AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT LOCKWOOD

Interviewer: Jewell Willhite

Oral History Project

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University of Kansas
ROBERT LOCKWOOD

B.S. Physical Education, University of Kansas, 1961

Graduate work, 60 hours in Recreation, Physical Education, Pedagogy, and Physical Education and Sport Administration (A.B.T.), University of Kansas

Service at the University of Kansas

Undergrad Teaching Assistant, 1959-1961

Costa Rica Peace Corps Project, Fitness Trainer/Instructor, 1960-61

Physical Education Department Graduate Teaching Assistant, 1961-1963

Physical Education Department (HSES) Faculty, 1964-2001

Head Men=s Wrestling Coach, 1964-1965

Intramural Director, 1964-1973

Head Men=s Gymnastics Coach, 1964-1979

Head Diving Coach, 1964-1965

Head Men=s Tennis Coach, 1968-1970

Head Women=s Volleyball Coach, 1979-1985

Director, Kansas School of Gymnastics-Competitive and Instructional Program, 1985-2001

Supervisor, Robinson Center Security Staff, 1997-present

Supervisor, Robinson Center Maintenance Staff, 1997-present

Robinson Center Facilities director, 1998-present
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Q.: I am speaking with Robert Lockwood, who retired in 2001 as faculty member, academic advisor and facilities manager for the Health, Sport, and Exercise Science Department at the University of Kansas. We are in Lawrence, Kansas, on March 13, 2002. Where were you born and in what year?

A.: I was born in 1938 in Leavenworth. Shortly after that my parents moved to Lawrence. I have been a Lawrence resident since about eight months of age.

Q.: What were your parents’ names?

A.: My dad is Robert. I am a junior, named after my father. My mother is Marguerite Edington. They were southeast Kansas folks.

Q.: What was your father’s occupation?

A.: Dad was an engineer for the telephone company.

Q.: Did you have brothers and sisters?

A.: I have one brother. Doug is two and a half years younger than I am. He is a state employee, a biologist for the state of Alaska. He has recently formed his own business in environmental cleanup and things like that, and he runs a small airport. He is in Anchorage, Alaska.

Q.: Where did you go to elementary school here in Lawrence?

A.: Way back then we didn’t have that many elementary schools. I was a Cordley kid. I went all the way through Cordley. The junior highs were down at ninth street, Central, Manual and Old High. I was in those junior highs. In high school I was at old Memorial High School for one semester and then we moved into the new Lawrence High School. I
Q.: What do you remember about Lawrence as you were growing up? It must have been a lot different and a lot smaller than it is now.

A: As a child growing up, I had playmates and I lived right down here on Alabama Street, which is just on the south side of campus now. Our alleyway between Alabama and Maine was the city limits. There were very few houses to the west or to the south of that area. Nineteenth Street was a dirt road. Iowa Street was a dirt road. Where Allen Fieldhouse is and where Robinson Gym, all of our parking areas and Stauffer Place, that was all big fields, farmers’ fields. That was a big play space for us. I remember playing a lot as a child right where we sit now in Robinson Center. There was a creek here where we used to catch little fish and crawdads. Then growing up in high school the thing that I am always reminded of is that there were very few stop lights. We would do what we called A shoot the square. The kids would have their vehicles, their old jalopies, and we would meet at A & W Root Beer or one of the quick stop hamburger places like Griff’s over on 23rd Street. And we would just drive around.

Q.: So the square would be Massachusetts Street and 23rd Street and what were the others?

A: Iowa and then Sixth Street. There were very few people on the streets after eight at night, mostly high school kids who drove their cars and had their meetings. I remember a lot of that. Of course, it has changed a lot. It was nice to go into a new high school back then. I’ve seen Lawrence grow and expand, housingwise and sizewise. It’s been unbelievable, really. But when you live that close to it, you don’t notice it as much as when you are away and then come back.

Q.: Did they have elementary age sports in those days?
A: No, they didn't have anything at the elementary school. They had junior high sports. I was kind of a slow-maturing kid. I was pretty small and I was a year younger than everyone in my class. My parents had me go to school when I was still four years old. So I was behind. In junior high I tried out for basketball and I didn't make the team. But I always tried out for it. Then L. R. "Dad" Perry was the high school coach. When I was a sophomore in high school he got me out for gymnastics. He thought that was for me because of my size. So I did gymnastics for "Dad" Perry at Lawrence High School. That led into track. I was a letterman in track and field at Lawrence High. I was a pole vaulter, a high jumper, and a long jumper. Then when I came to KU, athletics had a new life for me. I competed in a couple of varsity sports and did a lot of things.

Q.: Do you have memories of what world War II was like around here? Did you have relatives in the war?

A: I had two uncles who were in World War II, both in the Pacific conflict. But I was pretty young then. The biggest memories I have are two memories. My neighbor came over to our house to see our mom and they were crying because the president had died. That was when F.D.R. had passed away. They were saying, "What are we going to do? He is the savior of our country. He has been in so long." I didn't know what that meant, but we were at war. Then when President Truman dropped the bomb, the first one, the atomic bomb, again, the same neighbor came over and said, "Have you heard the news? This is what has happened." I have a little memory of Pearl Harbor. I didn't know what it meant, but I knew it was another tragedy. So it was something adults had gotten together and said, "Oh my gosh, this has happened." I as a child was listening from afar and had concern about it.
Q.: Did you have influential teachers as you were growing up in Lawrence?
A: I think I had some excellent teachers in Lawrence. Miss Pearson, who has recently
passed away—she was about 100 years old—was my third grade teacher at Cordley. She
was later a principal here in the public schools and remained a dear friend of mine
throughout the years as my career extended here at KU. She was really influential with
me, among other things, just by being a stand-up person, being honest and encouraging
me to study harder and learn. I remember I thought I was such a poor speller. She said,
\textit{No, you will be a better speller. Just do this and this.} She was pretty good that way to
set some kind of standard for me for studying. My high school teacher in physical
education was probably the most influential of the public school people. He really built
my confidence and gave me the idea that maybe I could be a teacher. Maybe physical
education would be a thing I could pursue, that I might be talented in that area.

Q.: Who was that?
A: That was L. R. \textit{Dad} Perry. He was the old-time P.E. teacher at Lawrence High School
for all those years. In fact, I named my third child Perry after Coach Perry.

Q.: You said you were in track and gymnastics in high school. When did you graduate from
high school?
A: I was in the class of 1956.

Q.: Did you have summer jobs during the time you were in high school?
A: Actually, I worked every summer. I got my first payment when I was 11. I was self-
employed as a custodian. I’ve had summer jobs and odd jobs since then. I worked
primarily as a tree trimmer. I got on with a tree-trimming company in Kansas City and it
went along with my gymnastics training. I was a climber and a trimmer in the trees. It
was a good summer job. I made good money, $1.25 an hour when I first started, more than anyone else made doing part-time work. It was a good experience. I got to travel with the road crews and things like that. That was a very good summer job for me. It helped pay my way through school.

Q.: Was it always assumed that you would go to college?

A: I think there was always the assumption that I would go to college. I had an opportunity at one time to join the tree service and form my own company. I talked with my boss about that a lot and my parents, but I don't think I every really wanted to do that for a career. I always wanted to be a teacher and a coach.

Q.: Did you go to college on an athletic scholarship?

A: No. We didn't have a lot of scholarships in 1956. Football had them and basketball. There were a very few track scholarships. I didn't do track here at KU. What happened with me was that I did gymnastics and volleyball. They were collegiate sports for men back then. Henry Shenk was the chairman of our department. Henry put me on as a graduate assistant, what is termed now a graduate G.T.A. I was an undergraduate, only a sophomore, but he had me teaching most of the activity courses for the department. So I made good money while I was going to school. And I did other odd jobs for the department, such as training Peace Corps trainees, and things like that. He always had me do those little extra things.

Q.: What sort of training did you do for the Peace Corps?

A: That was fitness training. The Costa Rican project is what we worked on here at KU in two different ventures we had back then. I took all the candidates for the Peace Corps that centered here at KU and brought them into our facility, Old Robinson Gym and gave
them physical fitness testing and then the training to increase their physical fitness abilities and their strength abilities. I got to do that a few times. So those things were kind of in lieu of a scholarship. He did that for me to be sure I could pay my way through college.

Q.: Did you live at home?
A.: I lived at home.

Q.: The department wasn’t called then what it is now, I don’t think.
A.: We were the Physical Education Department. Then it became Health and Physical Education. Then it was Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Then finally dance was added to it. Then, of course, recreation is gone, dance is gone, health is still here. We changed our name to Health, Sport and Exercise Sciences. So back in my early days it was a physical education major in the Physical Education Department.

Q.: Do you remember influential teachers from your college days?
A.: Actually, yes. Bill Easton was the track coach then. He had a great influence on me. He spent a lot of time with me as a teacher, a coaching mentor in preparing me for things. Then I had faculty members who were very much in my camp. Henry Shenk was the chairman of the department. Henry is the one who hired me to come back to the department. I spent a year teaching in junior college after I graduated. He pretty much got me that job. Then he wanted me back here. I had so many great ones. There were a handful of people in the department then. Reg Strait was one of the great old-timers who had a lot of life experiences to help me understand how to best communicate with students. Don Henry was an exact, very well-organized health teacher here. He was a dear friend of mine. Juanita Strait and Wahnita Henry both remain very close friends.
Walt Mikols was the activity kind of guy. He was a ex-gymnast from the old Turners Club Association. We bonded very well here. I had several who were outstanding professors who I have tried to emulate since their departure.

Q.: Then you were in track and gymnastics all the way through?
A.: I wasn’t in track. I was in volleyball. I was a collegiate all-American in volleyball.

Gymnastics was a good sport for me. It was a funny thing because we had 10 events in men’s gymnastics instead of the six they have now. We had the extra things such as trampoline, rope climbing and tumbling and flying rings. They were like circus events plus the six all-around events that we now have today. I worked all ten. Because of that, I scored a lot of points. My senior year I was a national scoring leader, which really didn’t mean very much, other than the fact that I scored a lot of points throughout my senior career. Volleyball was a good sport. We had a very strong volleyball team. My three years that I played volleyball we never won a national championship. We took second once and third twice.

Q.: Was it hard to keep up with studies with all the time it takes to be in sports?
A.: It actually was. My career in school went from 1956 to 1961, so I took an extra year in a standard four-year program to get all my studies done, as well as do all the other things. So with scheduling the teaching time and the athletic time, I felt it was probably the best thing for me to do. I ended up with kind of a double minor as well. I had math and science as a teaching minor. So those were extra courses that I took. It all seemed to blend together. There is something about being busy. You just get it done.

Q.: So you graduated in 1961. Were you ever in the military?
A.: I was not in the military. Back in the draft times, at age 18 you had to sign up for the
selective service. I was in school at that time, so I had a school deferment. As soon as I
graduated in 1961, they called all of us back in to take our physical for immediate
induction to the Armed Forces. That was in Kansas City. I went over there. I had a
graduate school deferment as well. They allowed me the graduate school deferment
instead of going into the active military. That gave me eligibility for the military until
age 35. At the time in 1961 there was not any national urgency for young men to be
drafted into the service. So that’s why I think they continued the school deferments.

Q.: Did you go to graduate school right after finishing your undergraduate degree?
A: I did. I started the master’s work while I was teaching, so I only took a few hours at a
time. I ended up with about 60 graduate hours without the dissertation. It was a
specialist’s degree back then, 60 hours plus the dissertation. I didn’t finish that, or a
master’s. So I did that from 1961 throughout quite a lengthy time. And I taught one
year away from the university, 1963.

Q.: Where was that?
A: That was a Metropolitan Junior College.

Q.: Is that in Kansas City?
A: Yes. It now has a different name. Metropolitan Junior College was a two-year school
that was one of the higher ranking academic institutions in the country for community
colleges. They later branched into four areas. I couldn’t name those now. They are
Longview, Penn Valley and two others. They discontinued the name, Metropolitan
Junior College. It was in an old building. I taught physical education for them. That was
a very unique experience, but I then came back full-time to KU in 1964. The overlap was
that I taught while I was an undergraduate and I taught while I was a graduate student. In
1963 I got the job in Kansas City, but I continued to coach up here.

Q.: What were you coaching?
A.: I was coaching men’s diving at one time, also men’s gymnastics and wrestling.

Q.: Had you been involved in diving and wrestling yourself?
A.: I had been involved in diving as a freshman athlete up here. The diving coach asked me to come out for the team, as he did all the gymnasts. Anyone who worked trampoline automatically worked diving. That’s how I became a diving coach for KU for that one year because all the trampolinists were all on the diving team. I had coached with the trampoline kids. We didn’t travel with the team or anything like that. We did our water work and we did our trampoline work. So I had three sports all at once during that time when I was an undergraduate, a graduate student and starting my career here. So I never really left KU, but the teaching responsibility jumped to the junior college for one year and then back here as full-time faculty.

Q.: Then when you came back here, what were you coaching?
A.: When I came back here in 1964 we started gymnastics as a varsity sport, funded by the Athletics Department.

Q.: Before that it hadn’t been?
A.: It had not been funded by the Athletics Department. It had been funded by the Physical Education Department. But it was under the auspices of the Athletics Department. Funding was a scarce thing back then. We had two of those sports that became varsity athletics, but the funding was different. So in 1964 I met with Dutch Lonborg, the Athletics Director, and reformed men’s gymnastics and men’s wrestling as varsity sports. I coached both those in concurrent seasons, so that was a little difficult, and I was
a full-time faculty member here. Once I did that, after one year of coaching wrestling, I had to give up one of the sports. So I gave up wrestling and continued with gymnastics, since they were in the same time frame.

Q.: And you were teaching classes also.
A: Yes.

Q.: What classes did you teach?
A:: I taught a multitude of classes for the department and most of the skill type classes, the specialty areas, such as volleyball, gymnastics, swimming, diving and some of the physical fitness stuff, also the coaching classes to train people to be coaches. My first year here I taught adaptive physical education. It was a class that Walter Mikols had taught. He was taking a sabbatical, so I taught that for him one year. It just varied from the different types of coaching and preparation classes for our majors. I taught all the skill classes from team sports to individual sports to aquatics, gymnastics. Everything that a teacher had to learn how to do, I taught them. I came along at a time when they needed someone who could demonstrate as well as teach them.

Q.: So you were preparing people to be physical education teachers.
A: Yes. That was totally our department=s mission at that time.

Q.: You weren=t in this building, were you?
A: No, we were in old Robinson, which is up where Wescoe Hall is now. They tore Robinson down in 1965 and we moved into the new facility in 1966. We physically moved. Actually, the faculty members and whoever we could get to help us moved our things by hand down the hill to move into our offices here in what we called New Robinson then. I had a great education and experience in the old gym. It was built and
designed by James Naismith. When I was a student there the women were on one side and the men on the other. Joie Stapleton was the chairman for the women and Henry Shenk was the chairman for the men. No classes were together. They were all separate.

Q.: Has that changed?

A: Oh, yes. When Title IX came in 1972 the idea was that everything would be equal and that men and women would have classes together and education together and all rights would be equal. Then we had one chairman. That was Henry Shenk. We mixed our classes wherever possible. But in that facility when I first moved there, Phog Allen had his office up there and Ed Elbel had his area in the tower and the remnants of James Naismith’s papers were still in Robinson at that time, and the police department was there. There were three guys here. Joe Skillman was chief of police and Andy Anderson was one of the police officers and Walt Torneden was the other. The three of them ran all the traffic and security for KU back in 1956. They were housed in Robinson Center until they were finally moved to one part of Hoch Auditorium.

Q.: KU was a lot smaller when you started teaching.

A: Yes. I think my first year I paid fees and tuition but I paid it myself so it was brutal to come up with the money for my first semester, which I recall was under $100 for instate fees and tuition at KU. I’m thinking $87.50 but I could be wrong about that.

Q.: And there were a lot less students.

A: Oh, yes, somewhere between 8,000 and 9,000, I believe.

Q.: It has sure grown a lot. Were you married at this time?

A: When I first came to KU I wasn’t. I got married in 1961 when I graduated.
Q.: What is her name?
A: She and I are divorced. I was married to Sharon Ward from Lawrence, Kansas. She was not a KU grad. She went to school at Pittsburg. I had known her through high school.

Q.: Did you have children?
A: We have three sons. All three attended KU. Two graduated. One will finish his master’s this year. One finished his master’s and is now finishing his doctorate degree at the University of Maryland. One is a physical education major and a teacher. The other teaches P.E. in specialized areas at Washburn University as a faculty member. The other works for the Journal World. He is a manager over rural route carriers.

Q.: What are their names?
A: Park is my oldest. Park was named after my grandfather. He is the one who finished his master’s here in Sports Psychology. He had an undergraduate degree in psychology from here. He went on for his Ph.D. at the University of Maryland in what they call Biomechanics/ Neurophysiology. It is actually their form of Sports Psychology. Bob, (Robert Anthony Lockwood) not named after me, is my middle son. He graduated from KU and is now finishing his master’s degree here in the Teacher Pedagogy program. He is a physical education teacher in the Shawnee Mission district. He is also the district supervisor of physical education for the elementary schools. He is one of the track coaches at Shawnee Mission South High School. My third son is Perry, named after my old high school coach. Perry is the rural route manager for the Lawrence Journal-World. He has two children and my oldest son has one.

Q.: What do you remember about the late sixties and early seventies while you were here?
A: One of the big things that happened early, I guess prior to the sixties, is the Wilt Chamberlin era. That was a big thing to come to the University of Kansas as a freshman and Wilt was a year older than me. Just seeing the man. He didn’t want to be called seven foot tall. He hated the name Wilt the Stilt. But Wilt was comfortable with the athletes. There were only a handful for athletes who would sit up in the old stairwell at Old Robinson Center. Wilt would come by and sit with us there. That was a big thing. Wilt was just a super athlete. One time we went down to the stadium. Wilt said he could throw the shot put 60 feet. We had Bill Neider. He was a Lawrence High graduate a little older than I. He had the world record at the time and was an Olympic Gold Medalist in the shot put. He could throw it over 60 feet. Wilt said he could throw it that far. So we all went down. Wilt grabbed the shot put, bend down and threw it over his head backwards 62 feet something. So Wilt was extremely strong. He didn’t specify how he would throw the shot put, but he did push that thing in a weird way 62 feet and something. So Wilt’s addition to KU was quite spectacular. I had the opportunity while he was here to play volleyball with him. Of course Wilt later became a very good volleyball player. We met several times on the circuit in open volleyball championships. My greatest time with him was in 1977 in Hilo, Hawaii, at the national championships, when I played for a Kansas City masters team and Wilt played for an L.A. team. He and I as old Kansas buddies were able to sit together in the stands in Hilo not bothered by anyone, no autograph seekers, just sit and talk about old times. I miss Wilt. He was a good friend as a collegiate athlete. That’s one of the things I remember starting in at the University. For me, I started my life and family life and things like that. It was exciting to be able to coach and be a teacher. My dreams were coming true that way. In 1961 I
was a graduate student and that was a new experience. As far as the university and the city of Lawrence, to me I thought it was just the normal thing, but it was just in its infancy. Times were difficult for us. No one seemed to have extra money. When John Hadl, who was a classmate of mine, signed that pro contract to go to the San Diego Chargers, I thought he was the richest man in town. He had a baby blue Thunderbird convertible in 1961, the newest one in town. He signed that big bonus with the Chargers. I don’t know what it was, nothing like they sign today. I just thought, what a great thing, because times were tough back there. My father was not a penny pincher, but Dad counted his money because no one made a lot back then and the idea was you paid for it up front. You didn’t charge things. Those things I remember pretty well about KU.

Q.: Then things changed a lot around 1969 or 1970.
A.: Oh, yes.

Q.: There was a lot going on here.
A.: As I changed the job from 1964 when I was in Kansas City, I was in the stairwell going to my office area out of the gym. And someone came down and said, "The President’s been shot." So we rushed in and turned on the radio. There were a lot of different stories and we didn’t know how bad...That was, for me, the first big shock, other than my grandfather passing away. It was the first big shock of losing someone I had a lot of faith in. I am a Republican, but J.F.K. was one person I thought had a good head on his shoulders and really had all of us at heart. I felt that. When his life was taken that abruptly, it was a shock and it was for the whole nation. Then came the boycott of the Olympics and realizing that we in the middle part of the country are now being included in what was happening, particularly on the West Coast. That was a cultural shock to all
of us.

There was racial impact and things like that, as well as Title IX issues, women=s rights and equal rights for everyone. We had just gone through three tragedies, John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King. In the late sixties, after the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City with the boycott and the black glove things, then it became a reality here that, gee, there=s a problem. And there were civil rights issues and the protests on campus, the burning of parts of our student union and the bombing of the computer center, which was over here at Summerfield Hall at that time. So there were a lot of things that showed all the unrest, faculty members taking punches at students who were in protest. In my office you see up on the wall right now there is a newspaper picture with a sign saying AOut of South Africa. There is a swastika on the words South Africa. That was a sign in 1979, so we went through a decade of different types of protest. The reason that is on my wall is because Larry Heeb and I are sitting up there. We were ushers for commencement many years. We were sitting there waiting for the police to come to be sure that none of the spectators at commencement would rush up and tear the sign up or fight the people holding it up. The police did come, they arrested them, and took the sign away, and quite peacefully walked out of the stadium. That on the wall is a reprint when they were doing some articles on the guy in charge of that. He came back and spoke at the university several years back. But that whole decade of protests and unrest was a little bit tiring. And the economy was up and down. We had no raises as faculty, we would have to go another year without a raise. We didn=t think much about it. It was just a sign of the times. So the late sixties and all of the seventies were kind of that way.
Q.: I read somewhere that you had coached five different sports here. You had mentioned some, the wrestling, the gymnastics and the diving.

A: And I coached men=s tennis as well, and I coached women=s volleyball. Women=s volleyball was the last sport I coached. Then in 1985 or so I quit coaching and dedicated the rest of my time to facility management and teaching.

Q.: Did you have pretty good teams in some of those sports?

A: In gymnastics the last year I had that sport Bob Markum was the Athletics Director and he dropped the sport. It was one of the cutbacks he envisioned. He dropped men=s gymnastics and women=s gymnastics from the program.

Q.: About when was that?

A: The gymnastics were dropped in the 1979-80 season. There was a cost savings from eliminating that sport, and they took some money away from track and a few of the others. That came back but they never reentered gymnastics into the department. So that was gone. When there was a heyday of men=s gymnastics, there were probably about 80 teams competing nationally in the NCAA. We ranked seventh in the nation and they dropped our team. We had a terrific team. The first time they had given a scholarship for gymnastics was two years before that. We had entered into the real race. The women=s team was coached by a different person. They had had a series of injuries, so they couldn=t field a full team. In team events they took last because they didn=t have enough athletes to be competitive, although they had some good athletes. So I think that also entered into the idea that they were going to drop the sport. That was a good team that I had. The tennis team I coached for two years here, kind of as a favor to Wade Stinson, who was the athletics director, because I had had a fairly good background in
tennis. We were competitive, but it wasn’t a chance to recruit into it. It was whatever we had. It was kind of a last-minute thing, Coach Lockwood, I need you to coach tennis. Can you do that?

Q.: You said you had a background in tennis. Had you been playing tennis?

A.: It was just a background in physical education. I had played quite a bit of tennis, but not competitively, not on a team. I had taught it a lot in the department. He just felt I would be the ideal person to do this. Then we did well that year. We eliminated the unrest that they had with tennis, so he wanted me to do it a second year, which I did. Then we recruited another coach. The assistant coached that I had became the head coach.

Q.: Is it different coaching women than coaching men?

A.: Well, it’s a little different, but I think the difference I noticed was not a male/female issue. It was a team sport individual sport issue. I coached women’s volleyball, and everything else I coached was kind of an individual sport. When I coached women’s gymnastics, which was on a club basis, I coached those kids after they dropped the sport here. They continued on two years to compete as a club. That’s not on my list of coaching things because they were not a varsity team. But I didn’t treat them any differently than the men. It was the same type of conditioning, the same type of routine practices that we followed. There was not much difference that way. I think the biggest thing that I learned in coaching all those sports is if you try to change yourself to match your athletes, then you forget who you are. I call it the chameleon effect when I teach, because a chameleon is a lizard that changes color as it goes to whatever background, green for the grass, brown for the tree bark or whatever. And coaches sometimes do that. It was my intent that I would coach the way I coach and teach and I didn’t want to play
like I was somebody else. I wanted my athletes to have trust in me for who I was, and I would trust them the same way.

Q.: I understand that for a long time you were the director of the Lawrence Aquatic Center also.

A: That’s right. I worked from 1969 to 1998 as director of the Municipal Pool and then the last three years we changed it to the new Aquatic Center that is there now. Of course 1969 reminds us of the problems that we had and the unrest that was in Lawrence, Kansas, at that time.

Q.: Now the pool was fairly new at that time, wasn’t it?

A: Yes, the pool was in its first year. The Lawrence Recreation Department had the old Jayhawk Plunge, an old pool at Sixth Street and Florida. It was a private pool and certain races were not allowed in there. It was an all white pool. In those times, when it was called to the attention of everyone, Parks and Recreation Department tried to find opportunities for everyone, a public facility. They used a facility called the Firebird Pool, which was out on 23rd and Iowa. It has been torn down, but they rented that pool for a while. It took three bond issues before they got the Municipal Pool approved. That first year they asked me to manage it. As I told you before, I was a tree trimmer during the summers, and I had continued that as summer work. I had made an obligation to my boss to help him through some summer contracts. I didn’t want to renig on that. So I turned down the job as the aquatics director. One of my close friends, a colleague from KU, Bobby Harper, was a Lawrence boy. He was a little bit younger than I and he worked on his master’s degree at KU. He started out. It was no fault of his, I think, but there were different bosses of instruction, management, Red Cross certification. There just wasn’t a
consistency. There were problems. Before the Fourth of July, most of the staff had quit. The manager quit. Wayne Bly, who was the Parks and Rec director, and Jim Talley, who was assistant director, were running the pool day by day. They would sit down at the pool and a handful of people would come in. Everyone was threatened. Paint was thrown in the water. There was a lot of vandalism that was done out of protest.

Q.: Were they protesting that the pool was open to everyone?

A: Well, no, not that. I think there was a protest movement in Lawrence saying that there were still not opportunities for African Americans and things like that. There were some groups in Lawrence that would march in throw the lifeguards off the stands and things like that. Maybe it was a power struggle, just a defiant attitude that things weren’t right and to call attention to that. So I told my tree trimming boss that I thought I had better go down and help with this. Around that time in July, he said, ‘I think you had better do it.’ We had finished our out-of-town contracts, so I had really helped him with what he needed. So I went down to work at the pool. The first week that I worked there I wore a shirt and tie to the pool. The Journal-world quoted me. They asked me a question I will never forget. I still have the article. They asked, ‘What rule changes do you plan to make to get this pool back on track?’ I said, ‘I don’t plan any rule changes. I plan to be consistent in what we do. The pool is a place that must be fun, sanitary, and safe. And that’s what I plan to have here.’ Basically, that is what I told them. For the 29 or 30 years that I ran that pool, I lived by those standards, safe, sanitary, and fun. You know, it straightened out. We started to get people back and there was confidence in it. The next year was better and the third year was even better. By the end it was a pretty automatic thing, that we had a great swimming pool there. The pool itself deteriorated
and we had to build a new center. They came in with that bond issue, which was a blessing for all of us in Lawrence. We are able to enjoy some facilities with the sales tax revenue. We built the Aquatic Center, and I got to start that and then spent two more summers with it. So I got it kind of on its feet, so to speak. Then I had a great retirement ceremony down there. They named the ABob Lockwood Room® after me, which was really nice. It is a big meeting room, and Lawrence Mayor Kennedy proclaimed ABob Lockwood Day® in September of 1998. It was a great experience with Parks and Rec. and with the Lawrence community. At KU we are shielded from a lot of things that happen to the people of Lawrence. That gave me an opportunity to work with children=s programs, swimming lessons, and to personally know young people who grew up, their children and grandchildren. So I've seen three generations.

Q.: The swimming program is big. A lot of kids take part in that. And you were in charge of hiring the life guards and the swimming teachers, etc.

A: Yes. Actually, it was a pretty nice setup with Parks and Rec. They gave me from the beginning the responsibility and the authority of it. I think that was one of the things with the then city manager Ray Wells that I insisted on. If I am going to do it, give me the authority to do it, as well as the responsibility. The two go hand in hand. I will make the decisions.® They were glad to do that. So throughout that time I pretty much ran the pool, from hiring everyone to getting it cleaned up at the very end.

Q.: Were you involved in a gymnastics program for children also?

A: Yes. When we dropped our varsity gymnastics teams, men=s and women=s, back in 1979, Tom Wilkerson, who had been a faculty member and a facilities manager at KU, had taken the job of assistant Parks and Recreation director. He currently still has that
job. Tom and I discussed the idea of starting a youth program. I had worked with them in their program for little kids at the Community Building. Why not do a joint effort with the Department and the Parks and Recreation Department? Have it administrated up here and they could take care of the fees and the enrollment from their office. So we worked out all the paperwork and in about six months we had it finalized and approved by the Chancellor and we started a youth program up here. It’s been a great thing.

Q.: Oh, they come up here.
A: Yes, they came to Robinson Center and they still do that.

Q.: Is this high school kids or younger children?
A: Preschool through age 19. We have a two-year-old class for parents and tots and three-year-old tumbling and all the way up. We have competitive kids, boys who have gotten college scholarships. We have sent several to the military academies for further training at the college level. We’ve had a young man at West Point who graduated, and one at the Air Force Academy, who is now flying the big, fast jets. It’s amazing what some of these kids have done. We have girls now who have been national champions. Our little age-group kids have done a great job.

Q.: You’ve mentioned a couple of former students. Any others you’d like to mention?
A: I have a philosophy about students. One of my big responsibilities in this department is advising. I’ve had as many as 400 students in a year who I have advised, throughout the university, not just in our own department. There are so many special people, and I think that is why I’ve really enjoyed teaching all these years. It’s a communication with everyone. There is no special person who is any more special than anyone else. If you look around my office you will see that I have no autographs. There is one someone sent
me of Elvis, but that is not his. I have lots of notes from people, but I don’t put those things up. Gayle Sayers is a good friend of mine. Gayle, as you may know, was an all-pro, a Hall of Famer in football. I don’t have Gayle’s autograph, but he was a student of mine. Wilt Chamberlain was a classmate of mine and a good friend of mine, and I don’t have Wilt’s autograph. So if we look at my specialized areas in physical education and athletics, Congressman Jim Ryan has spoken in my class. Jimmy and I go way back.

Bill Mills is an Olympic champion in the 10,000-meter run. Bill is a friend of mine. We went to school together. I don’t see those guys on a lot of occasions, but the list goes on and on. They are no more special, I only mention them because everyone knows them. But do you know Katy or Johnny? They are all special people. That is the essence of teaching.

Q.: Do coaches take sabbaticals, or isn’t that applicable?

A: I don’t think so. They coach 13 months out of the year. I don’t think that ever happens. I’ve never had a sabbatical. As an academic appointment here, it was always nine months. That’s typical. The three months in the summer you would have off. I never had a summer off because I worked at the Aquatic Center and I had athletics as well. My gymnasts had to work out during the summer, as do most sport teams. They have some type of workout. I had a lot of supervision that way. I don’t think I ever took a vacation and certainly not a sabbatical.

Q.: I don’t suppose coaches do publications either.

A: Some coaches do. Most of the things that I did were things like high school graduations and honor awards, where you go and be the keynote speaker, things like that. As a coach I think I represented the university well in things like that. I is always nice to go
somewhere and represent the University of Kansas. To some people that is maybe the chance to realize some of their dreams. Here is someone from KU coming to a small western Kansas town. The chancellor and our dean now do visitations throughout all of Kansas to expose us to rural and western Kansas and vice versa. So we did things like that. I was pretty active in the Gymnastics Association, not as an officer but in presentations and clinics and things like that. I did a lot of that. I wrote a book that I self-published called Tumbling Time. It was a color book for kids. I tried some things like that. I have a couple of inventions and one is patented.

Q.: What is it?
A: It is a pole vault trainer. It is called a Aswinger. It is a preliminary thing that hooks on a horizontal bar so that pole vaulters can get the drag after the pole plant. It is really a good thing. Our vaulters here at KU practice quite a bit on the prototype that I built. It is patented. I don't know what will happen with it, if anything. Some big name people, Olympians and what not, have used it and trained on it and swear by it. So that is a good thing. That is fun, not that I really need to make any money off anything. It is just fun to create something and find that, yes, it really works and really helps.

Q.: Were you on University committees?
A: I was involved for a long time on the scholarship committee for the School of Education. That was a big thing that I liked to serve on as well as department committees. I was on several department committees throughout the years. We all shared in that. As far as University committees, I didn't seek election to the Athletic Board, or something like that, although I had great interest and had some support for it. As a former coach, I felt I probably shouldn't do things like that. The Scholarship Committee was basically it,
other than department committees.

Q.: Have you had honors? You mentioned the honor you were given when you retired from the pool. Anything else?

A: Well, I’ve had a lot of awards that have come my way, more so in the last five years. I was a collegiate All-American in volleyball and was a national scoring leader in gymnastics. Those are nice. Some more recent awards are: KU Sport Management HSES Teacher of the Year Award 2000, Del Shankel Teaching Award Finalist 1998, Joyce Elaine Pauls-Morgan Faculty Teaching Excellence Award and stipend, 1997. I think in the end some of the better things, more meaningful things for me, were awards that were based on my advising of students, from the Athletic Department, what I had done with student athletes and what I have done with Special Olympics.

Q.: Oh, you were also involved with Special Olympics?

A: Well, we did special Olympics here and I was the gymnastic consultant for them for several years for the coaches, training and advising them on their routines, things like that. I have been recognized quite a bit in the sport of gymnastics. I received a national award called the Cowan Award, which went to me for my service to sport. I have had several state awards. Recently, I received the L. R. Perry Award. It was a surprise to me to get that for my years. I guess the culmination of it all was this past year in December I was inducted into the KU Sports Hall of Fame. That was kind of a final thing. It is something I had never thought about, never in my wildest dreams. You know, my picture will be in Allen Fieldhouse like Wilt’s and Jo Jo White, like Gayle Sayer and Johnny Hadl, like Paul Pierce and Ray Lafrenz, those guys who earned that right. I was chosen to be a keynote speaker on learning strategies for the Final Four in volleyball a few years
back. I did that down in Austin, Texas. It was really an honor for me, after I had finished my coaching career, to walk in with all those great coaches around, some of the top ones in the country for our Olympic team and everything, and talk to them about how people learn. It was really an honor to do that because I was chosen. It was certainly not a money thing. It was just a great honor to do that. There have been a lot of things like that, but I really haven’t counted them.

Q.: Are you a member of professional organizations?

A: As we became more specialized, our national phys ed organization, I was a member of that for a long time and all the coaching associations, the Kansas Gymnastic Association for our own state. Back then it was called the USGF, the gymnastic federation. In most of my career I was a volleyball official, at the national level for a time. I was a gymnastics official at the national for a long time. I have judged international competitions. So I have been involved in the Gymnastics Association, both as a coach and as an official.

Q.: Since you still have an office here, I assume you still have involvement with KU.

A: Well, I do. During my year of retirement, what has happened in the department is that Wayne Osness was asked to come back and be the interim chairman. He and I retired last year, as well as three other faculty members. So five of us retired at one shot. We, of course, haven’t hired replacements yet. I agreed to come back and be a consultant for the department in facility matters, and I would continue to assist my students who needed more advising. I would try to do that whenever I could come back. I am currently in Little Rock, Arkansas. My wife is a physician there. She is a resident doctor.

Q.: So you have remarried. What is her name?
A: Lillian. Lillian was a nurse. Her first husband passed away. He died of cancer. She wanted to be an oncology doctor. She became a nurse after that. I met her at a gymnastics meet and we have been married since 1988. We are approaching our 14th year of marriage. We have no children. She is a resident physician now as we speak at the University Medical Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, in emergency medicine. She graduated from KU Med Center. She will finish her residency in May of 2003. She will then come back to the state of Kansas and she will practice here somewhere. She is on a Kansas Medical Scholarship, which means that she is obligated for the three years she received the scholarship from the state of Kansas, and will pay that back to them year for year. So we will remain Jayhawks, even though we are down in Arkansas land right now. That=s what we plan to do.

Q: What would your assessment be of your department here or KU, past, present, hopes for the future, that kind of thing?

A: I teach The History and Foundation of P.E. Classes. It is big class with a lot of students that I have taught, and I am really interested in KU history, particularly when it involves athletics and physical education. I have seen the change in the department from a few members who were so involved with athletics to the specialization that has happened in physical education. Biomechanics is a separate area. Exercise Physiology is a separate area. Health is a separate area. At one time it was all physical education. So the specialties of it have been interesting and the advanced degrees that we now offer are exceptional. And the technology part of it has changed so much. The department and the university, of course, have great tradition and great prestige, in spite of the rough times that we are in now. We=ve had those times before. I am worried for our public schools
right now and for our universities. We are taking five or six percent off of the financial base here at KU. That is a terrible cut. The Lawrence Public Schools are not cutting, they are slicing, they are mutilating their budgets right now. I don’t know whose fault it is. I don’t know that you can point fingers. The school boards are just handicapped right now. What a terrible job that must be for those people. But I think the mission of the University and the mission of our department is excellent. I think we are still in the people business. I think that is still important. I think KU still recognizes that society needs teachers, we still need to produce teachers, and we as faculty members need to be teachers and be role models. I like that. We’ve haven’t gone so far as to say we only do research. Certainly we agree that we all need to do service. I like that mission.

Q.: Okay, I think that’s about it unless you have something else to add.

A: Here is some information I ran off for you. If it would be helpful to you, please take it.

Q.: Thank you very much.