

## **1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project: Transcript of Interview**

Interviewer: Desiree Harguess

Narrator: Richard Walter Gilbert

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Today is Friday, August 19, 2011. This is Desiree Harguess, Sport Management Graduate Student at the University of Texas at Austin, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports Institute for Olympic Studies. As part of the 1968 US Olympic Team Oral History Project I am interviewing Rick Gilbert over the phone about his experiences in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City.

DH: Okay.

RG: You don't have all this information ahead of time here?

DH: We do but we like for you to say it. So what is your birth name?

RG: Richard Walter Gilbert.

DH: Okay and where were you born? Where and when?

RG: Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

DH: And where did you grow up?

RG: In Lancaster and I was born September 23, 1943.

DH: Okay. What were some of your first athletic pursuits and how did you first get involved with your sport?

RG: Uh, let's see. I tried little league baseball a couple of times and then actually got into diving. My father— my parents had a cottage at Port Deposit, Maryland, which is on the Susquehanna River below the Conowingo Dam just at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, if that helps your geography. And it was a little old one-road town there, he had a cottage and loved to fish and when he got off work on Friday everybody was loaded in the car, actually it was just the three of us, my mother and myself. I was an only child. And he would go down there and like to fish. And I was good for as long as my comic books held out. (laughter) At this point I'm about 13. There was a local pool I hung out around and there was a life guard there. I could do a front somersault at the time and he told me if I didn't do a one and a half he'd kick me out of the pool, so thus my diving career started. And then I went to the local YMCA in Lancaster and they had

a program and I was— I had a coach there for two years before I got involved with the high school coach and that's sort of how it took off.

DH: Okay. Did you have other friends that were involved in swimming or diving?

RG: Yes. Not— Through that but not, you know, that led me into it if that's what you mean.

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: In other words I didn't have a buddy that was into it and said hey, come on down here. I was just, you know, I went down to the Y and at that point it was one of the few recreational areas you could go to as a kid. And it was within walking distance. You let kids walk places then. Like now, you have to be afraid some idiot might pick them up but back then we really didn't worry about it. So, yeah, I made friends down there on the team and things.

DH: About how many people were on that team?

RG: Oh, jeez-Louise. Oh there might have been three or four at the time there. And in the high school there was three or four, diving. Not a large number.

DH: Where did your high school team work out?

RG: At the— They had a high school pool.

DH: Oh, that's nice.

RG: It was J. P. McCaskey High School in Lancaster. I'm thinking back, I've got to think back here. The high schools in our area did have pools so swimming and diving was there and we went to local high schools; we never went real far. An hour away might be as far as you went on a school bus—

DH: Okay.

RG: —on a trip.

DH: So going into just before the Olympic Games or a few years before that, can you tell me a little bit about any outstanding things that you remember from your high school diving experience and then tell me about your college diving career.

RG: All right. Well I guess I was real fortunate in high school. I won the state championship three years in a row. There's an Eastern Inter [scholastic] Championship meet at [Lawrenceville, NJ, I won ] as a sophomore and a senior and lost it by less than a point as a junior. Turned out the guy that beat me (laughter) was from uh, his name was Pat LaForte and he was from the Buffalo area of New York and when I went to Cornell to coach later, he ended up being a dentist in town and was my dentist. (laughter) You talk about a small world.

DH: Yeah.

RG: And then when I was a senior in high school I was seventh in the nationals on the one meter and I went to Indiana and won the nationals as a freshman. Not NCAA but AAU Nationals. US diving didn't exist back then. AAU ran everything. They ran track and field, they, the AAU and the NCAA were probably at odds with each other.

DH: Oh.

RG: And they were fighting over who got to pick the Olympians, the AAU was picking the Olympic teams and NCAA was actually out of it. And that was a nasty battle for a little bit. But I was successful in college, I won seven Nationals, two World University Diving Championships in Budapest. I missed the team in sixty-four. They took three; I was fourth on the springboard. And I was fourth on the springboard in sixty-eight and then made it on the platform. I really considered myself a springboard diver, though.

DH: Hum.

RG: But one of the things the coach [Hobie Billingsley] preached that was nobody wanted to dive platform, I mean who in your right mind wants to go 33 feet in the air and jump off.

DH: Right.

RG: And he always spun it as an extra, just another chance [to make the Olympic Team\_\_\_ that was our goal] and as it turned out it was the chance that I had that I made it.

DH: Yeah. So tell me a little bit more about the different events that you participated in or that you competed in, in diving.

RG: Same as today, that one-meter, three-meter, and 10-meter. There's not a lot of emphasis in one-meter. There is in high school and college. Initially colleges didn't have 10-meter, NCAA didn't have 10-meter because there weren't enough pools, indoor, that had 10-meter. The 10-meter came in with the AAU in the outdoors. It's only probably oh, I'm guessing now, in the last— I don't know if twenty years is going back too much, I think it is, that NCAA's had 10-meter in their NCAA championship, namely because of the lack of facilities that had them.

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: But those three events were what we did. Now the Olympic competition is interested [in] only three-meter and 10-meter. US Diving and NCAA have one meter, three meter, and 10-meter. Did I answer your question? I even forget what it was.

DH: Yes, I was just asking you about, you know, what were the different events that you competed in? And so you also competed in springboard. Can you tell me a little bit more about the springboard?

RG: I think most people like springboard better. As you get older some divers have hung around with the platform because your balance isn't as important. In the springboard, you know when you're running out on the springboard and you're taking that high hurdle, balance on the takeoff is critical and if you're out of balance you're gonna have a hard time doing a decent dive.

There was one book way back when called *The Diver's Manual*, it had small circulation but in there the guy claimed and probably rightly so that 95 percent of your dives were ruined from bad [hurdles and] takeoffs. So if you can think of, if you're familiar with the sport and you watch people on springboard you'll see them running out there and taking a very high hurdle before they takeoff and their arms are up in the air and the hurdles nowadays are three or four feet in the air and then you drop to the end of the springboard and that's how you attain your height. And balance is very critical landing on the end of the board where if you'll watch platform that last jump to the end of the platform is long and low, it's not very high and it's usually much faster, much more forward velocity than on a springboard. It's more like tumbling. So balance isn't quite as critical as it is on a springboard. The— let me see how to put this, the actual dives like a three and a half somersault, the timing is very similar on a springboard and on a platform except on the platform typically you'll have a little longer drop because the springboard catapults you up in the air so you're spinning on the way up and a good diver is gonna have his three and a half somersaults done by the time he passes the springboard. Where on a platform you jump up three or four feet, maybe, and you're doing most of your spinning on the way down so the diver might only have one and a half somersaults done by the time he passes the platform or two if he's very good and he's gonna do the other one and a half, you know, between ten and five meters as he falls. So his finish is gonna be five meters above the water but the three meter divers' finish is gonna be two or three meters above the water. I'm talking about the longer drop off the platform, but the actual timing of the dive is very similar.

DH: Okay. And are there different heights or different events within springboard?

RG: One meter and three meter.

DH: In the springboard?

RG: Right. And then the platform is technically [a 10 meter event.] You can compete off the five meter platform but you could never win anything off a five meter platform, you might see some age group events where kids will do some dive off five and some off ten, but [in] your senior nationals and NCAA's, everything's off ten.

DH: Okay. So where were you living and what were you doing in the year just prior to the sixty-eight games?

RG: The year just prior I was in Fort Worth, Texas, at Tarrant County Junior College. I took a job, some of your questions here later talk about amateurs and amateurism was a big deal back then. I got a Bachelor's and Master's at Indiana, I stayed for two years and I had one year before the games and I was tired of school so I took a job in Fort Worth and I was teaching physical education, it was the first year the Junior College was in existence and they had no athletic programs as such. I was teaching pretty much. I had taken the job, by taking the job there I knew I wouldn't have to fend off any accusations that my athletic ability got me the job. In other words they [didn't] hired me to coach because of, you know, my athletic [ability], since I was just teaching.

DH: Okay.

RG: And so I spent that year there. I trained in their pool. They had a pool. There was some local people, some local programs that were going on and I got involved with, there was a Boys Club there. I went over and helped out at the Boys Club and the two individuals that were coaching divers at the Boys Club were pretty good and they were helping me. They were coaching, one guy was a [coach] named [Wirt] Norris and Carl Locke was another [coach] who had a daughter who I ended up coaching, and tried to get her to go to Cornell and the last second she wouldn't leave Texas and went to SMU. But she later won a number of national championships so these [coaches] were pretty decent and then the summer— You know, I worked in the junior college for the nine months and then went back to Indiana to train for the summer before the Games.

DH: Okay. So describe your training and your competition and how it was supported during the summer before the Games and during the trials.

RG: I went back up to Indiana and lived in a dorm and they had a summer program going on so I ended up being a Counselor in the dorm and so that's how I, you know, I got my room and board out of that. I— That summer, that was about it. And then I just trained. Other summers when I was in grad school and I stayed there in the summers, I ended up teaching swimming lessons at a local Country Club which was illegal.

DH: Oh, really?

RG: You couldn't do anything back then.

DH: Oh, my goodness.

RG: When we talk about amateurs then you'll understand some of my apathy toward the current amateur, or attitude toward the current amateurism as they call it. Back then you couldn't do anything. You couldn't teach swimming lessons legally, most of us did under the table, and took cash. I had one guy in town who was a very strong athletic supporter who owned a clothing store who allowed me to go in and he didn't pay me, it was, you know, what do you need for clothes? And it was a preppy type of place and I was able to get some nice clothes that way. But in general that stuff, you know, that's what everybody was doing. It was sort of quiet and under the table.

DH: Yeah. So did you have a family or were you engaged or married at that time?

RG: No, my family was home in Pennsylvania and I was sort of on my own out there with a bunch of other guys trying to do the same thing. We were all training and we counted, what was it? Hobie wasn't running camps at the time, the coach there was Hobie Billingsley who I don't know if anybody's interviewing him or not. He was the Olympic Coach on the '68 Team on the Women's Team.

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DH: Well we'd like to interview him.

RG: — Well you need to get him before uh — We just went up to Indiana for his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday and he's a cracksville [?] guy at this point, he was really funny. [DELETE THE FOLLOWING: You don't want to talk politics and he thinks Obama has ruined the country and he doesn't want to live here with Obama being President. He listens to Rush Limbaugh too much. And] He goes down to Mexico for six months and he goes down in, uh I think he's going down in October. So somebody wants to get him before October.

DH: — Oh, okay.

RG: — If you haven't and when we talk about, well in that letter I copied to you he was the one who said he wanted me to have all his things when he passed on.

DH: — Right?

RG: — ~~And I said I didn't know what I was gonna do with mine.~~ Here's a guy that coached divers that won somewhere around a hundred and ten National [and] Olympic [Championships]. [He] coached Mark Lenzi who won the, uh, what was that? The '96 Games? In Barcelona. There was, was it Barcelona? I can't keep track anymore.

DH: Yeah. I'm not up on it right at this moment; haven't had enough coffee this morning. But—

RG: [In 2004, he] coached Lesley Bush who won the platform in 2004 for the women and was on the '68 Team. And Ken Sitzberger who won the springboard in '64. So, yeah, he'd be, his picture is in that stuff I sent you.

DH: Yes. Okay. So I'll get his contact information from you at the end of this and find out more about when he might be passing through Texas at the end of the interview if you don't mind.

RG: Uh-huh.

DH: So going back to your training before the Games. How did your training affect your work and relationships?

RG: How did it affect my work and relationships?

DH: Uh-huh. Was it hard—

RG: I wasn't working. (laughter)

DH: Okay, so—

RG: I mean we were just there to train is what we were doing.

DH: Uh-huh. So would it have been hard if you had been married or if you had been trying to work as well?

RG: It would have been hard working. I mean, yeah, holding down a full-time job it would have been. I mean we did lifeguarding, that was one of the things I did at the country club [~~when~~ where] I was, I didn't do it that summer because I had just, I had just finished teaching for nine months so I was able to save enough that I didn't have to worry about it, you know, in previous summers unless I was teaching swimming lessons I was also lifeguarding. I ran the country club pool. I, you know, went out there, checked the filters, made sure the filters were working right. I was lifeguard during the day, taught swimming lessons when it was— the time was down, somebody else would come in and spell me and I would go train, I would train in the morning before I went out there and then I would train in the afternoon after it was done. The summer right before the games we were, there was a group of us there. We, at one point before the, as I started to say, Hobie wasn't running camps but he was bringing in high school kids. You could do that at that point, the NCAA wasn't legislating like they were or they are now. You can't bring a high school kid in unless it's in a camp situation. And I sat there with one of my teammates and we counted like 18 people flying around that pool one practice. It was, you know, and one man trying to handle them and you can't do it. But there were also, I'd have to go back and pull up some other pictures and see who was there at the time. Okay, who made the '64 Team was there? Jim Henry who made the ['68] Team was there. Lesley Bush made the '64 Team was there. Uh, I don't think Luis was there. He might have been. Luis Niño de Rivera made the team from Mexico. Actually I think he made the '72 Team and I'm not sure Luis was on the, he should have been on the scene. I'm not sure where Luis trained, if he was training there or not although there were like five National Champions bopping around there.

DH: Wow.

RG: And— Or six and they were all his kids that he had coached. And some of us were a little upset because you know, we're sitting there competing for his attention with high school kids that he had brought in the door who had no chance of making the team or anything else. He was just training them. And so you had, you had the nationals, we were training for the nationals and then the trials were probably, hum, a month later. Let me think back. Trials were in August and the Nationals were in July that summer. They moved the nationals up early and the Olympic [trials] two weeks later. I haven't thought about this in a long time. But I think there was a two-week break between the nationals and the Olympic trials.

DH: Okay. And how did you do at the nationals?

RG: I don't remember, came in second. I didn't win in— that would be '68, the last two I won were '66, I won the three meter and the 10-meter. I was second. I was second in the indoors on the springboard I remember.

DH: Okay.

RG: I won seven nationals, I was probably second about twice as many. I was bouncing around the top three consistently.

DH: Good. So describe the Olympic trials. What was the process and the result and were there any problems or challenges?

RG: The biggest challenge was that pool. If you look at the picture, do you have the pictures up?

DH: Yeah.

RG: Let me get them up here, I don't have them up and that just took up my whole screen. All right, the Long Beach pool if you can find that. I tried to keep those, as I said in my thing, I tried to keep that in order and I wasn't successful. It's my first picture but you're, it's gonna be alpha I guess and if you see where the diving area is you'll see that it's all glass behind the pool. The walls are glass.

DH: Okay. Yeah, I see that.

RG: Uh-huh. And you can't see the other part of the pool, you know, directly across the pool but it was glass over there. The whole building was, had those glass walls. The challenge of that pool is that the lighting normally comes from above and here it's coming from the horizontal and if you're outside the sky's above you obviously. And if you're indoors the lights are above you and when we dive, good divers spot the water or they spot the board and uh, having the light come horizontally disorients you. It's something you have to get used to and we weren't there long enough to really get used to it, I mean we showed up two days before the first event and trained and then the next couple of days and then you went. So I missed the springboard team because I was fourth. I did an inward two and a half somersault and went over and I went over because as I came over the double somersault inward two and a half would have been, I would have been standing on the end of that diving board looking into that glass. Well that's all right. You take [~~up, then you jump~~] off and you spin around two and a half times when you come over the double somersault you're getting ready to look for the water below you and that light catches your eyes that's behind you and I knew that I didn't want to reach for that light, I needed to be reaching down so I ducked my head and then went way over. Had I been smart I would have saved that dive until the finals but it was a list of dives that I had done, you know, in the same order for years so you know hindsight says I should have changed it and I thought about it but that would have meant been using back and reverse two and a half to qualify and those can be two tricky dives, two risky dives and most people didn't want to try to qualify with those two dives to get into the finals.

DH: Okay.

RG: It would have been good for me because I spotted horizontally though the light would have been on a back two and a half the light would have been right there. That was why I missed the springboard team. It didn't affect me quite as much the same way on the 10-meter though I did switch my list around. I didn't do, I saved the inward until the evening. But you would have had that tower in the way of the glass. If you can see the tower. The, I'm trying to get out of this view that I have now. If you're off that 10-meter tower you can see the shaft or the support of the tower would be in the way, you wouldn't see the light quite as much as if you're on that springboard where that diver is.

DH: Oh, okay.

RG: If you're on that springboard and you look at those kids standing behind on the three-meter platform there, and you see it's all glass back there so if you look, if you're facing that, that's where I got caught. There was another interesting story that went down at the time. My coach believed you didn't do a dive over and there are people that did. In other words, you could claim unusual circumstances and ask to have the dive repeated and we always, I had been taught that you uh, you have one shot to do this. You don't get two. You don't get three. And when I was standing on the board to do the inward in the actual meet there was a guy sitting in the stands off to the right. His name was Maury Arbini, we became friends later on, it was funny. And Maury all of a sudden comes running around the back of the diving standard and he gets over, he was also a diving coach, and he gets over to the back of the three-meter or the back of the 10-meter platform there and he starts to walk across and he looks up and he sees I'm on the board getting ready to do the dive and so he backs up to get out of the way and then he leans forward and his head sticks out. He wants to see if I was going or whatever. All this was going on while I'm preparing to dive and I finally just waved him on to get him out of there and then he went and I got myself ready and I did the dive, and missed it. Well now there's three or four people coming up saying you need to go ask to do that dive over again. I mean you got screwed up and, you know, I said I was ready when I went, you know, if I hadn't been I wouldn't have gone. So forget it. So Maury came over and apologized later and it turned, his story was he was sitting over in the bleachers and this big guy came over and sat next to him and then he moved even closer and the next thing, you know, he got even closer and then he put his hand on Maury's leg and Maury freaked out. (laughter) And so that was why he bolted around the back of the pool. (laughter) But it was really funny. So anyway, that's that.

Where are you now?

DH: So how did your fans, family, or the community or your hometown react when they found out you were going to compete in the Olympics?

RG: Well the hometown, you know, there was a guy named Bill Fisher who was the local sports reporter who had followed me all the way through high school. He was ecstatic. He was running half page stories and everything else. You know, I never got back to, I never got to go back to Lancaster at that point. It was, you know, my parents cut out the paper, the clippings and everything and I saw them later, but, and he interviewed me, but, you know, I never went back at that point and I was engaged to be married at that time and my wife who was from Fort Worth and who didn't know much about athletics, had never seen a dive meet, said, and I called and said hey I made the team and her comment was oh, great— (laughter) Because we were sandwiching the wedding in-between the trials and the games.

DH: Oh, my goodness.

RG: So I went back to Fort Worth and we got married. We took a weekend honeymoon in New Orleans and then, as she says, she went back to live with her parents and I went to the training grounds in Colorado. (laughter)

DH: So how did she feel about your training and your athletic competition? Was it hard for her to support that or was she very supportive?

RG: No, she understood it at that point. We hadn't dated that long. We dated about nine months and she'd seen me dive. She didn't understand it as she liked to tell later, the first meet that she ever saw was the Olympic Games and it was all downhill after that. (laughter) So but we went to the training camp for, I don't know, two weeks or whatever it was in Colorado Springs at the Air Force Academy and then we went to Mexico and we didn't have a lot of money at that point, I had a good friend from Lancaster who was the president of a department store who had followed my career through high school and college and would help me out as a sponsor occasionally, give me enough money to make it to a meet, pay the gas because we drove everywhere, stayed in hotels. As Hobie tells it at the first national, he drove the team down in a station wagon and there was like six of us in there and we were all staying in the same room because we didn't have any money. But, you know, he paid her way to Mexico and then we got her into the Olympic Village and she stayed in the Village.

DH: Oh, really?

RG: Interesting security question when we get to security, but she's actually in some of those pictures down in Mexico.

DH: Okay. So who paid for your training, like after you found out you made the team and you were training for the actual games in Colorado Springs and then when you had to—

RG: That was all picked up by the Olympic Committee.

DH: Okay.

RG: Once you made the team and you went to Colorado they paid for everything from that point on.

DH: Okay.

RG: Which I think they do now, too.

DH: So were there any special training regimens or methods in preparing for Mexico City or the high altitude there?

RG: Well the high altitude, that's why they took us to Colorado Springs, because of the altitude. They wanted to acclimate us there. And I would say that the altitude wasn't as big a factor for, you know, diving as it would have been for swimming, because diving is not really cardio-vascular.

DH: Right.

RG: Uh, in nature. So yeah, we huffed and puffed a little bit more climbing up the ladder to the ten meter, but you know, I really don't remember much of the effects at that point. You felt maybe a little tired at first but as I said, it's not as critical for diving as it would be for people swimming, or track or, you know, any endurance type thing.

DH: Do you think that the high altitude changed your performance or had a positive effect on the performance somehow?

RG: I don't think it had any effect, one way or the other. I think my, the training at Colorado— Back then it was thought that you, the body couldn't withstand diving ten meter every day because of the impact of the water so typically we would work out platform every other day or three times a week. And as you can imagine there's a lot of fear, or can be a lot of fear diving ten meter and it was strange, some days it didn't bother you at all and other days it bothered you a lot and I would think, or I found out in Colorado since I didn't make the springboard team all I was doing was platform. I was diving platform every day and it was the first time I actually got over the fear of diving up there because I was doing it every day.

DH: Right.

RG: And I, in relationship to that, once, you know, as you're learning to dive springboard and as you're learning to do the harder dives, you know the back two and a halves and the reverse two and a halves, nowadays I'm glad I'm not diving now they're doing reverse three and a half. And there's one guy out there because I watched the nationals here this past weekend did a four and a half forward. I mean it's gotten really acrobatic; dives that we didn't even think were possible back then are being done today. It's, you'd have to watch the sport and see pictures of what we did and what they're doing now and it blows your mind. But what I started to say was when you're learning those dives on the springboard there's a certain amount of fear. Once you start to dive platform all of a sudden that three-meter springboard which is ten feet over the water doesn't seem so high any more compared to 33 feet. So diving platform, I think, takes, at least for me, it took a lot of fear out of the springboard that I had as I was initially learning, was—.

DH: Yeah.

RG: Wait a minute. I've got to tell my wife, somebody's trying to call in that she's going someplace with. Hang on a minute.

DH: Okay. All right. So we were talking about your training and you were training after you made the Olympic team at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs?

RG: Uh-huh.

DH: And was there anything interesting about being there at the Air Force Academy?

RG: Not in particular. I mean there are, you'll see pictures. We went to Pike's Peak, we went to the Garden of the Gods, I mean we did some sightseeing around there and we were training twice a day. You know the one guy, there is a picture of the host that took us around the Academy, it was sort of neat. You know, it's just another university, it just happens to teach people how to fly.

DH: Do you remember anything about the Olympic Project for Human Rights or remember hearing about possible protests or boycotts and did you ever receive a letter?

RG: At the time?

DH: Yes.

RG: No. I never heard anything about it.

DH: Okay. What about in the weeks right before the Olympic Games, did you hear anything about the Tlatelolco massacre?

RG: No. I vaguely remember when we got there, there was something said at one point that this had gone on and we, we passed the protest I want to say we were in cars and I think it was near the university and we drove by the university and I want to say it was the Army was, you know, controlling the crowds and everything. And then for a minute I wondered what we had gotten into. We and when I went to the World University Games in Budapest the Communists were still in control and it was interesting that this was in '65 and they only took a men's team because they were going behind the Iron Curtain and we didn't learn this until later, but they didn't want to take the women's team over in case we couldn't get back out. (laughter)

DH: Oh, wow.

RG: And I was walking around Budapest one night with my camera, taking pictures, and uh, I mean you could see bullet marks in the buildings from when they had the revolution and I came up to one building that had a guard in front of it and I raised my camera to take a picture and the guy raised his gun and I put my camera down and walked away. (laughter)

DH: Oh, my goodness.

RG: So I, driving into Mexico and seeing the guns I'm thinking, I wonder if this was such a good idea. (laughter) But that was, I don't remember seeing anything about it afterward and the security we had at the games, my memory says it was to keep those people out. It, you know, they had never— We had never had anything at that point as we did in the later games where they killed all the Israelis. And I don't think anybody expected any attack on the teams at that time so to me the security, yeah, they didn't want everybody and their brother being able to walk into the games but it's not like it is now. You know, as tight as it is now.

DH: Right.

RG: You know, and they wanted to keep people out of the venues that didn't pay. I mean it was that type of security as opposed to making sure everyone was safe.

DH: Okay. So did you drive all the way from Colorado Springs to Mexico City?

RG: No we flew.

DH: Okay you flew.

RG: We flew American Airlines, you can see that one picture of the team standing on the ramp at the airlines.

DH: Oh, yes. Yeah, I see that now.

RG: Yeah. That was the whole diving team.

DH: Oh, okay. And so you rented a car or you had a car, uh—

RG: It was all prearranged and I want to say we were in a car.

DH: Okay.

RG: You know, I don't remember whether it was a car or bus or whether I'm remembering going to the airport in a car to pick my wife up and bring her back.

DH: Okay. So when you said you remember a first impression there right after you arrived in Mexico City, what exactly was that impression or what did you see?

RG: Well, I think it was the massacre was what we were talking about or the reaction to the protest seeing that. That was, you know, I mean the first impression was the welcome band of the guys that you see when we came out of the airport. It will be near the end because it says welcome band and there's a bunch of people playing their fiddles or whatever they were playing there, I can't see. I could if I'd click on it. Their violins, so they had that because we weren't, the divers weren't the only US athletes on that American flight and so what happened was the groups would get out and they would take the pictures like we have here and each group took their own picture. And then I would think that, I remember leaving was on a bus so I'm thinking that a bus probably took us and my thing with the car is when I picked my wife up is what I'm guessing.

DH: Okay.

RG: I can't believe, you don't take that large a body of people in 50 cars— (laughter)

DH: Right. Right.

RG: —to the Olympic Village.

DH: Uh-huh. So what was the scene there with the people or the police or the military?

RG: They were just, we drove by, they were, I mean they were just, and I want to say it was by the university and they were out to keep order. There were, I remember crowds but I don't know whether the crowds were protesting or they were watching the teams go by in their buses or whatever.

DH: And about how many days was this before the start of the games?

RG: Probably two weeks. I'm guessing. I mean probably two weeks and I don't think I ever saw anything about protesting after that.

DH: Oh.

RG: Because we were, uh, from that point on I want to say we were using small buses or shuttles that would take you to and from your venue and the venues were spread out so it wasn't

like, and like they still do the same thing today. The pool may be in one location in town and the gymnastic area I think was close by the pool. The track and field was back out at the Olympic Stadium and that was a whole different place, a whole different location so everybody's being shuttled back and forth to their venue, I mean each athlete. And typically we would travel as teams, okay, the team is going to work out at such and such a time today so all the divers would go down and hop on the shuttle and the two coaches were there and we, that's how we operated.

DH: Okay. So what were your accommodations like in the Olympic Village? Where did you and your teammates and your wife stay?

RG: Well my wife stayed with the women (laughter) and I stayed with the men obviously and the housing, I don't know if there's a picture of the housing or not. It was our understanding that the housing, the way it was built, was going to be converted to low-income housing for apartments. So if you find the picture that says Olympic Village, those, that was the accommodations right there. That was the main entrance right into that and this complex was continued throughout the Olympic Village shops if you look at it and see behind it are similar structures and they're numbered. That was the one behind a post office box or where the village shops are, that's number 20. I can't see what the number is in the front here, the main one. But this complex was put together and these were apartments and I'm gonna guess ours was a three bedroom apartment and I think we had two to a room. And that's what they were. I mean they were nice, they were, you know, there wasn't luxury, but I don't know that we expected luxury. It was more than adequate and you weren't cooking in there you were going down to the dining hall to eat.

DH: Right.

RG: I don't know what they get now (laughter).

DH: Yeah, makes you wonder.

RG: But it was, I'd say it was a no frills thing but it certainly wasn't poverty. I would think that if this would be low income for the Mexican people that it probably should have been up-scale to what some of them might have been living in before. I mean when we were, I can't remember whether it was leaving then, probably. I was also back there in '79 and as the technical director for the World Student Games and I can't remember which time it was but I can remember leaving on a bus and the extreme poverty and the shanties and the sheds in one area where people were living. And this Olympic Village housing if they got that for apartments it would have been luxury compared to what those poor souls were living in. But that's, you know, that was what they did with these, we were told at the time that these, the Village was going to become apartments for people after the games were over.

DH: Okay. And so your wife was allowed to stay with the female athletes in the Olympic Village?

RG: Nobody knew.

DH: Oh, really?

RG: I mean it wasn't like I went to somebody and said can my wife come? She came down, we weren't alone, there is a picture in there of uh, it says Bernie and Cathy, somewhere. That was Bernie Wrightson and his wife Cathy and I don't know if they were married then or got married right after. But they're still together and she came down and though she stayed, she didn't stay in the Village. She stayed, there's a picture in there of Sylvia and Alvaro and Bernie's wife stayed with Alvaro, stayed with them for a while. That was a Mexican diver who medaled in the platform I believe. And so she stayed with them at least the first part of the time but I said something to some of the girl divers, they had an extra bed and security walking in if you were, if you had a sweatshirt on or a sweat suit on that said USA, nobody questioned you. You were free to walk in and out. The only place they questioned you initially, and we had these IDs, picture IDs, was getting into your venue. There is picture, I found that picture there it is entitled Bernie and Cathy and they're standing in front of the Olympic pool. But if you were in a sweat suit you could walk in and out of the Olympic Village without any trouble at all.

DH: Okay.

RG: Now you talk about security, there's a, I'll have to find a picture there. There's one under, look under Mexican Guard and there's a guy in a police uniform and another guy.

DH: Yes, okay.

RG: Okay, now the guy in the police uniform was the main guy that we had to walk past to get into the pool, so I started making buddy-buddy with him from day one, start talking with him, chatting with him, you know, I found out about his family and whatever, you know, and what he was doing and blah, blah, and I got so that I could walk by him without showing my ID so then I took my ID and put my wife's picture on it and that walked her in. Now she said after it was all over, this was funny, everybody would go into the pool to train, everybody came out with wet heads but my wife (laughter) and we're all in sweats and things. So she showed an ID to get in, I never showed anything so the very last day when the final competition was over and we're leaving and I took her over and he says it's very nice to meet your wife. (laughter) But you'd never get away with that today. Someone would have to issue some sort of pass to get in because the way it is now you don't go past one guard any more, you go past half a dozen.

DH: Right. Gosh, so do you remember what floor you stayed on and who your roommates or suite mates were?

RG: My suite mates were all the men divers. And I don't know what floor we were on any more. I can't even tell you what building we were in any more.

DH: That's— I understand.

RG: (Laughter) I will say from that main picture it was off to the left behind there somewhere. (laughter)

DH: Okay. So did you have any interactions with the locals?

RG: Not really. I mean you were sequestered there, I mean, essentially, unless you went out on your own. We did do some sightseeing. I want to say that we took buses, we had maps and

buses and you could go outside the Village and in the front there was all kinds of bus transportation available. At one time before my wife came down in that two-week period, she just came down for the competition, right before the competition. I ended up taking off by myself and going across town on a bus to see a movie. One of my all-time favorite movies was a movie called *Trapeze* with Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis and it was showing across town. And It's an acrobat, it's almost like a coaching an acrobatic movie. I was, I want to say it was made in the late 50s. It was actually made at the same time the *Greatest Show on Earth* was made and the producers didn't think the two circus movies would play well released in the same year so they actually held the movie for two years before they released it. But it was a, it's basically the story of a trapeze kid seeking out an older guy who fell from the trapeze and he wants the guy to teach him how to do a triple somersault that [F he] did, so that's basically the line of the movie. Sounds probably very boring to you but—

DH: No, it sounds interesting.

RG: To a young athlete it was, it was fun to watch.

DH: So did you need a translator or did you have a translator? How did you get around?

RG: I just read the map and the bus and, you know, I don't remember it being real, I mean I had no trouble getting there or getting back. I knew which bus to take and I had a bus schedule. And I don't remember having that difficult of a time trying to communicate with people. I mean I didn't speak Spanish, but you know, you'd walk into a place get something to eat and maybe we just pointed and they'd say how much and if worse came to worse you handed out a few bills and held them out and they picked what it was and you had to trust them.

DH: Uh-huh. So was that in the Mexican currency that you—

RG: Yeah. Dealt in pesos.

DH: So what were the locals like? Like what was their reaction to you or the reception that you received there?

RG: I'd say it was good. Most of us were wearing some sort of athletic garb so they knew you were there for the Olympics and I think most of them were happy to see the tourists, I mean, they knew they were gonna spend money and help the local economy. You know it was nothing I really thought about at the time. You just sort of went and did your thing.

DH: What was the food like in the Olympic Village and did you eat outside of the Olympic Village?

RG: Yeah, I ate outside once and shouldn't have. The food was good and you had as much as you wanted to eat and in fact we were warned not to over indulge, it would be very easy to pig out, you know, it was an all you can eat type thing. I got into trouble, there's some pictures there of, let me see if I can find what they're called. There are some that say Rude, R-u-d-e, [d-i-n.]

DH: Yes, I see those.

RG: All right. The one there's one that says Hobie, Mary, Ray Rude dinner.

DH: Yes.

RG: Okay. Hobie was my coach at the time and that was his wife, they later got divorced mainly because he paid too much attention to his athletes and his home life suffered, not that he had an affair or anything, he was just so involved in coaching that, well, his—. But the gentleman on the right, Ray Rude is the inventor of the current springboard or diving board that is still used today. He was an aircraft engineer and somebody brought him a diving board, a buckboard which had a bunch of aluminum slats and asked him if he could fix it and he looked at it and thought that it looked very much like construction of an aircraft wing. So he fashioned a diving board, took it out to the local pool and asked them if they'd try it and they laughed at him, yeah, I'll give it a try, leave it here. So it turned out to be the changer of the sport. It was a great innovation and has gone through several evolutions since the early sixties, or late fifties which was when it started and today his daughter runs the company. He has since passed away. But he was a great supporter of diving and would put, you know, would donate money back into the sport and different things. But he hosted this dinner. That's a little side history for you.

DH: Yeah. No, that was fascinating. So this dinner was somewhere in Mexico City?

RG: Right. Right, and that's where I screwed up because I got roast duck and ended up with Montezuma's Revenge because of it. Everybody else got steak.

DH: Oh, no.

RG: (Laughter)

DH: And they were fine?

RG: Yeah, they were fine.

DH: Well that was my next question was to ask if you or anyone you know got sick from the food.

RG: I got sick. (laughter) Yeah. No, I had diarrhea for two or three days.

DH: Oh, my gosh. Did that affect your ability to train and compete?

RG: Well, you know, you have— Two things did. One I sprained my ankle down there. If you go back to that Olympic Village picture that we were looking at, well they don't go that way, never mind. Uh, that main one of the Olympic Village that shows you the, the Mexico '68.

DH: Yes, I see that one.

RG: Okay. If you see the walkway is not solid, those lines that you see in certain areas are six inches apart and I went running across there one night and misjudged my step and twisted my ankle.

DH: Oh, no.

RG: And this was fairly early on and my recollection is that building directly in front of the Mexico '68 on the left side, those two white panels coming down for the walls—

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: —the trainers were, that's where the trainers were for the US team and I literally from there went right straight into the trainers and we had my foot stuck in a bucket of ice within five minutes. But between the two it screwed me up. I mean, I couldn't dive for like a week, so—

DH: Is this—

RG: —I'd say that's one reason I didn't do as well as I could have.

DH: Yeah, it sounds like you had quite a few things going on. The buildings seem to have some kind of like color stripes near the top, green on one building and then it looks like purple on two other buildings?

RG: Yeah, that might be to help identify— I don't know why the purple is so far apart, you know if it had been— I don't know if it was a color scheme to identify buildings or whether it had some other significance.

DH: Okay, and there is—

RG: In one of those other pictures, the one that says Olympic Village, that's purple and it has a 20, or the Olympic Village Shops, that's purple and has a 20 up there so that obviously the 20 is to identify which building it is and then there's one that just says Village which shows a track and an athletic field and a pyramid, you can see that along the top where the color is one is numbered eight, one is numbered nine. So obviously that's how they're identifying these things.

DH: Okay. So that track there, was that a practice track or was that where the track and field events were held?

RG: I think some people may have done some running there, uh, but I'm sure they went out to the venue to train, I mean, you know, yeah, some people could do it but I don't think that was the case. Maybe they thought when they designed it that that would happen and whether it did or not I don't know because I didn't pay attention, you know, because we weren't there. There were no diving boards on the premises so there was no way, there's a picture of the Olympic Village pool.

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: And that was more like a recreational thing, you see there's a little three-meter platform at the one end of it. Nobody's gonna do any diving off of that and I'm guessing this is right behind that building on the right, I'm guessing that's the dining hall, the back of it, is my guess.

DH: Okay. So the pool looks pretty busy. Did you have any experiences at the pool?

RG: No. When you're in a pool all day long you don't want to go to a pool to have recreation (laughter).

DH: That makes sense. That makes sense. So what were those pyramids there in the picture?

RG: They uncovered those when they were excavating to do the, to build the Olympic Village.

DH: Really?

RG: Uh-huh the pyramid at the Village. Now there's another pyramid, the Great Pyramid which I think is south of Mexico City. We went down to see those but they uncovered a number of pyramids when they were doing the excavating so they, you know, it's a national shrine to those guys so they left them.

DH: Right. And in the picture that also shows the track, it does look like there's some people working out and then there's it's just called Village and then there's a large interesting colorful sculpture. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

RG: Let me go back. I saw what you're talking about but I've got to find it again. Uh, hum, I think I know what you're talking about but I gotta find the picture again. And my initial answer is I don't know if that was something— I always thought that was something they built. In other words, that wasn't an excavation.

DH: So maybe it was a special sculpture just for the games?

RG: Yeah, I think they— Yeah. There was no way that was on top of that pyramid I don't think.

DH: Okay.

RG: You're looking at the one that what's it say? It says Village.

DH: Yes, uh-huh.

RG: Yeah, uh and those, those that were around there if you go to a picture, men's team with Flags.

DH: Yes.

RG: You see there's another one behind there.

DH: Yes.

RG: And so those as I remember were built to, you know, as decorations and they were around. Now if you want to have some more fun here, this men's team, the guy that is second from the left, it was Win Young. He was on the platform, now he died of cancer not too long ago.

DH: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

RG: The other four guys, at some point you should probably interview. We met up at the '68 [2008] (sic) Trials with our wives and ended up spending time in a hospitality room while the women's three-meter finals was going on (laughter). That's how interested we were. And we were in there drinking wine and feeling no pain and decided, with our spouses, that we would, my wife said we all ought to take a cruise together and they said you organize it and we'll do it. And we did it in 2009 and they flew into Houston and two of them stayed with me, Keith, the one on the left, he's got a son that lives north of Houston so he stayed with them, but Bernie and Jim and his wife stayed here at the house and we all went to Galveston and took a week's cruise together and had a great time.

DH: Oh, how nice. And was that right after the games or—

RG: This was in— No, this was in 2009.

DH: Oh, okay.

RG: Actually we met up at the 2008 Trials. They were in Indianapolis.

DH: I see. How fun. That must have been nice.

RG: So the group has been strong ever since.

DH: Right. So I also see pictures of the shops in the Olympic Village. There were shops there on the ground floor or in a certain area?

RG: Yeah. Hang on my wife's getting a second call here, I've got.

DH: Okay.

RG: This is the other partner going, there's like four of them going to the movie.

DH: Okay. And it looks like you also took some pictures from a university there.

RG: Yeah. And I want to say that when we drove by that's where the protest was, was outside that university.

DH: Oh, okay.

RG: Wasn't it university students that were protesting?

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: I'm asking you a question.

DH: Oh, yes. I'm sorry. It was, it was university students; yes.

RG: So I'm thinking that's what those are. I mean or that's where it was and I remember driving by the university and I'm thinking that's where the protest was, where we saw the soldiers at that one point and I think they'd pretty well, and maybe I'm out to lunch, had pretty

well dispersed that all afterwards because there's, I've got two universities. There's one that we went sight-seeing at after my wife was down there and I don't, it must have been after the Games, after the competition, I mean we— There was a period there that we were done competing that we had nothing to do but before our plane trips home. So there's some sight-seeing there, there's two universities pictures. There's one with my wife that says "Jo sitting at the university."

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: So obviously if we're out sitting like that we weren't particularly worried about the students.

DH: Right.

RG: And then there's one that says "Jo, Lesley, Korean Clothing."

DH: Yes.

RG: That's my wife and Lesley is, was the '64 Olympic champion. We trained at Indiana together, so I don't know whether this was their Village, I mean, you know, where the Koreans were staying or what, but they were obviously trading. (laughter)

DH: Right. Trading clothes and—

RG: Trading clothes and trading everything.

DH: Wonderful. That's a great picture. So tell me a little bit about the opening ceremonies and your memories of that.

RG: Okay. I didn't go. I mean I didn't walk because of the sprained ankle.

DH: Oh.

RG: That's why you have the pictures. So I was up in the stands and took those pictures.

DH: Oh, I see. These pictures are really, really wonderful by the way. They are some of the best quality that I've ever seen and they look like they were taken just yesterday.

RG: Well they have suffered. These were slides originally and actually I, what I sent you were lower resolutions. I can send you higher resolutions, in fact some of them appear on my uh, in my file twice. I went back, I did these before the '68 [2008] (sic) Trials because I did a disc, I did a disc that I took that had pictures, all these pictures on it and then the people that were at a party, an Olympic party, at the '64 [2004] (sic) Trials. I took a CD of all that and to the '68 (sic) ones and then when, I'm sorry to the '08 Trials, I took that and then I took a ton of pictures at the '08 Trials then I prepared a DVD which I can send you that has these pictures on it, had the 2004 Trials, the parties, the social scene, not the diving and the 2008 Trials.

DH: Oh, that would be wonderful.

RG: Oh, it's interesting from the standpoint you can see Hobie Billingsley at different stages. You can see Sammy Lee, there's a picture in here that says Hobie and Sammy. And when I was talking to you about the history Sammy is, Sammy Lee was the '48 and '52 Olympic platform champion. And he is now 93.

DH: Oh, wow.

RG: So, you know, when I say it would be nice to fine, and I haven't heard back from any of those guys other than Frank said he'll give it some thought. I probably will try to get hold of somebody at the Swimming Hall of Fame and find out what the heck they'll do. But anyway, I can send you the high res files of these if you guys want them. I'm sure, I can't believe that there aren't better pictures here.

DH: The[y] really are very great quality. But yes, if you want to do that, that would be wonderful. We'd love to have those. So the opening ceremony, were there any special reflections or thoughts as you were watching your team come in?

RG: Not really. I was glad I was up there sitting and not (laughter) not waiting. It's fun to march in but you know, they're assembling everybody two hours ahead of time and I, if you've watched any of the recent games and things there have been some athletes, especially if they had events that were going to take place early, would not participate in the opening ceremony because they didn't want to, you know, they didn't want their legs to be tired and everything from standing. I mean we got there an hour and a half before and then you have the ceremony themselves, where you have all those people standing around the whole time. I really didn't want to do it. I have always hated standing and waiting in lines.

DH: Me too, I completely understand. But at least you got to watch it, that was what—

RG: Oh, that is the other thing, I wanted to be able to take pictures of it, too. And I've got, I'm only sorry that I didn't have a better quality camera at the time or different lenses. I'm not, I wasn't into it then. I couldn't afford to be into it then like I am now.

DH: But still these are wonderful pictures. So going on to your event, when and where was it held and what did you think of the facility where your event was held?

RG: Well, you've got pictures of it there. I can't remember what days it was held or these events were held. Usually it's over about an eight-day period with the springboard going first and then the platform and if they're gonna take turns between men and women so, but the facility is a nice facility. It was the uh, I mean there's one there of the diving well. There's one there of the Olympic Pool exterior, you can see it looked quite modern. And remember this is '68. And then you have the interior pool. It looks like it's all glass on the outside but when you look at the interior you're not, you're not seeing the glass walls behind the pool. They're off to the side on the diving well but they're not directly behind the pool. And that facility still exists today and is used, so no, it was state-of-the-art at the time. And I don't think it's that far out of it now.

DH: Uh-huh. So there are some pictures of you and it says Rick in armstand and Rick on tower and there's a picture of a scoreboard. Were those taken during your event?

RG: Yeah. I don't know who took them anymore. I forgot that I had them and it might have been somebody else that took it and then gave it to me later.

DH: Oh, I see.

RG: So that, you know, and then there was— And then they had the awards and some of the kids.

DH: Uh-huh. So any particular memories from your actual event and then the award ceremony?

RG: Well I never made it to the award ceremony. I was seventeenth. The, so, no the only thing I remember being and I think we, we take care of this much better today. The problem an athlete have was Olympic competition is, our history has made so much of it or made so much out of it, there's so much prestige involved with the Olympic Games and the key to your success is you can't do that. It has to be just another major championship.

DH: Right. That makes sense.

RG: If you build it up in your mind that way, and I did, I get out on the end of the tower the first dive and tried to figure out, I wasn't even sure who I was let alone what dive I was supposed to be doing. It was the first time I'd ever been in a venue like that that large with that many people sitting there looking at you. We handle that today better and a lot of our kids, we now send them off to more international competitions and there's probably two or three opportunities a year to participate in international competition and get used to the stress that goes on with that. And so I think we prepare our athletes a lot better today. And you've got to really believe that it makes no difference, I mean that it isn't any more important because it, uh, it can be your downfall.

DH: So after your event you said you did some sightseeing and things like that so about how much longer after your event were you in Mexico City?

RG: I don't remember exactly. I don't think it was that much longer, but we had a few days where we could, unless, I mean there's pictures of the team on top of a pyramid. There's two on that pyramid and I'm wondering, my wife isn't with me so I'm thinking that we must have taken off, taken a day off and gone down to these pyramids.

DH: Okay.

RG: Or she'd have been in this picture. I don't know who's holding the camera, but it's (laughter) who took the picture, but essentially that's the women's team there and then Bernie and myself.

DH: I see. So who is Bernie?

RG: Bernie won the, Bernie Wrightson won the gold medal in the springboard.

DH: Oh, okay. Uh—

RG: And Lesley Bush who Hobie's got his arm around. She was the '64 platform champion, didn't make the finals here. It was a dumb mistake she broke on her first dive and that was the end of that. And I can't remember the next girl's name. There were basically two sets of divers there. One was Hobie's divers and the other was Dick Smith's divers.

DH: Okay.

RG: And those were the two Olympic coaches and then the Hawaiian looking girl is Keala O'Sullivan. And she was coached by a guy from Hawaii so she was the odd man out on this team. Everybody else had been coached by these two guys. (laughter)

DH: Yeah. So there are quite a few pictures of Bernie and was there anybody else that you were particularly close to on the team?

RG: Well, I think the uh, let's go back to uh, now the team— I'm not sure you have the team, one team picture is set, I don't know what I sent you exactly, but I cut down on what I had here. Go up near the top there's a 1968 Olympic Team.

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: And that was the original team picture and you can see the colors are a little wacky and that was the best I could do to restore it with Photoshop because it had been hanging on my wall for 30 years before we moved and it was somewhat faded and then the team one picture, and the team two, I'm not sure what I printed up around here. I think I printed the original for my own, what I've got hanging here again. I don't have the original up, I have a copy of the original up and the original is now totally in the shade so it doesn't fade any more. And Bernie said he thought, I asked if anybody had one in good shape and Bernie thought he did but he had no idea where it was. But I would say that, you know, on the back row of that picture, the guy in the left was Jim Henry, I just saw Jim a couple of weeks ago. He also, he went on the cruise. Win who passed away and we were probably the closest and then Bernie and Keith who are on either side of me in that picture, they were rivals or we were rivals. The guy on the, coach on the far right is Dick Smith. Dick Smith has since died. So he coached Bernie and Keith and on the front row he coached the third girl Ann Barber [Peterson] and the last girl, I can't think of her name. [Keala O'Sullivan – married name of Watson] She'd shoot me. He, they each coached four people on that so what have we got there we got, we got twelve there. Two are alternates. Oh, wait on the front row is an alternate. So there's eleven people there. The one guy on the top second from the left was an alternate so he didn't get to dive.

DH: Who's on the very end, again?

RG: The one on the very end was Jim Henry.

DH: That's Jim and then who's on the other side of the alternate?

RG: Win Young.

DH: That's Win Young and then Bernie and Keith— Keith, and then you, and then Bernie?

RG: Right.

DH: Okay.

RG: And the other guy is Chuck Knorr and I think Chuck Knorr has died.

DH: Okay. And then the women, do you remember which one was Micki King?

RG: Micki King is second from the left.

DH: On the end there?

RG: Yes. She's not the last one, she's the second on the left. And then, I can tell you exactly who everybody is but I gotta go find it.

DH: Well we can go over that later. But just while I had the picture up—

RG: Oh, wait a minute here— Oh come on Excel, don't cover that—

DH: And there are some pictures of Sue receiving medal. Who—

RG: Okay, that's Sue Gossick. Let's back-track here now. The women in the front here, the, Ann Shearer [Peterson Sheerer] is the first lady, the first blonde lady. And then you have, uh, Micki— Then you have Micki and if you want to piss her off call her Maxine. I do all the time. I call her Miss Maxine, "Aw, Gilbert what are you doing." (laughter) And there is Sue Gossick.

DH: Okay.

RG: And the only people that know that Maxine, that call her Maxine are her coach and me. (laughter) And then you have Sue Gossick and then you had Barbara Talmage Andrews. Talmage I think was her, no, that was her first married name, uh her maiden name was McAlister. Barbara McAlister and then you have Lesley Bush, she was Lesley Bush was '64 and '68 and then you have Keala O'Sullivan, Watson's her last name now. You guys don't have this?

DH: We do, but it's helpful to, I mean we have the team roster, but it's helpful just to make sure we get the names right for the picture if we ever, you know, get to use the picture with the interview.

RG: Okay. Why don't I, let me, I have to go, well she's not in the picture. I have to check, I have to change an email address but she's not in the picture because she was the other alternate for the women that didn't go down here. And I'll send you a spreadsheet of these people and their addresses as of three years ago.

DH: Okay.

RG: You know I think some of them are still current but we're gonna, you know somebody is not gonna cooperate. (laughter)

DH: Right. Right. So going back to just the interactions and relationships there at the team, how do you think that the women back then in the Olympics were treated? Were they treated any differently? Do you think it's changed a lot since then?

RG: I don't think anybody, if you're talking about Chauvinism, I don't, you know, I don't see that. I mean let's face it, these coaches— And the one coach that we didn't talk about is Ron O'Brien who was an Olympic coach many, he was the manager here, but he coached Greg Louganis.

DH: Oh, yes, Okay.

RG: Okay. That was Greg's coach. And that's the most famous one, but you know, many more. The— I mean let's face it, if you're coaching and you're trying to get a lead athlete, I'm not sure you care whether they're men or women. I mean there's so many who are in a position to coach women. Of course at Cornell it was very difficult. There was no place for them to change, there was, you know, it was a men's pool. They had a men's pool at Cornell and a women's pool and when I first started coaching women they were changing in the bathroom behind the, under the stands where the pool was because there was no locker room for them. But I didn't treat them any differently than I treated the men. You know, it just wasn't being done then. I mean the NCAA didn't take women in for many, many moons. Women probably were only under the NCAA for the last, well I've got to think about this. Seventies? Late seventies?

DH: Okay.

RG: Up until that time they had something called AIAW that were governing women so you could take women and coach women in the summertime where you couldn't coach men because the NCAA was prohibiting the men and not the women. (laughter)

DH: Oh, interesting.

RG: They didn't have the women. So there were no regulations for the women. So if you want to coach women then there are some people that just coach women and some people that just coach men but people, you know, if you're in the sport of diving and you're out there, you don't care whether it's a woman or a man. You're just looking for that elite athlete.

DH: Right. Gender verification testing was introduced in 1968. Were the athletes aware of this test coming to the group?

RG: I sure wasn't.

DH: Okay. Did you ever hear any of the women talk about it or mention it?

RG: No.

DH: What about your interaction with other national teams, particularly from the Soviet Bloc, did you have any interactions with those athletes?

RG: No. At that time the Soviet Bloc wasn't that strong with divers. The guy that won the platform in Mexico City was a guy named Klaus Dibiasi who was Italian and had won, that was his third gold medal on the platform. And he was probably the main, you know, international competitor outside the United States. And then a Mexican was second and that was Alvaro Gaxiola and his picture's in here, too. But we knew those people, we, they would come up to the States and train or participate in our nationals until we, uh, said our nationals were just for our nationals and they stopped coming in. And so you won't find an international competitor in our nationals any more. I'm not sure why but they said our national championship, we're not gonna do it. When Dibiasi did participate in our nationals he was about 57 [68].

DH: Oh, interesting.

RG: So you have, what you get into is you get international judging prejudice. It would have been very difficult to beat Dibiasi who was two-time defending Olympic champion.

DH: So what does the judging prejudice due to? Do you think the criteria were too subjective or did, judges were biased?

RG: I think they had become biased or, you know, there have been accusations of nationalism over the years. Alvaro was, who's a Mexican kid, Alvaro and Sylvia, he was a silver medalist on the platform and Keith Russell was the bronze and Keith should have beat Alvaro. And the Mexican people, every time he dived, Alvaro, would be like a standing ovation that wouldn't shut up for five minutes and when Keith would dive and they could see on the scoreboard at the other end that they were very close the Mexicans would boo him and hiss.

DH: Interesting.

RG: And it's a whole different ballgame and the judges are affected, there's no question and yes, they had judges from each country, but it had an effect and then Keith is a Mormon and he couldn't understand why people would do that. I mean he had a very hard time understanding the politics. I mean with his Mormon upbringing, it was just like that's not the proper thing to do. But he should have been second there and was third.

DH: So was there a bit of discussion on the team at the time?

RG: It was obvious what happened. I mean everybody was trying to explain it to Keith, but you know there wasn't anything you're going to do about it and you don't, when you're in Mexico you're not gonna put up a protest.

DH: Ah-ha. Was there anything that could have been done, you know, afterwards just to prevent that type of nationalistic behavior on the future? Were there any procedures in place?

RG: Oh, no, no. Everybody knew it was there, everybody, you know when you're picking the judges and things you try to avoid that. I don't think we have quite as much of it as we do. The last controversy probably was in '88 when, uh, I went blank. Greg Louganis won the platform.

DH: Okay.

RG: And by less than a point and there were those that said the Chinese kid should have beat him. And that Greg really didn't win, you know, that it was the judges. That was the year he came back from hitting his head on the springboard and won the springboard.

DH: Yes.

RG: And then the tower was very close down to the last dive and there were people there that claimed that he got the advantage because of, you know, that was the fourth Olympic Games he was in, actually the [third] Olympic Games, he was on the team that Carter pulled us out, pulled the American Team out so he didn't get to compete the second time around. And then he won in Los Angeles and in China.

DH: Okay. So testing for banned or performance enhancing substances, did you, yourself receive or were you aware of a list of banned substances?

RG: Vaguely. I hadn't even thought about that happening until I read this list here of questions.

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: I had totally forgotten about that and I think it was, I think it was only the winners they were testing. I mean I don't think it was, at least in our sport. I don't think, I mean the sport of diving is such that later on here there's some question about endorsements and things like that. I mean it's not gonna happen in this sport. There's just, nobody gives a damn. I mean Louganis could pull it off because he won so many.

DH: Right.

RG: And yeah, your, I can't think, what's the current swimmer with—

DH: Michael Phelps?

RG: Yeah. Phelps. Now when you get somebody like Phelps who won seven or eight gold medals, yeah, they, if they get themselves an agent and things, yeah, they can get some endorsements and stuff like that and get away with it. But nobody cares about small minor sports. Like I said we can't even find a place to put the history.

DH: Well it seems like diving is a pretty big deal in the, at least in the Olympic Games these days. But I understand at the time there wasn't a separate diving team necessarily or listed that way in the roster, that it was listed together as swimming and diving?

RG: Yeah. My Olympic ring says swimming on the side.

DH: Oh, interesting.

RG: The other Olympic rings, I think in '72 they started putting diving on them.

DH: Okay.

RG: And that's still the way it's treated in college, basically, it's a swimming and diving team and diving is a part of swimming. Diving as an NCAA sport couldn't exist. It wouldn't happen. People, if they ever, there are some diving people that would like to see diving break off from swimming but nobody is gonna pay a coach for a separate team, you know, \$30 thousand a year or \$40 thousand a year or whatever, most of them aren't making that, to coach eight or ten people. Your cost per student is, starts to rival football. At least in the Ivy League, not in Texas where they're probably spending a ton more but they bring in a ton more. The, and you take an Ivy League team, in fact, you take most colleges and football can't even support itself. You take a place like Texas and the real division one football power and football supports football and could support a dozen other minor sports, you know, with the excess just because of the size of the stadiums and the quality of the teams and the following.

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: We were lucky to see 4,000 at a football game. (laughter)

DH: So while you were there at the games or while you were preparing, did you remember having heard any rumors about other athletes or other teams or nations that were using performance enhancing substances?

RG: No.

DH: And did you ever hear about any disqualifications for banned substances while you were there?

RG: No. We kept pretty much to ourselves. I mean there was, it was difficult to get into other venues. First of all I had no desire to go watch track and field so I wasn't gonna travel that distance and then there was one day we were gonna try to get into the gymnastics and we were told they were just full and we wouldn't be able to get in. So, I mean there were times that people could have sneaked into swimming for preliminary events and stuff like that but not for the finals. There wasn't a seat to be had in the venue. So we would ask around but didn't try and we were staying, you know, all the swimmers and divers were in the same area, in the same building so it wasn't, you know, the place you would see other athletes would be in the dining hall. I mean, you know if you weren't going to their venues and you're not living with them, you might see them walking around but, you know, Tom is trying to do all these reunions for the '68 Olympic team and I haven't had any interest because the only people I would know is the diving people and a few swimming people and I see the diving people every time we go back to the '68, or to one of these trials and they've made an effort to try to get the old Olympians back and we had, we had quite a few show up. Let's see out of that list of, on that team picture there, Bernie was at the last two trials, I was at the last two trials, Keith was at the last two trials, Henry was at the last two trials, Micki King was at the last two trials. Ann was at this last trials. I went blank here, uh, Sue Gossick was at the '04 trials, wasn't at the ['06 '08]. Barbara hasn't been at any. Lesley was at the last two trials. Lesley Bush was at the last two trials and was at the, I see her every time we have a reunion for Hobie, as I do Jim Henry. Ronnie O'Brien was at the last two trials, in fact they honored him for his outstanding achievements in the '08 trials. Hobie was at the last two trials and of course Dick Smith wasn't because he's deceased. So if you want to see your former Olympian teammate you go to the trials.

DH: That's amazing that they've stayed so active in the sport.

RG: Well, they made it real— Micki was probably responsible because Micki had, has gone overboard, or went overboard trying to write all the teams and get them to come back. Now the young kids don't come back yet. The young kids don't appreciate what it's all about. The newer ones, or the older ones, a lot of them came back to see old friends.

DH: Okay. So while you were at the games, did you happen to witness or see on TV or overhear anything about the Tommie Smith and John Carlos' protests?

RG: I didn't hear about it until we got back to the States.

DH: Okay.

RG: I wasn't aware that they were doing any TV there and yet I saw at some point somebody had, I don't know what, I can't think of the gal's name that was doing a lot of the FaceBook stuff. I think had a YouTube that was up that looked like it was television coverage. I don't remember TV coverage in the pool back then. And I don't remember a lot of the journalists, you had something about the media here and of course they weren't after me because I was seventeenth, but I don't remember a lot of that going on. I mean somebody might go out and take a picture, but I, you sort of thought they were Olympic people. And maybe I was unaware and I wasn't around, I didn't see too many swimming finals to see what they were doing because they were at different, a different time.

DH: Did—

RG: Everything was schedules into that pool so it was, you know, you're scheduled in timeframes and so when we're diving there's not people swimming in the swimming pool.

DH: Right. It sounds like you were pretty isolated.

RG: Yeah, I'd say that was— That would be my feeling and if you wanted to go see the swimming, yes, you could. We could get back in the swimming pool but getting into other events was, I wasn't aware how to get it off, there had to be space there and the spectators took priority.

DH: Okay. Did you happen to hear about any of the record-setting events or hear about any particular events while you were there?

RG: Only the swimming. Only on what was going on in swimming.

DH: Is there anything that sticks out in your mind today that you heard about?

RG: No, not really. I mean it was, uh, I think the big laugh was, again it goes back to my comment about don't make, not making so much of the Games. Mark Spitz, this was Mark Spitz' first Olympic Games and he was expected to win seven Olympic Gold Medals there and only won three and the kid was in high school at the time. And he took a lot of crap from people that said well, he didn't perform up to his ability and, you know, and made it sound like his three

gold medals were crap. (laughter) Because he was supposed to win seven, right, you know and you didn't do that, you failed at what you were doing. That was the attitude that I remember was from some people, you know, you really blew it kid. You only won three gold medals.  
(laughter)

DH: What a shame and that must be so much, so much pressure.

RG: Yeah. Well you have to figure it out. So he comes back the next time and he does his seven, you know what I mean?

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: It's, I think with a lot of these people like Louganis, the first time he was in, I want to say he was a silver medalist, you almost have to go through it to understand the false pressure that you put on yourself. It's another world championship or think of it as another championship. I mean, uh, what's it all about when it says, I can't think of his name now, the cyclist that won the Tour de France championship five or six times.

DH: Lance Armstrong?

RG: Lance. Can't win the Olympic Games. (laughter) He wins the Tour de France, what did he win it? Six times, seven times or something?

DH: Yeah, seven—

RG: And he goes to the Olympic Games and he doesn't win. Well, I would think the Tour de France should have the prestige that the games does, or the games do. Evidently not, I mean, you know, and a number of tennis stars, Wimbledon winners and things will go to the games and screw up. (laughter) I think it's one of those things that you gotta do it once. I mean you gotta go through it and understand what it's all about to do well. You gotta get that experience.

DH: Yeah. Well do you have any other memories—

RG: It's hard to describe to people.

DH: Yeah?

RG: I mean it's hard to describe that pressure to people. I mean, for a coach to get it across to his athletes, do you know what I mean?

DH: I imagine. I can't imagine trying to prepare somebody for that. So for you personally was there a most memorable part of being there at the Games or are there any other special memories or interesting events that strike you?

RG: No. You know, it just, I don't think that I fully appreciated it at the time. It was what I had worked for my entire athletic career and you went and you did it and then you had a good time but it was, I think I appreciate it more now than I did then, if that makes a lot of sense.

DH: No, it definitely does. I feel like that about, you know, things in my life I'm sure many people do. So the closing ceremony, do you have any memories from the closing ceremony or were you able to attend or participate?

RG: I didn't go and I think there were a number of people that didn't go.

DH: Yeah, that seems to be the case. So right after the Olympic Games, I know you got to do some wonderful sightseeing, but what happened after that? Like what happened right when you returned to uh—

RG: When you go back to the real world?

DH: Yeah. Uh-huh.

RG: We had, uh I had to go to work and make a living. You, uh, let me— Well your amateurism will come later so I won't jump ahead. I had a job at Cornell and I had to go back to it so we went back to Texas and picked up our car, my wife picked up all her things and I picked up my things because I had been living in Texas, I mean, I had taught there for a year so I, I don't know what I did. I don't remember whether I still had my apartment or not. But you remember we had gotten married in-between the trials and the games. So we had to go back and we had to be at Cornell by November 1<sup>st</sup>. So by car we went up to Ithaca and got ourselves settled and I had no money at that point. I had budgeted the money that I had saved from working right down to the point where we got into Cornell and I had probably \$30 in my pocket and, but we had to go to the local bank and borrow \$400 to get started. And then I started coaching, teaching and coaching. And we stopped off, we stopped off in Lancaster, saw my folks, the paper did a big spread. There was a guy there that had followed me all the way from high school through and had, there was some article that "Gilbert finally makes it, or something to the games, having missed it in '04." And then see bride on back page. My wife always gets a kick out of because they had a picture of the two of us together and it said something like "to bride on back page." So she has never let me forget that. But they did a nice, they did a nice spread of both of us and gave us the picture and it's in a scrapbook here somewhere. I did keep a scrapbook through, my parents started it when I was in high school so I kept it through college. Which probably would be good for historical things. I haven't looked it in years, it's in a box in a closet. But no, then we went up to Cornell and found an apartment and got along with living.

DH: And you had quite a long and successful career as the coach there at Cornell I understand.

RG: Yeah, I just sent you something that gives you a, I don't know if you opened it before—

DH: Yes, I did read it, uh-huh.

RG: I didn't even realize that was in the Cornell Web site until a couple of years after, or a year afterwards or something somebody pointed it out to me. Yeah, no I had the, I was there for 39 years. I'd say for the most part it was good. At one point they tried to lay me off and so it got a little nasty. I got put on part-time and that was, uh, I want to say it was around '95. And the alumni got all bent out of shape and that was the only reason I didn't get laid off totally, we had an athletic director that somebody brought in, some football alum and supporter brought in and they were gonna try to reduce the costs in the athletic department and so on and so forth and that

one goes back to my earlier statement of what it costs to maintain a coach. So I was just about ready to make \$40 thousand at that point and I was coaching ten kids so that's \$4,000 a kid. I don't know that the football in the Ivy League costs that much. But if it's football it's okay. (laughter)

DH: Right.

RG: So that was part of the motivation. I never did take it personally but this athletic director came in here and started cutting people. We had a rowing coach who would have been there 20 years and rowing didn't receive any support from the admissions. I'm just trying to figure out how deep I should meander here, but rowing didn't receive any support from admissions and the benefits that we had, some of the side benefits we had were our kids when they went to college, if they went to Cornell they got free tuition. If they went to another university, which my daughter did, she went to SMU, Cornell paid a third of the tuition. The athletic director that went after me and went after this rowing coach and called him in the year before because he wanted to cut his spot, he said we think you should be able to win the IRA, which is essentially the national championship for rowing, and if you don't win, this is your last year. And he, the guy looked at the AD and he says without any admissions support there is no way in hell I could win. I mean you've got to give me some athletes. If I don't get in athletes every year then we're just taking kids off campus. Well, he said, that's the deal. Well he got rid of him the next year.

DH: Oh, my gosh. Hello? (interruption) for the diving team.

RG: Yeah, well, that was the, you know, they, he wanted to get rid of me and get a graduate assistant. The problem is the university isn't large enough to pull somebody in as a graduate assistant to do it, you know what I mean?

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: He was cutting it back to two coaches. So I don't know, I don't know what it was all about but that was, he was, that was supposedly a move to save money and it didn't matter with the Ivy League, you know, they don't care. If it's not hockey up there, football, or basketball, those are the important programs. And the Ivy League tends to, I don't know what to say, sponsor or push programs that have, that when they want to push teams that had national championships but do not have national participation: Lacrosse, hockey, rowing, uh teams where, or sports where you have a chance to win the nationals, but not every team participates, not every school participates in those sports or the participants are regional. Hockey is a good example. I mean how many teams down here, how many schools down here have a hockey team?

DH: Yeah.

RG: So, all of a sudden your completion, you have a chance to put some money into a sport where you can get some national recognition. Wrestling is another one that Cornell does well and partially because the AD was a former wrestling coach. Cornell is probably, I'm gonna say the only university but it may not be the case, that has its own wrestling building (laughter) on campus. They have one building they built just for the wrestling team. So, you know, swimming or diving? They could care less.

DH: That's unfortunate but it sounds like you were, you still were able to make a big impact there all the way up through 2007.

RG: Yeah, I did. But it was, it's also hard in the Ivy League and if you're gonna coach in the Ivy League, you have to be happy to get a good athlete once every four or five, six, years. I mean an athlete that might win the Ivy Championship, especially at Cornell. I mean you're talking \$40-\$50 thousand tuition now, I don't know what it is, I haven't kept up with it. Financially based on need there is no, there are no athletic scholarships. Harvard and Princeton now have gone out and, I forget what some coach told me, they're doing, but their financial aid packages are so much better than Cornell's that if you're in competition with them there's no way you are in competition with them. You can't, you can't compete and we always said we couldn't compete anyway. We called it the HYP syndrome, Harvard, Princeton, Yale. If you were recruiting a kid that was accepted at one of those schools, especially Harvard or Princeton, we weren't gonna get them. You know, on a rare occasion you might get one if you wanted engineering which Cornell is strong in or the hotel school. You might sneak one by, but by and large, no. And our admissions were, you know, wasn't very supportive. For football and hockey, yeah, maybe, but not for swimming and diving. I mean I had a guy call me, I got to know him, a director of admissions called me up one time and said we had a diver that applied that was a straight A student, was the valedictorian in her class and the, uh he called me to tell me that Cornell had refused her and I said well, that doesn't matter she was accepted to Harvard early action. And he says Harvard took her. She was first in her class, I mean straight A student, first in her class. What do you want? He says well, we'll wait-list her. I says why? She's going to Harvard. And they wait-listed her so they didn't look bad. So we went through that jazz all the time so it gets very frustrating to be coaching there.

And then there's a question down here that says, I'll jump ahead here. I looked at— Advice to Olympic hopefuls. What one piece of advice would you give? And it would be the same thing that I was hoping could get at Cornell. Any coach hopes he can get is someone that is willing to sacrifice and be dedicated to their sport. And there's so much that goes on today that it, it's hard to find someone that's gonna be dedicated. And I think that's the key to being successful. And if you go to an Ivy League school like this, most of the time, someone's trying to call in. I know who it is and I'm gonna let go, but if you hear a blackout, that's what it is.

DH: Okay.

RG: It's more disturbing from my end because it beeps in my ear. I lost my train of thought. Many a kid, oh, I was gonna say. At Cornell now and you have, being highly academic, you have kids, bright kids that were still concentrating on their school work. That was priority number one. Two became the athletics and Cornell, Cornell was a tough school academically. At one point some of the college books were saying that there was more stress at Cornell than there was in any other Ivy League school. And it was almost like, in the Art[s] School in particular, graduating was a rite of passage. They were gonna make sure you worked your butt off to graduate. I mean it didn't have to be that hard. So, you know, we would have kids, I had one girl one time that, uh I didn't help her get in, the kid was bright enough and her mother was on the faculty, standing on the end of the diving board and I look over, this was her freshman year when she first came in, and I looked over at her and there were tears streaming down her eyes and I looked at her and I said Kari, what is wrong? Or Eliza, it was her sister, I had sisters,

Eliza, what is wrong? Well I have a test tomorrow and I'm afraid I'm gonna flunk it. And I say why don't you get home. Get out of here, you're useless. Go study. So she came in the next day bopping around and, how did you do with that test? Oh, I aced it.

DH: Oh, wow.

RG: But the fear involved, uh, and then the last good girl that I had was willing to work out twice a day, at one point, as a sophomore and she wins the Ivy Championships. The next year her father's putting so much pressure on her to get her academics stronger and blah, blah, that she didn't start training until November. I mean we were working out and she's coming in twice a week, you know, so she doesn't really start to train until right before the first meet and does very poorly, didn't want to go with us and, or didn't want to stay there and train, I mean, she didn't start to put out until, uh, second semester and you can't get in shape in two months. It can't be done. And that's what I mean by dedication and sacrifice. It's gotta be, this has gotta be the priority and other things are gonna go by the wayside. I mean it was with me. I lived for the sport, so, I mean dating went by the wayside at times. You know, you didn't go do other things because you were training all the time. You were training year round. You didn't take any breaks. I mean you'd take a couple of weeks off at the end of the winter, you know, end of school and go home maybe, and come back and it probably wasn't even that long. Because after a while, as you may have found out, I'm assuming you're a grad student?

DH: Yes.

RG: Do you live in close to— Where are you from?

DH: Austin, I've lived in Austin for at least 16 years now.

RG: Okay, so that's home to you? That's unbelievable. From Austin?

DH: No, my father was in the military, actually. I was born at the Academy Air Force Base.

RG: Okay. Well, I think what most kids find out, I was gonna see if I could use you as an example, though Texans rarely leave Texas, I know. They seem to hang around.

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: There are those people that never leave home, you know, they go to school and they come back and they live at home. But generally I found when I went to school, you go back on vacations your freshman year and you know, you see some of your friends and if you would go home in the summer which I never got to do because I was training, you'd see some of your friends. The next year it's less and the third year they're few and far between. I mean everybody's starting to get scattered around. And by the time you've graduated or whatever, you know, you may or may have not kept in touch with your high school. There is one high school guy that I know and actually he was another diver and he wasn't even my high school, but from my era, my same age that I've been in contact with all these years. Other than that I never go to a high school reunion, I wouldn't know anybody. So, anyway, sacrifice and dedication. That's and that's what it is.

DH: That's a good piece of advice. Very sound. So you wanted to speak some about the amateurism issue then and now.

RG: Yeah. I, when, as we alluded to earlier, it was back then you couldn't do anything. You certainly couldn't coach and you weren't supposed to even teach swimming lessons or anything like that. An example, as I said, I took the job at Tarrant County Junior College in Fort Worth because they had no athletic program. Now I know at this point I'd been at it for 12 years, I was tired of the sport, I mean I, it was— trying to make a living and continue to compete, I was, had made up my mind that when '68 was over if I didn't make the team or if I did make the team, either way, I was gonna retire and get a job. There was a magazine at the time called *Swimming World* and I put an ad in *Swimming Word* saying that I wanted to find a job coaching diving either for September or November '68, depending on whether I made the Olympic team, put my name down, my phone number down, and ran the ad. At that time I was, I would be well-known with swimming coaches and the readers of that magazine. So I didn't have to say much about who I was and what I did. The phone rings one day and it's Harry Hainsworth and Harry Hainsworth is the Aquatic Administrator for the AAU, he runs the AAU which is essentially selects the Olympic team. And he says to me, we have a little friendly chit-chat and then Harry said I thought you wanted to try out for the team. And I says well, I do. And he says do you have an ad in *Swimming World*? And I said, Harry you know I do because that's where you got my phone number. What's the problem? You can't advertise. I said I don't have the job, I haven't taken a job, that was very clear that I wouldn't want the job until after the games if I made it. He says you can't advertise, you'll have to pull the ad. That's how strict it was.

DH: Wow.

RG: So I pulled the ad. Now the backside of this story is the athletic director at Cornell, the ad ended up getting me three inquiries. One was the University of Tennessee which at that time didn't have a diving coach and didn't really want one, they wanted me to come in and be director of [intramurals] and then coach diving on the side and I said how many secretaries would I have and they said none. And I said running an [intramural program for a school the size of Tennessee is gonna be a full-time job and without a bunch of secretaries or somebody else to go out to the athletic fields and pay attention, I said I don't see how I'd have time to coach. And the University of Washington wanted somebody, they wanted to put them in the junior college and teach in junior college and come over after your junior college work and coach them and Cornell was the only one that wanted a full-time coach at that point. And the athletic director at Cornell was Bob Cain who was secretary of the Olympic Committee. So I, uh, got a call from the Cornell swimming coach at the time and the nationals, the Diving Nationals were in Green— East Carolina State University, Greenville, North Carolina, I think. But the springboard was in Pittsburg, or the tower was in Pittsburg because the University didn't have a tower. So to get the meet they agreed to fly the athletes from Greenville up to Pittsburg and for a little time perspective, this is the same weekend Martin Luther King was assassinated.

DH: Oh, my gosh.

RG: So I meet the Cornell swimming coach at the airport at Pittsburg and he interviews me. He's flying with the US Swimming Nationals, it would have been AAU Swimming Nationals at that time. And I'm going to the platform and he interviews me and said okay, he'd like to hire

me, he'll talk to the athletic director and the athletic director will call me. So it's not too long after that I get a call from Bob Cain who said okay, I'd like to hire you but obviously I will not make a commitment until the games are over and I, you know, it's just you and me talking. Couldn't hire me, right? Because I'm amateur.

DH: I see.

RG: So he gets a call from Harry Hainsworth and I don't know how the word got out because I didn't say anything to anybody. Harry says to Bob Cain I understand you've hired Rick Gilbert and he says no, didn't hire him. He said I talked to him but I didn't hire him. (laughter) So Bob came to visit me in the Olympic Village says we'll see you up at Cornell on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

DH: Oh, wow.

RG: Now the way it is now, there was a guy named, I thought this was interesting. There was a guy named Mark Bradshaw. Mark Bradshaw I think is still coaching at Arizona, I'm not sure which one of the Arizona schools, Arizona State and Michelle Mitchell is at one of them there, ASU or Arizona, I don't know. Mark was an Ohio State diver, he was in the Olympics twice and decided he would take a job at the Military Academy coaching diving. And he did for a season, they paid him like \$17 thousand and we chit-chatted a little when he came to Cornell when the team came to Cornell and I guess he decided he wasn't making enough money because he ended up having his amateurism, or his amateur status reinstated, which was nothing we ever could have done, and went back to diving and training for the next games and US Diving was paying him a stipend of \$25 thousand a year. The guy could make more diving than he could coaching. And you've got, uh, what I can't figure out how he's able to do it. You've got Troy Dumais, now, who I watched over the weekend, lost the springboard nationals in the outdoors, he was going for his 34<sup>th</sup> National Championship. He was sixth in three Olympic games and he missed making the team the first time around so he's trying this time. We were talking about this guy's been diving for 25 years. I have no clue how he's got the mental stamina to hang in there that long, number one. Then he's on your campus, you could probably go down and talk to him if you ever wanted to. Good looking guy, so there you go. Nice bod. But I don't know what his status is and how he's making money. He's like thirty— I think they said he was 31. I mean I don't know how he's supporting himself and training to, I have no idea what he's doing, if he's got a stipend from somebody. They tried to establish a US Olympic Training Facility in Indianapolis and they would provide the coaches and things but you've got like guys like Troy who's a Texas graduate, and you got an Olympian there coaching who wants to stay with his own coach. So I'm sure I'd be very surprised if he's not getting some sort of a stipend to continue.

DH: Well, how— When you were competing, how did the AAU expect athletes to finance their training and competition and how were you expected to stay in the sport for more than a few years?

RG: I don't know and that's what the deal was, most kids didn't stay in past college. I mean when you're going to college and you might be getting a scholarship at a school, you know, you can do some summer jobs depending on what it was and continue to train, you know. But once you get out and need to make a living, and need to support yourself, especially if you end up

with a family, it was— It was something very difficult to do. Now there were rumors, you talk about in here about, or there's a question in here something about, oh, I've alluded to it before.

DH: Was it under the amateurism section? About gifts or—

RG: Something about gifts and things. I mean when I was competing and I can't think of the guy's name, there was a long-distance track guy that was out of Kansas or someplace, and it was rumored at that time that he was getting, he was getting like \$50 thousand a race to run in some of these national marathon races, because he was a marathon runner. I can't think of his name at this point. That was a rumor, I mean, whether it ever happened or not, I have no clue. But I don't know of anybody in the aquatic world that was getting anything.

DH: Yeah. So what are your overall thoughts or feelings about that, then versus now?

RG: It's almost like the games today are a joke. I hate to say that but I mean if we were fielding pro basketball players and pro hockey players and pro tennis guys, I mean, these guys that are winning grand slams and a million dollars a pop, to think that this is amateur is a joke. And it all started because Russia started wanting to create strong teams and started funding the sports entirely and East Germany did the same thing. I mean they were, they were housing their kids and they were, you know, training them, supporting them. You know China does that. China picks these kids when they're three and four years old and starts to develop them.

DH: Uh-huh.

RG: So, we're not going to do that in this country and we have to a certain extent in some of these organizations that are paying their athletes stipends to be able to train because they recognize the problem, but this is government intervention into the sport, uh, I mean it's the Chinese government that's running the program. Our government certainly isn't going to do that, not in here, so we find ourselves split just like we're talking about with the diving. You've got a program up in Indianapolis where they tried to do a national training program, Colorado Springs has a National Training Facility there, but you've got athletes like Troy and others who are training in Austin and Houston and some from Indianapolis and some staying with their college coach. The one guy, oh, I can't think of his name here, that just took silver in the World's, I'm looking at my emails now, he was out of the Indianapolis Training Facility. And went to, yeah, studied at Purdue, and now the Purdue coach is coaching him. So here's your college thing that's supporting part of this. I'm sure there's stipends being paid by US Diving to certain nationally, national team members, I think is what they call them now. If you make the national team I think you're able to get some stuff but I haven't been active in US Diving for years so I don't know exactly what they're doing. But this is what's happening here. So I have mixed emotions. I mean nobody's amateur anymore but there's no way you're gonna compete and be truly amateur the way we were and it's not gonna happen. And but I, I just find it hard accepting the fact that there are pros doing it and then the Olympic Committee constantly is asking you to send them a donation.

DH: Yeah. (laughter)

RG: (laughter) And I don't know, you know, that goes to the games, so the, if you want to talk of extreme amateurism you go back to a guy named Jim Thorp. Have you ever heard of Jim Thorp?

DH: Yes.

RG: Who ended up having his Olympic medals taken away from him because he played baseball in a semi-pro league one summer or something. So we have gone from one extreme to the other. I like watching the Olympics, I don't have the same feelings that I had, you know, about it before. It, I don't know. I think I've said enough. (laughter)

DH: Well did you want to touch on any big influences on you throughout your own athletic career or the impact of the games on your life?

RG: I think the one, the person who had the greatest influence on my life was my coach and that was Hobie Billingsley at Indiana. And we just came back from his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. There were probably, it was short notice, there were probably twenty divers that came back and another sixty other people who were associated. When they had his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday there were like, or 80<sup>th</sup> birthday there were like a hundred and thirty there. It was much more organized. But essentially, you know, when I went to Indiana it was the first time I'd ever been away from home. You know I was homesick for a while and here was a guy that took me under his wing and was like a second father to me, was a great coach. He was, I think, at that era was probably the greatest coach in the world. He was the first coach to really get involved with the mechanical aspect of diving and applying the laws of motion. You've heard of Isaac M. Newton.

DH: Yes, of course, yeah.

RG: Applying the laws of motion to diving, figuring out how dives worked based on action, reaction, and Newton's first and third laws are the main ones that are involved in the sport. And it was, you know, I ended up wanting to coach and modeled my coaching after him. And we're still in close contact today so he would be the most influential person. Obviously the significant— what was it?

DH: How do you think your life would be different if you had not been an elite athlete in your sport?

RG: Oh, I think it would have been more difficult to get a college job. Some of the people at some of the colleges are hiring are, you know, I don't know. I think I probably would have tried to do the same thing, I had no trouble getting a job obviously with the background that I had and I think it helped recruit athletes for a while. I say for a while because after a while they don't remember who you are. People today, the kids today don't really study history of the sport. I think I was aware of the history mainly because Hobie himself had been a national championship, he had gone to Ohio State and talked about the history all the time, talked about who the people were. So I developed an appreciation for the history of the sport. I'm not sure the kids today do. Who the people were, I mean why do you care that somebody back in the forties was doing a flying front one and a half which essentially is a swan dive first you duck over and do a one and a half, you know, when the kids are now striving to do four and a half or four or one guy showed up at this meet with a front two and a half with three twists. I'd never

seen it before and he nailed it for nine. I mean it's, you know, so why would they want to care? I don't know. I guess that there was some history involved that people could go back and look some place they might have an appreciation for it. But, whatever.

DH: Well, and thank you for helping us with that and contributing to that.

RG: Okay.

DH: Did you have any other things you wanted to share with us? Anything, any thoughts about the overall impact of the '68 Games on your life or, you mentioned earlier something about you only heard about the salute when you came back to the States?

RG: Yeah, I saw it in the news when I came back. And I guess it was, I don't know, I was sort of shocked, I mean the other thing that was somewhat shocking that occurred right after that, and I don't want to sound like a racist or anything because I don't feel that I am. The, but it's just not savvy, not paying attention again, the other thing that happened that was very similar was the year I went to Cornell. I get there in November and I go home in for Thanksgiving to Lancaster which is like a four-hour drive and then we sit down and we look in the newspaper and it was a very similar occurrence. It was a group of black students at Cornell University took over the Union, barricaded themselves in the Union for two days making demands to the university to support their black students. It was another group of, you know, protesting over racial equality. And it, with Cornell it did wake up Cornell. Cornell always provided, or prided itself in diversity. Diversity is part of their admissions process so what they were doing was they were taking some poor black kids, they were accepting them into the university but then were not supporting them with remedial classes and things to bring them up to the academic demands of the school and the kids were flunking out, I mean they were having trouble. They couldn't pass. Their reading level wasn't high enough or their math skills weren't strong enough. So that's what that protest, what started that protest. If you're going to bring us up here then you gotta support us, you gotta help us survive in this, you know, this tough academic environment. So, and today, you know, I think things are coming— Back then nobody wanted to give anybody civil rights. I mean what I found, you're down in Austin. If you've been down here for sixteen years, and I had lived up in, I'm from Pennsylvania and I lived in Ithaca for thirty-nine years where the population was extremely diverse and we had students from all over the world walking around and all colors. And I come down here and I would say that where I'm living, which is an upscale neighborhood in West[on] Lakes, that I would bet when it comes right down to it 50% of the people are racist. Especially if they've come out of New Orleans and we've got some older folks here that lived in New Orleans and Louisiana or in that area over there, Mississippi, extreme racists, just in their comments and their actions and it's scary.

DH: Yeah.

RG: So I, you know, it would be interesting to go back because I haven't seen anything about the black power salute for some time. Historically it would be interesting to go back and look at it and try to understand it now.

DH: Yeah. So do you recall any of the other reactions of the people around you when they saw it or—

RG: Well nobody was around me because I was home watching television, you know, and I would say that my understanding, and this would be my criticism of it. I mean, my understanding of one of the goals of the games is to be free of politics. And I always thought one of the values of the competition in the international competitions that I was in was to allow our participants and the participants all over the world to meet one another and not believe let's say with the Russians and not believe the propaganda that was going around by the government at the time. I mean like they're supposed to be our enemies. And, you know, the East Germans and things. I mean, and meet these people and find out that they're really just like us, you know. So from that standpoint keep politics out of it. I mean, I don't think that's possible. Carter said he was gonna make a political statement and say we're not gonna participate in the games because of what Russia's doing and then Russia comes back in the next games and says well, we're not gonna put our Russian athletes in it because of that the US is doing or whatever, and you know. Somehow something is lost in all this.

DH: Right. You mentioned the Cold War. Did you feel or notice the impact of the Cold War or the Cold War propaganda as you said while you were there at the games?

RG: No. No, I did not, when, you know, like I said, we were isolated. I understand that there was a water polo game where the Hungarians played the Russians and I think this was in Mexico City and it was right after Russia had overrun Hungary and the Hungarian team let their nails grow long, fingernails, toenails and then sharpened them to very fine edges and literally went after the Russian team in the pool while they were playing and then they said there was blood in the water when, you know, when the game was over.

DH: Yeah. That's true.

RG: Because they wouldn't, you know, so that we did hear about, as I think back. If we talked all day maybe I'd remember more that I hadn't thought about in years.

DH: Well, then we can go ahead and wrap it up now and before we say goodbye, was there just any, any last parting thought or anything else you'd like to share?

RG: No, I think I've said enough.

DH: Well it's been wonderful talking with you today and I thank you so much for your time. I'm gonna go ahead and shut off the recorder and then we can, I can talk a little bit about Hobie and getting his contact information.

RG: Okay.

[end of interview, end recording]

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