Trucksville. The day students really had nowhere to really get together so they ended up at the dorms. Some guys slept on the floor and stayed in the dorms the whole semester. But they were very close. And, it was the 1965 freshman players who made the freshmen from ensuing years quickly part of the family. Once you joined the team you were family.

JR: I had another impression, too, of them. I watched many of their games. I have the impression that as a team, they weren't very sophisticated. They just beat the daylights out of the other teams. They just tore them right down.

GP: Defense, they were tough. I've heard people call them animals. They were tough but they weren't big. You have to know, the guys in the late 1960s weren't very big. Only a few weighed over 200 pounds.

JR: Cardinale was big.

GP: Not when he first came.

JR: John Mazur?

GP: Well, Mazur was just something different. Bruce Comstock was 195 pounds and he was the starting offensive tackle for four years. Mike Connolly was an outside linebacker for four years. He played at 175. But they were tough kids. Dr. Farley really had some concerns about the football team. He would go to the Westmoreland Club and someone said mockingly, "What are you doing there, building a football factory?" and this completely blew his mind! He wanted Wilkes to be recognized for its strong academic programs. In 1968, we did a comparison of the football team's GPA to the rest of the college and found out the team's GPA was 10 points higher than the rest of the student body. The golden era didn't produce any medical doctors but many of the players became lawyers, public school superintendents and several have done well in the corporate world. The majority of players told me that Rollie played a big part in molding their successful careers.

JR: The team only played eight games in those years but if they played ten games the streak might have reached 40 games.

GP: And in those years, there were four or five times where we could have lost. I point to Paul Purta catching an 80-yard touchdown pass against Lebanon Valley in 1966 with one second left.

JR: That's true of any winning streak, even.

GP: But you know that Vermont game--you asked me about laying it out. In one chapter, I'll talk about the 1968 Vermont game when freshman Teddy Yeager scored a touchdown on Wilkes' first offensive play of the game. He also scored on his last carry in 1971 against Muskingum.

JR: That was a big game because Vermont was a university division team and a member of the Yankee Conference at the time, and they even beat them 31 to 2.

GP: Well, Wilkes won that game, 31-9. Yeager was carried off the field after scoring the first touchdown. After the game, he quickly ran into the locker room and took a shower. He looked around for his teammates, and nobody was there. So he goes to the bus, and still there is nobody there. When he was in high school at Southern Columbia, you went to the bus after the game. So here he is, the star of the game, waiting alone on the bus.

JR: Where were they all?

GP: They were on the field like they usually were. After the games, players and their families would gather in the middle of the field. And Marge would come out to meet Rollie and everyone would stay for about 15-20 minutes.

CB: I was just throwing that to you, because they threw that to me more than once. I thought that was a really intriguing picture by the team of role the Schmidt's played. How much was Rollie in on this family feeling that you describe so well?

GP: It was the players basically.

CB: Maybe that's what they were describing.

GP: Rollie was an only child. His father was a fireman in Engine House Number 5 in North End. I wouldn't say he was a loner--

FM: He never had any children, did he?

GP: No, they didn't. Rollie and Marge regarded his players as their children.

FM: I think there was a subliminal paternal frustration that--

GP: But anyway, he didn't call people into his office. He never criticized players on the field. He waited until he could be in private with the player. Dave Kaschak told me about an experience that he had. Rollie usually showed films from the previous game on Wednesdays. During the previous game, Kaschak decided to run rather than punt the ball. It was a big mistake. Right before that play would be shown on film, Rollie stopped the film and said, "Okay, we'll come back tomorrow." When they came back the next day, Rollie resumed the film after the play. When the film ended Kaschak went up to Rollie and Rollie said, "Hey, it happens."

So Rollie knew everything about everybody. As I said, Art Hoover was his conduit. Art worked with everyone, athletes or not, and kept a lot of people in school. Getting back to the freshman class of 1965. Those 29 players just showed up. Only a few were recruited. It was a perfect storm. Some had been influenced by Wilkes alumni who suggested they come here. And there were a number of transfers --Al Yatko came from Temple. Rich Simonson from Davidson; Ray Lowery, from Cornell; Vince Yarmel from Toledo; and Pat Malloy, Rutgers. Malloy wanted to be part of what was happening. That's why he came back. And then you had Paul Purta, who was three years out of high school when he enrolled at Wilkes in 1963. Purta was an unbelievable athlete. In high school, his coaches hated him because he was a showboat. At Wilkes he said, "I can do it, I'm great, I can do it." and he did it!

And then I'm going to cover the second half of Rollie's coaching career, from 1972 to 1981, and talk about the events that impacted those teams. Among the sidebar profiles, I will feature George Ralston, Neil Dudurka, Tropical Storm Agnes, Art Hoover, Colonel Bob and the 1993 and 2006 Wilkes teams that won MAC titles and advanced to the NCAA 3 playoffs.

CB: You and Suzanna should talk about what happens to those interviews in their totality. Because you're not going to record all of them, but it strikes me as an extraordinary resource.

GP: My concern about sharing the interview tapes is the number of personal things that came up. Some of the guys spilled their guts out, to me you know what I mean? That's the only thing I'm uncomfortable with. I plan to give Suzanna my notes, interview transcriptions, and photos on a tumb drive. My notes, everything I have, the pictures and everything will be on a stick. Unfortunately, after I left Wilkes, there were a couple of people in the Sports Information office who threw away alot of our athletic archives. Even our two Lambert Bowls went missing for a while. They were found in a closet. And then you had Rollie's successor, Bill Unsworth, who took all the All-Star certificates off the locker walls in an effort to kill our football tradition.

CB: That was just when I got here.

GP: Yeah. Then, Joe DeMelfi and Frank Sheptock, who succeeded Unsworth, brought back the golden era tradition that Rollie had started.

CB: On the team.

GP: Over the last three or four years I've volunteered with the Wilkes admission's office and have represented the college at various high school college fairs in Connecticut during the fall and spring. Very few of these students that I met knew anything about Wilkes University. What I came to realize is that coaches can play a very important role expanding our recruitment imprint. If you can recruit an athlete from a certain school in Connecticut, there is a good chance that you may be able to interest others to attend Wilkes. I've suggested to our admissions staff that it is very important to work closely and share information with the athletic coaches.

FM: The only thing that makes television in the high schools around the state capitol is the kids from schools that are receiving athletic scholarships. That's the only time I ever see them. Two insights to your observations. I was Academic Dean from 1963 to 1970. There was always an undercurrent of hostility within the faculty for athletic coaches and athletes. Prejudices of the whole culture kind of always thinks of the "dumb jock". And you mentioned their study habits and their interest as students. I remember when the faculty came to me with two issues. Not at the same time, but separately. They always found a new issue or a way to question the athletic department. And one was the faculty status of coaches. And one of the reasons they were faculty was because of our physical education requirement. Dr. Farley wanted the coaches to remain faculty and I inherited the practice--they wanted them to be members of the faculty. Not just "coach" but members of the faculty. Middle states was satisfied if you had them teaching a course in phys-ed. And so for a long time, I'm sure the college had to show that that was a course requirement. And the other thing was, "you're just getting these dumb jocks that don't know anything." So those were the two issues of mine, and I was not focused on athletics particularly as Dean. But these came to my attention. By that I mean, I was so overwhelmed being a biology teacher that I had no idea what was happening around the college. So when I became Academic Dean, I really had a lot to learn. And these issues with the athletic department and John Reese are fresh in my mind as if it happened yesterday. So the question of faculty status came up. And I remember John Reese who was masterful. He came before the academic standing committee and he said, "These are the assignments that we give our coaches. These are the expectations we have. Do you all want to see a winning team?" "Oh, yes, John, that's fine! got to have goals! Got to have objectives!" "I would like to see every faculty member put on display, on Saturday afternoon, to the general public, a few of their lectures and their work during the week." And the other issue was athletes as students. I think he really got ticked off that they thought athletes were actually inferior to the other students academically. And the response he gave to that was to have a study done of all the courses and all the athletes and their grades. He had the evidence that showed the athletes were better students in their non-playing semester--or vice versa, I don't know which.

CB: During their playing semester.

FM: But there was a direct correlation between what their study habits were when they were in their season--they used to have seasons, now it's year-round--than when they were in their off semester. Being an athlete had nothing at all to do with the student. They're smart kids and they could pass any course you give them. Those are my only two experiences that I had as the dean for seven years and dealing with athletics.

GP: One of Rollie's goals was to get faculty support for his program. In fact, when he first came to Wilkes he invited the faculty to watch films each week and learn what he was trying to accomplish with his players. Two of his biggest faculty supporters were Welton Farrar and George Elliot.

FM: And Cromwell Thomas.

GP: Yes,. Cromwell was very, very involved.

CB: And the first wrestling coach.

GP: Yeah. And we did have a marching band in 1946.

CB: Did we really?

GP: We really did.

TG: And a big one!

FM: Do you remember the names of any of the post-war players that George Ralston coached? The only one I remember ever hearing stories about, when I came in 1955 was Norman Cross. And the line was called the Seven Blocks of Anthracite.

GP: Well they were the Seven Blocks of Anthracite. Leo Soloman was on that team. Leo became the superintendent for the Wilkes-Barre School District. Jack Jones was a very successful coach at Meyers High School and then he went down to Temple to coach that team. A lot of those guys from that era have passed on. An interesting guy who played later was Ron Rescigno.

JR: I remember Ron Rescigno.

CB: Is Ron still alive?

GP: Yes. He's coaching with his son. His son is the head coach and Ron serves as his assistant at a high school. He is well into his 80s.

CB: He and I are the same age. He was the one who had the smart classroom. In Port Hueneme, California where he was superintendent of schools. He built an entire school for kids who were migrant workers. But he started in Campbell, which is a part of Silicon Valley, and they wanted to marry technology with learning. And he did it there and then they hired him in Port Hueneme. Well, that's a whole other story, but I had heard that he was sick. When were you last in touch with him?

GP: About two months ago.

CB: Oh, great. Give me his address. Because he and I met up in Bulgaria. He did a lot of work with Bulgarian computer science people, which was the leading part of the Soviet Union in terms of computers. I used to take teachers out to Port Hueneme, and show them this setup, which was the future, as far as I was concerned. Incredible. And he came from New York City. He hit Wilkes as a --

GP: Well Ralston was his coach--he was very close to Ralston.

CB: That's how I got to know him.

FM: He wasn't a big guy, either. Ron was a small guy.

CB: He was a little guy.

GP: Nah, he was 5'9", if he was that.

FM: Boy, he was tough as nails.

GP: And they had really terrible teams at that time. It was to the point where Francis Pinkowski, who succeeded Ralston as coach in 1958, visited the dorms trying to recruit guys because his roster was lean.

CB: General observation: as far as I know, and Tim can correct us on this, but I don't think there has been any study of Wilkes that has taken an extensive few of a group of students. Either by activity, by discipline, by, in this case, athletics.

FM: Chris, during your tenure didn't they do an inventory of physicians?

CB: Yes. Dan Kopen did it. We have two physician directories, and we've got a lawyers directory. I think we did accounting. Not sure.

CB: But what George has gotten into, is into the lives of these kids. He's gotten into their families. And we're fit in the evolution of the social and economic structure of the Valley in the post World War II period. I think it's a very important book for Wilkes alumni in general. So when you get to marketing, Pawlusch, in this one, I think you should be working with our new president intimately. Because it could open up other cohorts that can be studied this way while they're still alive. You're getting just on the edge of it for this group.

GP: And that's just it. If I would have waited any longer I might have lost the opportunity to talk to these people. There were three people that I interviewed, who have died in the past year. Most of the people I interviewed wanted to talk. Many of them haven't been back to campus in many years. Wilkes was the biggest part of their lives, their experience here. That was the fun part of my project.

JR: George, you haven't mentioned much about the wrestling program.

CB: I was gonna get you into other sports. And other coaches.

JR: I'm also curious whether there was any tension between the programs.

GP: Yes, there was. In 1976 the school decided to upgrade our wrestling program to Division 1. And it wasn't the best of times as far as the budget. And we went division 1 and we were totally unprepared to offer scholarships to recruits. We just couldn't sustain it. Here we were, we were NCAA Division 3 champs in 1974 and we were third in 1974. And then we go up to Division 1, competing against Ivy league schools and other universities that had sufficient financial resources. Welton Farrar said that there was a buzz among football players because wrestlers were getting athletic scholarships while other sports weren't. And the perception was that John was taking money from football and putting it into wrestling, which he didn't.

JR: I had his budget at one point when I was dean.

CB: And I was the one who took us out of division 1 and returned to division 3, and moved John out of being athletic director for that very reason. He really couldn't focus on the rest of the sports compared to wrestling. It was his love.

GP: Well I talked to John last year for about an hour. And his memories prior to '65 were very short. But I asked him the question. Of course the big question was Rollie's meeting in the oval office in 1981. And the pieces that I've been able to put together--are you aware of what happened?

CB: No.

GP: At the end of the 1980 season Rollie began receiving criticism from individuals as well as the media. Some said, "Rollie needs to go and upgrade his offense and throw passes. What he's doing is something from the old ages." Rollie was still having success with his offensive running game. They lost a lot of close games that they could have won, depriving him of winning seasons in his later years as the Wilkes coach.

His 1981 team was heavily laden with freshmen and sophomores. The season turned out to be a disaster as the team ended winless at 0-9. Season. Following the last game Rollie was called to a meeting and told, "We want you to hire some new coaches and we want you to change your offense." And Rollie said, "Hey, I'm the coach of this team and we're not going to do that." and so they both fired each other. The next day Rollie handed John Reese his resignation as football coach. He didn't talk to Reese for two years after that. Rollie was a proud and stubborn guy and because of his personality had a tough time dealing with diplomacy. But getting back to the late 1960s, most of his players were able to get to practice on time at 4 pm. This was not the case in the late 1970s when more labs and classes were being scheduled later in the afternoon. Towards the end of his tenure, because of class conflicts, he would sometimes have guys at practice two or three times each week. He never had a full team at practice. There were a lot of other factors that impacted Wilkes football in Schmidt's final years - not having full-time assistants who could recruit, inadequate training facilities and the inability to recruit a quarterback to lead the program. However, Rollie's coaching philosophy and game demeanor stayed consistent throughout his 20-year tenure. He was on the line, very upbeat, and nobody noticed any change in him. He was always the same guy. It's unbelievable, the things you find out about a guy and you realize, God, we had a gem here, and we never even knew it. But he needed some help that he never got.

CB: Is he the only guy you're going to actually have a chapter on?

GP: Yeah, because that's what it's all about. And the working title right now is 'Zeus and His Boys.' In 1967, the guys were going down on the field, going down from the hill. It was raining, it was sleeting, and the boys were grumbling, "Oh, why do we have to practice?" And they didn't see Rollie in front of them. And Rollie turned around, pointed to the sky, and he said, "Stop." and the sun came out.

[Laughter]

GP: So in the 60s, if you look, he had the name 'Zeus'. And that's what they called him, 'Zeus'. So he was Zeus in the late 1960s. But the guys had fun with it.

CB: Let's talk about these other sports. Complete your thinking about wrestling. And about John Reese. John is one of the great men of Wilkes.

GP: Well, I have to be very open. As selfless as Rollie was, John was totally the opposite. I'm trying to be very objective. But I think it was more about him rather than the team. I never got close to John. But his focus was on wrestling and that was that. But the other programs. We had a nationally recognized baseball program under Gene Domzalski. Unfortunately Gene came up for tenure and was denied in 1978. Title IX was a hot topic at that point and to be compliant Wilkes added three new sports for women - tennis, volleyball and softball. Gene had to leave coaching and became director of placement. Dave Kaschak followed and coached for three years until he too, was not granted tenure. I would like to see Doris Saracino get a little more credit because she was really a tough son of a gun. But man, she really did a lot to propel the women's program. She used to say to me, "George Pawlusch took the women off the social page and put them on the athletic page." And ironically, I was looking, and today is her birthday. And she ticked off a lot of people. But her heart was in the right place. Now you see the women's teams have really had the most success on campus. And we still have a situation where one-quarter of our students are varsity athletes.

CB: Thinking of the Burns and Allen team on radio, I think we could have done The John and Doris Show.

GP: Well they were like cats and dogs.

CB: That's what I mean.

GP: But guys, she wasn't gonna let go. She knew what everybody else was getting.

CB: I was right in the middle of that. But I think one of my most important appointments was making Addy director of athletics.

GP: I interviewed Addie and I was totally impressed with her overall knowledge of where sports fits into the college experience. She nailed it down. She's really sharp. Very, very sharp. And I've got some more questions that I want to ask her. She confirmed the thoughts on the breakup of Rollie's final years. Because everybody loved him. And the new coaches used to go and seek his advice.

CB: That's true of all my 17 years.

GP: But believe me, everybody respected him. I only got one negative comment and that was from a person who was ticked off because another player was chosen as the starting quarterback instead of him.

CB: Two comments on--

TG: I just wanted to add here, when we had that dinner, I think you were there, weren't you George?

GP: No, I don't think so.

TG: Oh, it's too bad you missed that. But it was his return. The thing that was fascinating about it was the huge regard. You've expressed it very well, but I can confirm that there was this reverence for him, I think would be the best way to put it. And I didn't think it was artificial. I think it was something very very special. And I've dealt with a number of levels in athletics and I've just never seen anybody who pulls so many people together. And it was a great night for him.

GP: I think I heard correctly that Rollie left his estate to the college.

TG: Did he really?

GP: Yeah. It wasn't a heck of a lot, but he did. I was trying to track down some of the materials that he might have kept, like pictures and letters. I did get in touch with his niece. Her name was Denise Rupert. And she was John Reese's secretary in the early 1970s. And she was able to give me some background and sadly she told me in Rollie's last months. She described a situation when both Rollie and his Marge were failing. And I don't know if I'm going to use that in the book, but it was really sad. But he was devoted to her, and I guess someone in the waiting area said to him, "Weren't you the coach at Wilkes?" And yes he was still remembered. Rollie had heart problems probably impacted by his decades of smoking. Even in his last days he was smoking.

TG: Yep.

GP: The last, and I'll share it with all of you. I probably won't use it in the book, but I'm gonna share what she gave me.

TG: Yes, please.

GP: But said to use it, she gave me permission to make it public. But how well or how you didn't know Rollie--it describes the man. It was sad, but he was true to himself. And his big worry was that he would die before her. And he didn't make it. She had, and I never knew, Lou Gehrig's disease.

CB: Did she really?

TG: I didn't either.

GP: It took them about a year to find out what it was. And the last time I met him was during that weekend when they dedicated the stadium.

GP: It took them a while to find out what was wrong with Marge. He invited me to come down and visit him in Daytona. And a lot of guys did visit him down at Daytona. In those last years he attended a lot of events. And he was totally back in the program. And that was your time, Tim. And it was beautiful. It

allowed his players to experience closure with him And he talked with everyone, he remembered everyone. He remembered things that people couldn't believe he could remember. But he was truly dedicated to being a teacher. Life lessons, that's what he taught. He made everything a life lesson. He translated football into life.

TG: Just to make one other point, and I'm embarrassed, but I can't remember his wife's name, but I can remember vividly --

GP: It was Marge.

TG: Marge. they were really a beautiful couple, no other way to put it. Totally devoted to one another. And she clearly was a part of this effort, I think, that he made with the students. You alluded to that.

GP: She made it happen.

TG: Yeah, she was part of that night. And she was pretty successful in banking.

GP: She was. She went from being a teller to assistant vice president. From what I learned from people who went down to Florida to encourage him to return to campus, Marge was the reason that Rollie came back. She was a little bit more in the foreground than anyone thought. And you have to give credit to Sue Jolley in the advancement office who engineered the whole process. It was a happy ending. And if you have a happy ending, you can't ask for anything more!

TG: No, you can't.

CB: Just to balance the books a little bit, one should say, when you think about these couples, John Reese with Patsy was the most dovoting and supportive man through her years and years of her invalancy. He was absolutely, totally devoted to her. So you've got these two coaches who shared that in marriages, that were remarkable marriages. Not something to sniff at.

GP: She was a very nice person. I got to know her a little bit, not as much as Marge.

CB: You mentioned a couple other key people. Some portraits. Welton Farrar.

GP: Well, Welton was die-hard. He would show up to practice with George Elliot, especially during the 1965 through 1969 seasons. And he was head of the athletic committee. Now, I've been trying to find anything left in those files. And no files for athletic--

JR: Did you try Berlatsky?

GP: I talked to Berlatsky and he gave some insight from when he took over. He had some good insight. In intercollegiate athletics.

FM: George, you're touching a very delicate and almost unanswerable subject because people have died. We talked about the same thing with the theater and the arts and the impact on the community, the fine arts fiesta. But Al Groh had copper wire recordings of every performance when they were giving them at Irem Temple. And Bill Gasbarro with music and the band. There are areas that are non-specific. Talk about what a college does. And you have disciplines. And you have activities and a focus and a trained faculty to do them. But there are two departments that transcend a subject discipline, I think. One is theater and extracurricular activities like the radio station or college newspaper. And you have athletics. And they kind of don't fall into a clearly faculty-defined point. And you never know their distinguishing titles. "Coach." You're not Professor so-and-so you see this kind of bifurcation in looking at an entire history like we think we're doing. And see how Wilkes accommodated those different aspects of a university or college function and evolved in their own particular way. And yet there were underlying principles of the kind of people that recognize the parameters within which they could work. Which you could not do at other institutions. Jim found in his faculty years at Bloomsburg, I think, that there's an environment that contributes to a successful academic major. You never forget the impact of Hugo Mailey and Sam Rosenburg.

CB: Yep.

TG: Yeah. Mike, if I could just make one comment to what you said, I think a couple cases, I don't know what George found, I'm just fascinated. But I want to get a copy of the book. Are you selling advanced copies, George?

GP: [Laughing] I gotta write it, I'll tell you now.

TG: I'll put money down in the barrel and I'm still trying to get you to write a third book.

CB: The whole purpose of this was to put pressure on you.

GP: Well the big thing is getting that first one. Because it took me 25 years. Of course there were a lot of years I didn't do anything. I couldn't work on it because I was going back and forth to Greenwich. But I was able to get the discipline. Because I'm gonna tell you, if I was writing this to make money, Carol would be on the street with the grandkids. I don't know how they do it. I've put in four hours a day into this project since last February. The archive staff, here at Wilkes, have been so helpful. I have a history major that is working with me and that I stipend.. And he's learning about history, too. And that would have been the great thing. I got into this late and I didn't have a relationship with the history department, but it would have been a great educational opportunity. But I do have people who are really helping me out a lot.

TG: That's too bad you couldn't pull that in, but you know. The one other point I was going to make and just see if you agree. I think this concerns the athletic staff versus faculty. One, has diminished some over the years, particularly in Division 3. Division 1, that's a whole other story, and even in Division 2 there's still some of that traditional contention. But I think if you were to talk with faculty, at least during the time I was there, what they would say is they grasped the importance of athletics as a recruitment tool for students. By and large and certainly statistically, the athletes at Wilkes did better than the student body as

a whole. The total athletic cohort did better than the student body as a whole. Which I think was very helpful to them. And the faculty's view of them.

GP: In Rollie's scheme of things, academics came first. If a player needed to leave, he wanted the kid in class. He was very strict on his belief that you were here to get an education. Many of his players felt that too. Football is secondary, I'm here to get an education. I'm the first in my family to go to college, I got to succeed, I got to graduate, I have to get out there.

TG: I think division 3 allows for that. It's just a totally different situation in division 1. where the whole driver is athletic performance.

GP: Training was different in the 1960s. The guys didn't lift weights. They played two or three sports. They started with football. Many didn't even get in shape until pre-season practice started. It was all fun. They enjoyed it. For the Valley guys in the late 1960s, it was even more when you win and beat the heck out of everybody.

CB: Pour a beer.

GP: [laughing] Pour a beer! I heard a story about a party at the Nanticoke Legion. One Saturday night Congressman Dan Flood was on the main floor giving a speech while the Wilkes players were down stairs. Flood decided to go downstairs to join the party. Dan tried to grab the microphone that was typical Flood. Instead, the players chanted "Up, up, your ass! Up, up, your ass! Some shit!" to Dan Flood. So Flood just turned around and said, "You guys are barbarians!" and left.
[Laughter]

CB: Well that built our relationship with the Congressman.

TG: Well no! If this was fiction, it would be unbelievable, but.

CB: Well I think this book is going to be a very valuable book for this culture. As a non-athlete--

TG: Just before you go on there, I think that cheer was actually crafted by Jim Rodechko.

[Laughter]

TG: With some students. Notice how hard he's laughing.

GP: They were something. They were really something, those guys.

CB: As I was saying, as a non-athlete, coming into this picture, the first thing that I had to deal with Middle States. In their previous report, they found our gym to be inadequate. And to our entire program, opportunities for athletics and self-improvement physically put us in jeopardy. So I had the first meeting of the board. We held the meeting in the gym. Patty Davies was the new chair, first woman chair of the board. And we had a tour--I think John Reese gave the tour-- of the locker rooms. And these folks who

lived locally had no idea that things were this primitive. And reflected on what the visiting teams, both men and women, had to go through were those locker arrangements. So we committed, my very first board meeting, to a capital campaign to build the Martz Center. And I would have to go back--because I'm writing my own memoir--I would have to go back through my notes to really get the right chronology, but that building, Bob, must have been completed in the middle of my second year. We got onto it pretty quickly. We hit a crisis in our basketball program with Ron Rainey. And this is where I struggled with John Reese, who wanted to keep Ron on.

JR: We all struggled with that one.

CB: I decided that we needed a new coach. So I sailed into that thing and that's when we got our good friend.

JR: Jerry?

CB: Jerry Rickrode. Then came the issue with our football facilities during a time when our football program was on the floor.

GP: Yes, there were a couple ups but there were mostly downs.

CB: So we went through a very creative exercise with the board and with Allan Kirby, to convert and combine the two existing buildings on the hill at Ralston Field into full-scale locker room showers. So we kept--the historian in me, those two buildings that were remnants of our coal mining history. And in both cases, these two new facilities were the entry point to a period of real success in Wilkes sports. And Joe DeMelfi was hired as head football coach. After a 0-9 first season, he turned the program around and the team won the MAC title and advanced to the NCAA playoffs just three years later. next But the difference between those seasons were those new facilities. The facilities were crucial. You can't run good athletic programs without adequate facilities,

JR: Not when high schools look twice as good as your facility does.

CB: That's right. So those were big leaps by the institution. And in both cases, Allan Kirby came up with big money, because in the case of the Marts Center, we weren't going to do a full basement. We were just going to build John Reeses's wrestling room. And Paul then convinced Allan, "You know, it's a shame, with so little property we have to deal with, we really need to have that full basement." So Allan Kirby paid for the full basement. In a division 3 setting of the school-- the endowment was \$2 million when I got here. And we had not raised the money for Evans Hall, which was our first big commitment to a new modern dormitory. So the opportunity was there for me and the pressure was there for me, as someone again who was not an athlete, to say we've got to raise the money for this. Middle States was the entering wedge, but it was the quality of experience for the students so that they could have a successful... And then we started dealing with the fields. Of course, Addie was the field hockey coach, and she was a wonderful advocate that we had to do something about those fields. Meanwhile, I found out that the Indian burial ground was underneath our football field. So I was dealing with the spirits. Who was the guy that was our informal coach of our crew on the river?

Anyway, I had a very rich experience in my athletic career at Wilkes.

FM: You have to talk about Indian spirits at dinner tonight because I know nothing about this. Is that an astroturf field?

CB: No.

FM: Or is it real?

JR: It's got cork pieces in it. It's very safe.

TG: Actually, it's rubber. Ground-up rubber. Astroturf really is done--

JR: That's hard.

GP: I also know of one case, and I'm sure there are others, when George Ralston honored a final request by one of his former players to spread his ashes quietly on the football field.

FM: You're kidding.

SC: Wow.

CB: That sort of thing is starting to be done more and more. I just read an article on it.

GP: The guy wanted his ashes there, so George sprinkled them. I mean hey, that's what they're doing now, you know?

CB: Sure. It's nourishing.

TG: George was ahead of his time on a number of dimensions.

HR: We are gonna interview Helen.

TG: I've talked to her. She's sharp.

CB: Helen Ralston. George's lady.

GP: She gave me a lot of his artifacts. And I know his son, Tommy, pretty well. Amazing guy, George Ralston. But the big accomplishment for the college was building the football field in 1965. Prior to that we played our games in a temporary field at Artillery Park. And the field was situated in the old baseball outfield and was sloped. So there was a foot difference in elevation from endzone to endzone!

CB: So it's passing up!

GP: We opened the locker rooms on the hill in 1962 before opening the field. So guys thought that was great. And I asked the question, “how was our facility compared to those of the teams we played?” Their answer was that we weren’t too far behind many of the schools we faced. I remember going to Delaware Valley and they didn’t have a press box. In fact, I interviewed Joe Gries before he died and they told me that he had to climb up a tree to do the game down there.

FM: Use a deer stand!

GP: Lebanon Valley used Lebanon High School Stadium for its home games. I think in the 1970s a lot of schools began upgrading their football facilities.

CB: The Rose Bowl of Wrestling?

GP: Yes, Rollie was very involved in that in all the years that I was here. I remember he was the announcer. He, Marvin Antinnes and Cromwell Thomas. In fact I have a picture of those three guys. Rollie was a wrestler in high school and he competed in track. He went to Bloom but he really didn’t play much football there.

CB: Since we’re talking about facilities, I think we have never recorded the story, which was told very casually when I was here, but I’m not sure it’s going to be anywhere else. And that is the stands.

GP: I’ve been trying to find information about that.

FM: They were the Kennedy assassination stands from Washington we got from Dan Flood.

CB: Inauguration, not assassination.

FM: Okay, gosh.

GP: Well who knows? Who would be the person that I could get--

FM: [Laughing in background] there was not a parade!

CB: All you need is Mike! Because Mike was there. So they are the Kennedy inauguration [stands]? Was that Dan Flood?

GP: I heard that, but I couldn’t find anybody to--

FM: They were the stands for the inauguration of John F. Kennedy as president, and Dan Flood was our congressman in the 1960s. My understanding was that he called Dr. Farley and said, “Could you use some stands for the athletic field?” and Farley said, “Hell yes!”

CB: Did he say hell? No, no, no.

FM: No, Farley did not say hell. “Yell yes!”

GP: I have a picture of those stands winding up in the endzone after the flood

FM: They floated downstream.

CB: We’re getting towards the end.

GP: Whenever you want, don’t worry about me!

JR: I have to make a reservation. You’re not going to dinner?

GP: No, I have some meetings tomorrow that I have to get back for.

JR: I’ll go out and call.

GP: I hope that this is what you were looking for.

TG: No, better, better!

CB: I hope this is what you were looking for.

GP: Because I just opened my brain up and stuff just came out. Of course I’ve been living every day with Wilkes football for the last year. But I just want to be clear. That team and my experience here with the team set me up for a tremendous career. And I owe so much to this University. I talked earlier about the Vermont game. And prior to that game, there was another student, the editor of the Beacon, who criticized me because he felt that—even though I was only a student—that we should have gotten more publicity. I said, “Okay, I don’t need this. I just don’t want anything to do with it.” And I went on the fan bus going up. After the game, Rollie said to me, “I want you on the team bus.” And here’s the biggest win in Wilkes history, he was back in the bus telling me, if I did what I said I was going to do, it would be the stupidest thing in the world. And he convinced me to stay involved.

CB: One of the things that I’m curious about in terms of the way that you’re shaping this book. Is it a book that is giving context to this great team? Or is it more here’s the college and its athletic program which had within it this extraordinary five-year period?

GP: No, it’s really going to be much more than that. I’m going to tie our area’s mining history and its relationship with football. It’s also the college, and its history. And of course, Rollie Schmidt. When I started this thing, I had no clue on how deeply he had been involved in people’s lives. And I haven’t confirmed this but there is rumor that Rollie was offered the job at Vermont. But he wanted to stay here. And he came in second in 1968 for the head coaching job at Harvard University. Unfortunately, a few alumni didn’t like the fact that he received his undergraduate degree from a small public university. So he didn’t get the job. But I think after that, his life was Wilkes. His friends were here. So this was his comfort zone, in Wilkes-Barre.

CB: To pick up on that last point, do you have anything to say about--and I'm terrible at remembering names now--but our guy that went off to Wisconsin to be head coach?

JR: Bo Ryan.

CB: Bo Ryan?

GP: No, because he was a basketball player. As a student at Wilkes, Bo Ryan's student job was to feed the furnace at the gym. During the 1970 I was lucky to have two special students working with me in the sports information office. One was Paul Domowitch, who has had a lengthy career as the Philadelphia Eagles beat reporter for the Philadelphia Daily News. Paul is also on the selection committee for the NFL Hall of Fame. Eddie White followed Paul. After graduation, Eddie was sports information director at Wilkes for a year before moving on to Notre Dame. He later served as director of publicity for the Miami Dolphins. Today he is vice president of community relations for the NBA Indiana Pacers.

TG: That's great.

GP: Because you know, I just think there's a lot of opportunities. There's a lot of things going on at this campus, a lot in the history. And there hasn't been much written. Farley's book is basically just a collection of...

CB: Essays.

GP: Essays. And you would think that there might be more, but there isn't. So hopefully--

CB: Well that's what this project is trying to contribute to, that we'll have a rich summary of conversations like this for the people who will get serious about writing some aspect of history, or a total history of Wilkes.

GP: Yes. I've been involved, we published a book for the 100th anniversary of the Greenwich Hospital. That was my first taste of putting together a history book.

FM: What I want to do with you before we part, probably forever, is to take you over to the athletic field and show you that dynamite storage house and what's written inside! You gotta see it!

GP: Well this is the building--it's sort of a square building in the back?

FM: Yeah. Door's always open! I couldn't believe it when they showed it to me. And you will see handwritten notes and signatures and dates of "Thank God the strike is over, 1921." You gotta see it with your history!

GP: Well I was able to get a picture of Artillery Park, and what it looked like from the outside in the 1920s. It went right out to Northampton Street.

JR: Wasn't that the Cleveland Indians ?

GP: They were a Cleveland Indians farm team in the late 1940s, when the Indians were really good. And they had great seasons from 1948 to 1954.

JR: When they finished second to the Yankees every year?

GP: Except in the 1954 World Series, when they beat the Yankees and wound up in the world series against the New York Giants? When Willie Mays made that spectacular catch.

CB: I think you guys are just showing off, that's all.

GP: I wish I was a history major, but I'm catching up now.

CB: You're catching up. Now this book is very important to the history of Wilkes because it's going to inspire other people--I hope, to do different cuts. Because the story of the alumni, you started out with that today, and I'm sure Tim experienced this as he went around the country meeting people, If you get them talking about their Wilkes experience-- sounds very much like you. And I mean, predictably, if you meet them in Santa Fe New Mexico, San Francisco, they're the same. My favorite story, and I know this should be on tape, was my first alumni event in Miami while attending a national association meeting at the Fontainebleau Hotel. Because I was there, we decided to have an alumni event. One of the alums, whose parents had the VIP coffee shop in Sterling, and I'm not sure whether he finally graduated or not from Wilkes, was the vice president of food and beverage at the Intercontinental Hotel in Miami. So we got him to put on an event for us. It was just for cocktails. But we had a two story room, and it was banked with food, with waiters all dressed in white to take care of about eleven of us that arrived. And in the middle of this, my friend, whose name I just can't remember, got inspired that we should have dinner together as well. So we all wanted to stay for dinner. And he had sent a stretch white Cadillac limousine to pick Jane and me up. With chilled wine already for us. And I thought, "You know, this job at Wilkes is not going to be bad." So we get to dinner, and each of us has a waiter. And Ron--his first name was Ron, decided that he had learned enough about each of us that he could pick the item on the menu that would be the best for us. So he did that with all of us. And as the waiters left to take the order in, someone said, "What do you do when you go back to the Valley?" "Oh, I go to Victory Pig Pizza." "So do I!" "And I always go to "Oh, so do I!" So there we were, in the lap of luxury, and I said, you can take the Wilkes kids out of the Valley, but you can't take the Valley out of the Wilkes kids. And that was my experience from then on. However elite the setting, if you got people relaxed, and it didn't take much to get Wilkes people relaxed, they had a sense of this Valley as a bosom that was beautiful. And I, as someone coming from a totally different background, bought into this, and I could smell it when I got around a bunch of Wilkes people. And it's pink-centered. It was as true of our man at Stanford.

GP: Paul Wender?

CB: Paul Wender

GP: I grew up with him.

CB: And not that he did not fulfill a Stanford role socially, and his wife particularly, but they were Valley boys and Valley girls! Cathy DeAngelis--I've just been in touch with her--She is such an extraordinary example of a person who is going to the very top, and is utterly down to earth. That's part of the culture of the Valley, but it's also what Wilkes contributed in the seasoning and the marinating of these great people.

GP: Well going into the ivy league in Connecticut and traversing Greenwich... I haven't changed since I've been in college. And what you see is when they're drinking their martinis, I'm drinking my beer. But that opens you up, it makes people really want to connect with you. You know, as I said, with the picture of a breaker. And what I learned, just appreciating what you have and being able to be happy

CB: Tim, do you have any final comments? Before we sign this off.

TG: Yeah, actually. Hey George, I'm excited about your book, so when you got the advanced copy to be purchased, or an advance purchase of the book that surely will appear, I'd say, what, two months?

GP: Nah. That's being optimistic.

TG: Just kidding. [Laughs]