

BEGIN SIDE ONE

PRY: . . . place to start is with your career at Michigan State, with special emphasis on sort of how . . . on its impact on what you would do later. And I guess the first question I would have is when you were playing as a player, did you intend to make a career out of football at the time, or did you have other plans? You said . . . told me earlier that you were in ROTC.

KUSH: Yeah. Mark, like most college students, I had no concept of what I was going to do after I graduated school. In addition to that, I had no idea what I was going to do when I WENT to school, because coming from a coal mining area of Pennsylvania, you were fortunate to GO to college. You had no idea of what your career was going to be. So when I went -- ironically, I might mention I went to Washington and Lee in Virginia for one semester, and I was out of my element economically, which Washington and Lee was a private institution.

PRY: Did you play football there?

KUSH: Yes, I played football. I had an opportunity . . . I had a scholarship there, and I also had a scholarship at Michigan State. And I decided to go to Washington and Lee because I was not a very big individual. Even though I received quite a few high school honors, I had numerous scholarships, and then I selected Washington and Lee because it was a smaller institution and I thought I would have a better opportunity to play. And of course the coach was Carl Lewis -- one of the assistant coaches -- and Pappy Lewis -- were very aggressive people, and they kind of pulled about six or seven of us out of Pennsylvania and hauled us off down to Washington and Lee in August. As I said, I

stayed there for one semester. Then I transferred to Michigan State. I might add that Michigan State had offered me a scholarship previously also.

PRY: What made you decide to go?

KUSH: To Michigan State? (PRY: Yeah.) Well, when I said earlier I was out of my element economically, I came from an underprivileged family. In fact, my dad had passed away when I was fifteen. There were ten of us at home, and I was the oldest one.

PRY: Were you the first in your family to take college?

KUSH: Yes, I was the first from the Kush family in college. The great thing about it, though, was my dad was quite a disciplinarian, and he required all of us to go to school. And I have older brothers and sisters, four older brothers and sisters. They all received their high school degrees, and then all of my younger brothers -- which was very abnormal at that time. I'm talking about in the '30s and '40s. (PRY: Right.) And so even though we were an impoverished family. . . . We had no electricity, we had no hot water, we were lucky to eat three meals as we know 'em today, per day -- again, because of the existence of the situation in the coal mines, et cetera. So anyway, so I went to Washington and Lee with that concept. And then after one semester, I transferred TO Michigan State, which was probably the January of 1948.

PRY: So who was the coach when you were at Michigan State?

KUSH: Duffy Dougherty recruited me. He was one of the assistant football coaches at Michigan State, almost like a father to me. And that's probably why I turned to him, from Washington and Lee. And Biggie Munn was the head coach -- a very knowledgeable coach. In fact, when you're playing, you have no concept of the offense or the defense,

the structure, the strategy, et cetera, and I really got to appreciate Biggie Munn. He was a very successful coach, and played at Minnesota in the '30s. At Michigan State he had a great deal of success. In fact, the teams that we were on, from my sophomore year to my senior year, we only lost one football game, and it was our sophomore year. We got beat pretty handily by an outstanding Maryland team. But then we were together as a team for quite a few years -- in fact, a good three years -- and by the time we were seniors, I think we held about six or seven teams in minus yardage. We were very athletic, we had quite a few youngsters that received all types of honors. In fact, I was fortunate and I received All American honors, and it kind of paved the way for, maybe warmed my interest in football and the possibility of coaching.

PRY: Now, you played line, I believe?

KUSH: Yes, I played both offense and defensive line. In fact, in high school at that time, you played both ways. And then when I went to college, my sophomore year, you played one way, which I played defense. Then they changed the rules again my junior year, which would have been I guess about 1951, and I was playing some both ways. And then my senior year, I started off playing both ways until they developed another offensive guard, then I stayed on defense, and that's where I was probably best suited, because I had more knowledge and more experience, and we were pretty well a sound defensive football team. We had a lot of experienced players and developed a very proficient football team.

PRY: You weren't exactly big then?

KUSH: No, I was about 175, 180 pounds. I was quick and slow. (chuckles) You put that together. Slow for long distance, quick for short distance. And probably the greatest asset that I had was my instinctive capabilities as a defensive player. On offense, I was very well schooled. I had some of the best coaching, I think, and I look back at it, the high school coaches we had in Pennsylvania were outstanding. And because of that, I was well drilled in the fundamentals, so when I did go to college, I was able to play both ways and be pretty proficient at it, because, as I said, because of the teachings I had from the time that I was in high school.

PRY: Uh-huh. Now, you said that at the time you were in college you didn't have a particularly clear idea of what you would be doing, or where you'd be going. Was the military one of the possible careers you were thinking about?

KUSH: Well, at that time I wasn't thinking of professional football. The number one factor I was thinking of is education, getting your degree. At that time, the priorities were certainly education, socially second, and then, of course, athletics third. And I think that has changed dramatically over the years. Of course all your priorities were to do a good job academically -- you know, to retain your scholarship and stay in school and certainly get a degree, because coming from the type of a background that I came from, I can see what an education would mean to any individual, what opportunities it would provide. And I would say that the greatest asset about football at that time, it was an opportunity to continue my education, and to change my lifestyle, which theoretically, if I would have stayed in that coal mining area, I probably would end up in the coal mines. And so, again, this was a great opportunity for me not only to help myself, but to help my family.

PRY: So you saw it as a ticket out of the mines, then, basically?

KUSH: There's no question about it. And the community did a great deal. I seemed to be going back to Pennsylvania, to Windber. But the community, even though it was a very structured community, the schools were very disciplined, and education was very significant at that time. And so you can envision what it would mean to, if you DID not get a high school degree, or you DID not go to college, what type of future would you have? I worked on the railroad for many years, from the time I was 14 years of age, and I've been IN a coal mine -- I haven't officially worked there -- but my dad was a coal miner, he died at a young age of 51 from miner's asthma. So I had the opportunity to be exposed to the . . . what I would call both sides of the coin. People that went on to school -- there weren't too many from that community, although there was one fellow that was a high school teacher. He used to walk to school and I used to watch him. I thought, "Maybe I want to be like him someday." I'm talking about from the standpoint of economics and security and the lifestyle.

PRY: Yeah. So after you finished at Michigan State, you then went into the army. You said that you ended up coaching with the base team at Fort Benning, is that right?

KUSH: Yes, at Fort Benning, Georgia. I went in as an infantry officer through ROTC, as you had mentioned previously, and we had taken ROTC for two reasons. Number one, you were preparing yourself to go into the military, which we were all required to do. In addition to that, they paid \$27.50 a month for ROTC, which at that time was a horrendous amount of money. So I did go into the military as a distinguished military student. I went to Fort Benning, Georgia, which is the infantry school, and went through the basic

training for officers. And then I was about ready to go overseas, and they found out that I was a football player, because I had an opportunity to play in the old Chicago All-Star game. And because they were having so many problems with supposedly coddling athletes, I wasn't permitted to go to the All-Star game in Chicago. And I was finishing up my schooling, and they found out about my athletic ability, so they assigned me to play and coach at Fort Benning, Georgia, for the school brigade. The commanding officer, General Fritchie, was a bit of a football -- sports -- fanatic, I SHOULD say. And so he enjoyed sports. So we had quite an outstanding team. In fact, we had just a horrendous number, like Joe Fortunado, Yell Larry Donnelson, people that played pro ball, et cetera, and quite a few former college players. And the interesting thing about it was you were only permitted to play on a field at one time, out of the eleven starting players on the field, you were only allowed to have five officers, because we were loaded with talent out of the infantry school. And so that was the first year. I believe we only lost one ball game. The second year, I was a coach and a player -- and more of a coach. Did I know anything about coaching? I would say very little, but when you get good players, you find out you can be a pretty good coach. So we went undefeated the next year. And we played some very fine football teams. In fact, the infantry school, as well as the 101st Airborne, the 508th Airborne, had a football team, and there were a number of service teams throughout the Southeast, so we had an opportunity to play 'em. So I was there for two years at Fort Benning, Georgia, and then I had the opportunity -- I had no idea what I was really going to do -- I probably was going to go back to Michigan State and probably be working on my master's degree.

PRY: In what?

KUSH: Well, at that time I would imagine it probably would have been physical education and biology, because I had a minor in biology and a major in physical education.

PRY: With the idea that you would teach _____.

KUSH: Yeah. And again, because I had no specific goals or no concept of what various occupations offered. It was just kind of one of those things. "These guys are taking phys. ed., maybe I should take phys. ed." That's the way it developed, and which I did, and I received a degree in education, and also I was able to, I had a minor in biology. So then I . . . Dan Devine had acquired the job at Arizona State. And I might add that Dan was a graduate assistant while I was playing at Michigan State, and I really didn't know him, but I was very close to Duffy Dougherty, who was now the head coach at Michigan State. Biggie Munn, who had been OUR head coach, now was the athletic director. So Dan Devine is going to receive the job at Arizona State COLLEGE at that time. Notice I said "college," it wasn't a university. And Duffy Dougherty called me up and asked me would I be interested in coaching?, that Dan Devine had a position open at Arizona State. I had no idea -- I knew Arizona was out in the West, but I had no concept of Arizona whatsoever -- I'm talking about the climate. I knew some general information about it. So I talked to Dan Devine and I accepted it. At that time I had my wife and my oldest son presently, Danny -- ironically, who was our kicker at Arizona State -- he was only about, oh, I'd say maybe a month or so old. So he and my wife went to Michigan, to her folks' place, 'til I got organized. And I drove and drove and drove and drove from Fort

Benning, Georgia, to Tempe, Arizona. And I never thought I was going to get here. And when. . . . The amazing thing about it, when I came through the towns of Globe, Miami, and Superior (PRY: Look familiar?), I said to myself, "Good gosh, what have I got myself into?! if this is any indication of what Tempe is going to be like! I worked my way through college to get OUT of that kind of environment, and I'm right back in it again." So anyway, it was on a Sunday that I came into Tempe. And at that time, there weren't any buildings to speak of between, say, many miles in Tempe and Mesa. Well, anyway, I drove into Tempe and went right through Tempe. There wasn't too many people on the streets Sunday morning. And I got around, oh, about 48th Street and nothing there. I kept going and I got down to 24th Street, and there was a police officer there, and I pulled over and asked him, I said, "I'm looking for Arizona State College in Tempe." He said, "Which way did you come from?" And I explained to him. He said, "Well, you went right by it." He said, "If you turn around and you go by it, you'll see a dormitory on the left-hand side, and right next to that's the football field. So I turned around and came back. I saw the dormitory as you come around Mill Avenue, and make that big turn, where presently is Gammage Hall, then of course the dormitory there, if I'm not mistaken, was Hayden Hall. And I came there, saw the dormitory, and then I looked for the football field. Of course, playing at Michigan State, we had a pretty good-sized stadium. Playing down at Michigan, we were playing at South Bend for a number of years. So I was looking for a pretty good-sized stadium. When I went by the dormitory and right across the street was old Goodwin Stadium.

PRY: And that was not a large stadium.

KUSH: No, it held about, I'd say maybe 13,000-14,000 if they're standing in the aisles, et cetera, and everything else. And I said to myself, "Good gosh!" again. "This is college?!"

PRY: I guess you were used to big time Big Ten football, right?

KUSH: Oh, yeah, exactly right. Every place we went was first class. We played . . . we were national champs, we played [University of] Michigan, we played Notre Dame. In fact, ironically, we beat Notre Dame three years in a row. Well, we beat most teams, except that one game against Maryland. So we were playing big time football. Then I came to Arizona State and I thought to myself, "This is big time football?!" So anyway, I drove onto campus. I was looking for any kind of a building, looking for activity. You know, there's not too many college students that are up Sunday morning. Being a college student myself, I recalled what we were doing the Saturday nights. But anyway, so I drove around and I went into this building, it looked like a barracks. I was familiar with it because it came out of the military. It was the student union at that time. They did not have a student union, they just had an old building. I think the roaches were probably as big as the building. So I walked around, went in there and kind of introduced myself to people. Of course no one knew who I was, or it wouldn't make any difference anyway.

And then I finally tracked down Coach Devine, Bob Kerry, Tom Fletcher, and Al Onofrio, who are gonna be the coaches. And that's how I came to Arizona State.

PRY: What kind of football program did Arizona State College have at the time?

Obviously, it was smaller.

KUSH: It was small. They had some great athletes. Clyde Smith, the former athletic

director and head coach at that time, was an outstanding recruiter. They had some individuals, like John Henry Johnson that transferred when St. Mary's dropped football, he was picked up here, and he eventually went to the Pittsburgh Steelers and 49ers. And they had Bobby Mulgado, Sid Lar, Dave Grabel, who I thought was one of the great all-time athletes I've ever seen. He was a great basketball player, great football player, and great baseball player. Those are the kind of athletes that they had. Unfortunately, at that time, they did not receive the recognition. I thought that they were as good of athletes here at Arizona State College at that time, that we had at Michigan State that received quite a few All-American honors and national championships. I think Dave Grabel could have played with ANYBODY. Gene Mitchum to me was probably one of the [most] outstanding athletes I'd EVER seen. So they had numerous people like that. Clancy Osburne. And then, of course, we recruited extensively, embellished the program, but I think that they had a good foundation here from the time that we came. I'm talking about Dan Devine, _____ Clyde Smith, and the previous people. The Sun Angel organization was quite active in the entire recruiting process, but they didn't get involved on a personal basis where you'd have any trouble with the alums. But as a general rule, they were extremely beneficial, providing support to the program, et cetera. And the rules were quite different then than they are now, or when I coached in the latter years of the '70s and everything else. You could do a lot of things that you could not do presently, so I think they were able to build a very sound athletic program. In fact, I might add that the track program was outstanding, and they were developing the baseball program with Bobby Winkles. And the same way with Ned Wulk, they brought HIM in. So you can

see the future. I mean, they had a vision, and they had the competent people and coaches who were able to develop a good, sound foundation in all athletic programs.

PRY: So was the vision that they wanted to develop a big time university athletics, was that it?

KUSH: Yes, but you know the interesting thing about it, "big time" at that time meant beating the U of A. (laughter)

PRY: Was that made clear right after you got here?

KUSH: Oh, yeah, I'll tell you what, we lost our first year to the U of A, 7-6. I'll never forget that. They had a real fine running back in Arlo Peeno Ward, and Woodson was the coach. We may have had one or two losses that year, but I remember that so vividly. Everything was so ingrained into beating the U of A, and of course it was our first year, so we were not that aware of what it meant to the community, what it meant to the state, what it meant to the institutions. But we learned in a hurry, and there was no question in my mind that you develop that intimate relationship of hate (chuckles) for the U of A, any segment of it. The two communities were polarized, also. It was Tucson and Phoenix, and political, I'm talking about educationally, any type of social programs, work programs, et cetera and everything else, and there still is quite a bit of that animosity that goes on between the two communities. And of course this area in the Phoenix metropolitan area has developed so dramatically, but at that time the people were fairly closely involved with Arizona State College. I'm talking about the various organizations,

the community, the City of Tempe was almost like a marriage with Tempe and certainly Arizona State College at that time.

PRY: What was it like to play in Goodwin Stadium at the time? Did you fill it up?

KUSH: Oh, yes. We. . . . Yeah, because of, as I said earlier, I mentioned the former coach, Clyde Smith, who was now the athletic director, did a good job, we had good athletes, and we won, which, they'll come if you win. And so I think our first year we lost maybe one or two ball games at the most, and the next year we were undefeated, the following year we were undefeated. And we had sell-outs. It was great. At that time, Mark, the community was involved extensively. It was a social event to go to Sun Devil football games.

PRY: They were all Friday nights?

KUSH: No, they were Saturday nights.

PRY: The high schools were playing Friday nights?

KUSH: High schools would play on Fridays, and then we would play on Saturdays, and it would be a sell-out for every ball game. And a sell-out at that time was maybe 15,000-16,000. I shouldn't say 16,000, probably more like 15,000, 'cause it was a small stadium. And then when I had taken over, when Dan Devine received the opportunity to go to Missouri, he offered me the job to go with him as his line coach. At that time, George Morell, Jimmy Creasman, Gilbert Cady, and Joel Benedict, and Dr. Gammage kind of ran the institution. Those four guys, I used to call 'em "the inner mafia," and I use that word loosely, 'cause they kind of ran the institution. So they talked to me -- I should say Jimmy Creasman and George Morell talked to me about becoming the head coach. And I was

just a young kid, I think I was about 28 years old at the time, and I said, "Well, I've committed myself to Coach Devine." I said, "Let me go talk to him and see what he thinks, and if he would release me, it seems appropriate." So anyway, I went and talked to Dan, and he was opposed to it. Although his wife, Jo -- I'll never forget this -- I was at his house because he lived only a couple of blocks from me in Tempe, and talking to him and telling him what they had offered me, et cetera -- it wasn't very much money, which I'll talk about later. Then Jo intervened and said. . . . Dan was kind of opposed to it, he thought I was too young, et cetera, and everything else.

PRY: He thought you needed more experience?

KUSH: He thought I needed more experience, and in addition to that, he felt that I had obligated myself to him to go to Missouri with him. So bein' the young buck that I was. . . . Then Jo intervened and said to Dan, "You know, you should release him and give him an opportunity, because you always wanted to be a head coach, and you were relatively young when you became a head coach," which he did release me. So I went and talked to the various people at Arizona State and talked to Dr. Gammage. My salary at that time was \$9,000 -- a big spend. But the interesting thing about it, going back, when I first came here out of the military, my salary was \$4,500, and I was working on my master's degree. In addition to that, working a side job to make ends meet. So \$9,000 seemed like -- I think I got \$9,000 or \$9,500 -- seemed like a horrendous amount of money at that time for a young guy. So that's where it all started.

PRY: Were you eager to become a head coach, or did you have mixed feelings, given your experience? How did you approach that?

KUSH: Well, Mark, probably the word is serendipity, and also being naive, and being an aggressive person, which I always had been. It probably was the right opportunity at the right time. I probably was not aware of my limitations or what I potentially COULD do. But because the background that I DID have -- I'm talking about my high school athletic background, my Michigan State background, my military background -- it all combined. And then the learning I acquired from Dan Devine and the coaching staff HERE, I was fortunate because once I'd taken over I found out that, yes, I was. I didn't know this prior to taking the job. I just was taking the job because it was offered to me. And I found out that I was very . . . a fundamentally sound coach. I was a fundamentalist, a teacher of the basics of the game, and I think that's probably what carried us through over the years, and that great work ethic, as far as the recruiting, which was a VERY key factor, because we recruited extensively, besides Arizona, out of state, and Pennsylvania. We didn't recruit California at that time, because we got very few youngsters out of California. They thought going to Arizona was like going into the boondocks in the desert from California. We got some youngsters from Blythe, and say, like, Indio, and the same way with Yuma. But as a general rule, we primarily recruited the state of Arizona number one, and then, number two was Pennsylvania and the East, because the youngsters wanted to get out of the winter areas and have the possibility of coming out to Arizona. At that time we had no visitations or anything else, so you kind of conned them into coming. You made up your own little guide and little press book.

PRY: So you talked about palm trees and things like that?

KUSH: Palm trees and used to show 'em "Tempe Beach." That's when Tempe Beach was right along the Salt River.

PRY: There was still water in the river then, right?

KUSH: Well, no, same as it is now, but they called it Tempe Beach, and they had a swimming pool right across Monti's, and that's all it was, a swimming pool (chuckles), but they called it Tempe Beach. (chuckles) I used to get a kick out of that, we'd take pictures of it, and you could literally go and show the grass and the sand from the river bank, but there wasn't any water in the river (chuckles) when you show these pictures. To the youngsters, say, back East, and the palm trees, I'm sure they started swaying and swooning and thinking this is the place for them to go. I think once they came out here, they found out holy gosh almighty, it was closer to hell than it was Palm Beach.

PRY: It was still a small town, basically a farming town with the college in the middle of it, right?

KUSH: I think the college at that time was probably about 5,200 students, and Tempe was about eight to ten thousand people. And Phoenix was certainly not as large. There was quite a bit of open space between Phoenix and Tempe. I'm talking about the Papago Park area, and I'm talking down to 48th Street, and all of those were. . . . Tovrea's was the last building. In fact that castle -- we call it a castle -- that sits there, was kind of the earmark between Tempe -- it sat up on a little knoll there, and everything else was barren east of it and west of it and north of it and south of it. Tempe was, in many respects, a small community, very, I would say, a combination of farming and college-orientated [sic] people.

PRY: Well, once you became head coach, did you have an idea what sort of a team you wanted to develop, or did that take time? I mean, did you want to have a team that emphasized defense or offense, that would have a personality in any way?

KUSH: Well, I would say this, I think the personality, at the young age that I was, in my opinion, I don't think you really have any idea of what you are really like. (PRY: Right.)

I don't think I could say Frank Kush at that time was a fundamentalist or a disciplinarian or a offensive coach or a defensive coach. And I think all of those various personalities that influence my background in athletics, especially in football, I was part of all of it.

I'm talking about my high school coaches were fundamentalists and disciplinarians. My dad also was quite a disciplinarian. Going on to Michigan State, they created a desire for you to want to be successful, and what it takes to BE successful. And I'm talking about the goal setting, I'm talking about the preparation, the concentration, and all of those factors. And then the same thing prevailed at Michigan State. I knew what it would take to develop winning programs. I'm talking, in my opinion, and I guess I carried that on to the military, and also when I came to Arizona State with Coach Devine. You know, he had been at Michigan State, so it was just a continuation of that program. We did use Michigan State's multiple offense. It was very complicated, very sophisticated, and the players had to be, you know, very knowledgeable about their responsibilities. And at that time did I know I was gonna be this type of a coach and that type of a coach? -- because I played defense primarily, and I ended up being an offensive coach, because I'd just kind of taken over the leadership of the offense and coached the quarterbacks. And the same way with the running backs. My previous experience had been with the line, and I still

was a pretty effective offensive and defensive line coach, because we only had four coaches at Arizona State when Dan Devine came in.

PRY: Including the head coach?

KUSH: No, five including the head coach. And the assistants were Tom Fletcher, Bob Kerry, Al Onofrio, and myself. Dan Devine was the head coach. And when I'd taken over, we had the same type of numbers. Dick Tamburo, one of my former players at Michigan State, I brought him in; Paul Kemp and Chuck Fairbanks who went on to have a great deal of success in the college and pro ranks. Dick was an athletic director at many institutions, including Arizona State. And Paul Kemp went on to coach at Iowa. And so Gene Falker and several others that we had in that era. But as I said, we had a limited number of coaches, which was fine, so you coached two or three positions, which you HAD to do at that time.

PRY: Yeah. Now, during the mid '50s -- well, actually, it would be starting in the late '50s -- was ASU already going up to [Camp] Tontozona for summer camp?

KUSH: No, the interesting thing about Tontozona -- my high school football team goes to a pre-season training camp like the pros do. It's called Camp Hamilton in Pennsylvania. It used to belong to the Pittsburgh Steelers.

END SIDE ONE

BEGIN SIDE TWO

KUSH: . . . as I mentioned, our high school team. So we were indoctrinated in the pre-season training camp. Well, Arizona State College at that time had this little camp -- it really wasn't a camp, it was kind of a retreat for the faculty, and Dr. Gammage had a cottage up at Tontozona, which was right up at Payson, right next to Kohl's Ranch. And we went up there fishing on Tonto Creek, and I saw this facility. There was no football field there, it was kind of a hill. And I thought to myself, "Boy, this would be a fantastic place for a pre-season training site, as we had in high school." And so I went back and kind of checked out on some general aspects of it and everything else, and our athletic director at that time, Clyde Smith, I knew I had to present a number of statistics to prove why we should go there. So my whole point, my entire point of selling the administration on the program was the weather, the contrast between practice down in the valley in pre-season training in August, and, say, training in the mountains in the cold breeze of the pine trees. Well, when I first came here -- to regress slightly -- I thought to myself, "Good gravy, how can these players ever take this conditioning through these adverse [conditions], heat and everything else?" And I just couldn't imagine how they could wear full pads. So I checked out the temperatures and the contrast of the temperatures between Payson and down in Tempe, and I kind of sold it. But the interesting thing about it was I didn't ask anybody, I just, as young people are, you're very aggressive, et cetera, and everything else. The road between Payson and Kohl's Ranch at that time was a dirt road. And Tanner Brother Construction Company was building it. And after I saw this site down there, and I asked -- I went to the foreman of Tanner Brothers, and I introduced

myself, and I knew Mr. Tanner had been a Sun Angel, which was the booster group. And I said, "What's the possibility of getting this fill down here kind of leveled off, et cetera, and made into a football field?" He said, "Well, let's go take a look at it." So we went down -- say this was a Thursday or so. . . .

PRY: Is this before you had approval from. . . .

KUSH: I didn't have approval for anything! (chuckles) I just thought, "Boy, this would be great!" As I said, the remarkable thing about it is I didn't make anybody aware of what I was planning to do. The reason I say, "I," I didn't want to blame anybody else, blame the other coaches, because it was my fault. And so we went down there and the guy said to me, "We'll bring a machine down, if you could have your coaches here and help us out, et cetera and everything else, because. . . ." And he brought one of those big carry-alls, you know, one of those big digging machines that had the bottom that just closes, and you level off the dirt. But going down to Kohl's Ranch on that dirt road along Tonto Creek there, there were wires from one side of the road to the other, and we had to get up there to lift 'em up with sticks, et cetera, so this big dirt remover could get down there. So anyway, they get down there, and we spent, I'd say, the better part of a Saturday morning, leveling off the fill. I'm talking about leveling off, and we put barbed wire fence around it -- not that immediate day -- put barbed wire fence on it. And Mrs. Gammage -- this was on a Saturday -- we went back up there the following Saturday, and no one was aware of what we did! (laughs) And that was the funny part about it. When I say, "tear it down," because it wasn't anything that it is presently. . . . In fact, the buildings were Dr. Gammage's cottage, which was the same cottage; the old dining hall, the dining hall

there presently, right across the creek, if you recall, was the dining hall and sleeping quarters; and then they had dormitories, they called them "A," "B," "C," and "D," and that's all it is. And then he had some up on that hill where they now have dormitories. The Architect[ure] Department had built some design buildings in there, just canvas-covered buildings. Anyway, so -- and then after we got this all done, put up the barbed wire fence and leveled off the field, et cetera and everything else, I went to Clyde Smith, the athletic director, and told him what a great opportunity this would be for pre-season training. Well, he turned it down. And the acting president at that time was Dr. Richardson. And evidently, I'm sure he talked to Clyde Smith, and HE turned it down. Well, that didn't stop me there. I went to. . . .

PRY: Did they turn it down, knowing that you had already built the practice field?

KUSH: (laughing) No.

PRY: Okay. You were hoping that you'd get their approval, then tell them about the field, is that it?

KUSH: We didn't do much harm. We put a fence around it, we leveled it off. It was a pretty good playing area now, in contrast to what it was, because at that time it was only about 30 yards wide and probably about 70 yards long.

PRY: So it's not a full-sized football field?

KUSH: No, it was a hill. You'd have to see it previously and compare it now to see. It would be about half the size as it is now. But anyway, so I made these proposals and they turned 'em down. The University had not spent a penny on this at all. I mean, I'm talking about with the grader, I'm talking about with leveling the field, putting the grass in. I

mooched grass and put the barbed wire fence around it. They could have fired me over it (chuckles), very easily, for what we did. But anyway, so I went to Wynn Laney and O. D. Miller, who were on the Board of Regents at the time. And I talked to them -- I'm talking about the heat, et cetera and everything else, so they thought it was a good idea. And they said, "Well, have you got permission from the NCAA?" I said, "No, I have not, because, you know, I didn't think it was necessary." And they said, "Well, why don't you check with the NCAA?" So I called Walt Byers, who was the president of NCAA, at Kansas City. And he told me to send him some information, which I did. I got it to him immediately as you could. And he sent a letter back stating as long as there were no funds from outside sources being used to develop this program and camp, et cetera and everything else, that it would be all right. So I got the letter, showed it to O. D. Miller and Wynn Laney. Evidently they talked to Richardson and talked to Clyde Smith. And then Clyde Smith came to me and said, "You know, that's not such a bad idea, that football camp (laughing) _____." So that's how it all started, and that was in 1959.

PRY: In 1959. So that was really just a year after you. . . .

KUSH: Exactly, taking off.

PRY: When did you first use it for pre-season, in 1960?

KUSH: I think our first season was in '60, exactly. And it was a God-save in many respects, because you could practice. In fact, that's where WE started the concept of three practices a day, because the weather was just fantastic. We would go there. . . . The first year, I might add, we stayed too long, and we lost our first ball game to Wichita -- I'll never forget that -- BECAUSE I kept 'em there too long. We had a more difficult time

adjusting to the heat down in the valley, because when you came from Payson, say, the temperatures were during the daytime in the 80s -- say, 70s and 80s, et cetera, and really cool. And the key to it is the recovery from any strenuous activity up there, in football practice. And we stayed up there for about 12 or 14 days, and then came down. And boy, by the time we adjusted to the heat, it was at least a week-and-a-half. We lost our first ball game because of that. I blame myself for that, because even though it was a close ball game, our players were probably more exhausted than the Wichita players because it gets awful hot in Kansas in the summertime, but we're up in the cool country. They were more acclimated to playing in our climate than we were, because of staying up at Tontozona too long.

PRY: Now, this is right about the same time that Sun Devil Stadium was built. In fact, I believe the first game was played there in '58?

KUSH: Fifty eight. We played the first game, Mark, the first game of the 1958 season was in old Sun Devil Stadium. We played the University of Hawaii. We won that ball game. Then our next ball game, which was the second game of the season, we went and played West Texas. Joe Kirbal was the coach, and that was in Sun Devil Stadium. Sun Devil Stadium at that time held 30,000 people, and it was a beautiful stadium set between two mountains. And we won the game 16-13 if I recall, and they were a good football team. West Texas, Texas Western all had great athletes and fine football players. So that was our first ball game in Sun Devil Stadium in 1958. And as I said, the game was won.

PRY: What do you need in the program to get a new stadium like that?

KUSH: It was like the Messiah, meaning now you could sell, you could start talking about a bigger stadium, more intense program, the scheduling. You could start scheduling major teams, because of the guaranteed revenue that you can give 'em. The attendance went up dramatically, we sold _____ from 16,000 season tickets, I bet my bottom buck that we probably had 30,000 without any trouble. And then the stadium increased progressively as the years went on. But it meant horrendous -- as far as our recruiting, because you could bring youngsters in -- we still didn't have visitations at that time -- bring youngsters in and sell 'em on this beautiful Sun Devil Stadium, which I think it's one of the finer stadiums in the country.

PRY: Yeah. At the time, ASU football, that was the big time for sports in this area, right?

KUSH: It was THE thing in the metropolitan Phoenix area. When I say THE thing, it was the social activity to go to Saturday evenings. They were all sell-outs. They had a horrendous number of parties prior to the games, horrendous number of parties AFTER the ball games -- probably not as many after, because the games were played at nighttime, principally because of the weather. But the Saturday afternoon and early Saturday evenings, parties were just all through the valley, then everybody would come to Sun Devil football. And we had a horrendous following. We were "the only act in town," so to speak. The Suns weren't here, there wasn't any minor league baseball. So it was all ASU -- whether it was football, basketball, track, whatever it may be. That time of the year, it certainly was football.

PRY: The stadium was expanded over the years. (KUSH: Yeah.) I think two or three expansions, so that by the time you left as ASU coach, it held, I believe, nearly 70,000?

KUSH: About 71,000 -- had been increased to 72,000. Yes, it went through different stages. I think the first stage was 30,000, then 36,000, and then 52,000, and then if I recall, 70-some thousand. So, you know, the fortunate thing about it, it progressed as the need was seen for the progress and improvement of football, which the football program here -- the same way the other programs -- just became very competitive, we started playing nationally-recognized schedules, we received a horrendous amount of accolades. But the unfortunate thing about it -- I might add this -- in the '60s we had some great athletes and great programs, but we could not receive any national recognition for these athletes because we were playing night games. And by the time we finished a ball game, already in the East the papers were out on the street. And therefore we did not receive any. . . . For example, we had great players like Joe Zuger, Bobbie Mulgado. I mean, these guys went on to play professional football, were outstanding individuals. Osburne, Bart Jenkins, John Jenkins, Dave Grabel. I can mention names that are very common at that time as far as great athletic ability, but they never received any recognition, because, again, we played night ball games. And certainly we did not have the media coverage at that time, television. If we did have the media, it was just the local media. We were still playing, and they were probably delivering the papers out on the street back East. So again, a lot of them didn't receive any recognition. That was the entire '60s. I call it the "no recognition era."

PRY: Was it also the conference you were playing in?

KUSH: Well, the conference was probably, to me, we went through three conferences in my 25 years at Arizona State. (PRY: Right.) Originally the Border Conference (PRY: Right.) which were teams like Hardin Simmons, West Texas, Texas Western. Then we went to the WAC Conference, Western Athletic Conference, which was a combination of teams from the Southwest and teams from the northern area, called the Rocky Mountain area. I'm talking about the Utahs, the Colorado States, the Wyomings.

PRY: Was Colorado itself in that, or were they already in the Big Eight by then?

KUSH: Colorado was in the Big Eight. It was Colorado State, BYU, Utah, Wyoming, and Arizona State, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas-El Paso was on temporarily. And it was an outstanding conference. I might go back to the Border Conference. The Border Conference, they were great football players and great teams, but they were confronted with the same problem, because playing night games as we did, the recognition was limited because of the media coverage. So going into the WAC Conference, I think was a great boost from the standpoint of national recognition also. Although it was kind of, we played second fiddle, as far as recognition, to the Big Eight east of us, and the PAC Ten west of us. And we were sandwiched between the two. I call it the "afterthought in the Rocky Mountain area" in the southwestern area. So again, we still had that problem. And probably the break-through, more so than anything else, was in 1970 when we went to the first Peach Bowl game. NOW we started getting the recognition. In fact, I have a clipping downstairs where it says, "Now they'll know where Arizona State University is."

PRY: Did you win that game?

KUSH: Yes, we won the Peach Bowl. It was played down in Atlanta, Georgia. I might add that we had fantastic community support. The governor was there at the time. The various mayors of the cities. We literally bought our way into the Peach Bowl. We had to buy 10,000 tickets in order to get into the Peach Bowl, which we did, and then of course we didn't have 10,000 people from here -- we probably had about 5,000, but they gave the tickets to various nonprofit institutions, military, et cetera. So we did win the ball game. We played North Carolina University, and they were a great football team. We were outstanding, we had youngsters like Monroe E. Lee, J. D. Hill, Joe Spagnola, Junior Ah-You. The interesting thing about that ball game, I had anticipated, by checking the weather department, the weather conditions, prior to the ball game, and we found out it was supposed to rain, and I thought, "Good gravy, that's the last thing we need." So I asked the Georgia Tech people if we could use one session on the field where we could water it down and play in the mud for practice, which we did with a bucket. Had a bucket of water there and dipped a ball in it so our players would get accustomed to it.

PRY: That's right! I guess playing in wet weather is not something you do a lot of.

KUSH: No, not here, that's right. You can get accustomed to some outstanding football conditions here in Arizona. You know, there's great cool evenings, et cetera -- great for the players as well as the fans. So anyway, we played the North Carolina Tarheels, and they're beating us at half-time, 21-26 or something like that, and it's kind of drizzling and just miserable. We're playing well, but they're a good football team. We go in the locker room. I get into one of my normal half-time talks -- motivation, stimulation, and get on

'em and everything else. And I come outside, and what do you think it's doing? It's snowing! (claps hands) I thought to myself, "Good God Almighty! The Lord didn't like what I said at half-time." (laughs) So it's snowing, and we hadn't played in snow, so you could imagine with snow and cold and miserable and everything else. Well, anyway, we played well, we ended up beatin' 'em 48-26. As I said, that was the origin, in my opinion, of the recognition that Arizona State deserved, and this is the beginning of it from the standpoint of the various bowl games that we participated in.

PRY: Did television help to get more recognition?

KUSH: Yeah. _____, the television broadcasters at that time, and this is the first time that Arizona State had been televised on a so-called national network. So it was great recognition. It really enhanced your recruiting, because you could talk to youngsters about going to play in the bowl games, and we won the bowl game against an outstanding Division 1 football team, so it really meant a great deal to us.

PRY: Uh-huh. Now, by this point, did you have a coaching philosophy?

KUSH: Yes, definitely, no question about it.

PRY: What was it? Tell me a little bit about that.

KUSH: I would say I could see this coming on and progressing. The coaching philosophy that I acquired, I was basically a fundamentalist, teaching the fundamentals. As I said, I acquired all these from the previous schooling I've had at the various levels. A fundamentalist, and my concept, what I talk about, the regimen of discipline, the self-discipline, where the players become the leaders through THEIR experience and through their knowledge, but we as the coaches have to set the standard for them -- academically,

socially, and athletically. So I think this was our entire program, talking about being a fundamentalist, and having players progress and improve, which to me the gratification that one acquires out of coaching at the high school level and college level, in contrast to professional football, is the progress that the youngsters CAN make and you can see it. It's visual, whether they're throwing a football, whether they're catching a football, meaning visual, that you could see the progress. And this is the great gratification that I received over the years, is to see these youngsters and to see the progress they made in developing this into a cohesive unit. You talk about teamwork, you talk about the togetherness, the camaraderie, the tradition -- all of those things WERE developed, and this was part of the development that we had here at Arizona State that I acquired all of the years. So this is why we had the success -- in addition that we got good athletes. I could go on and talk about the Danny Whites, the Art Malones, the Benny Malones, Karl Keifers. You know, we had great athletes, and we were fundamentalists, we taught 'em the basics, and they progressed. And the key to it, in my opinion, is being able to recognize limitations in an athlete, and his potential. And you keep pushing him through the level where he gets the maximum out of his God-given ability -- both mentally and physically. And I'm talking about athletic ability. So that was the key to our program. There's no question we were probably one of the best fundamental teams in the nation.

PRY: Now, when you say getting . . . the emphasis was on getting the maximum out of your players, did that sometimes involve pushing them to do more than THEY thought they could do?

KUSH: Oh yeah, there's no question in my mind, you always have to do that. I saw this in the military, I saw this when I was a player, so I did push them to the limits. One of the shortcomings I had earlier in my coaching career, I did not recognize the limitations of players. And I probably ruined or broke a lot of players because I pushed them way beyond their capabilities, either mentally or physically, and they would -- as I said -- either quit or lose their desire. And that was no question in my mind. And I have one player in my mind, I probably destroyed a guy by the name of Mitch Ziskowski. I thought he was going to be a great football player, but I forced him too hard when he was a freshman. When I say "too hard," how? Well, by forcing him to compete with the Tony Loreks and Charlie Taylors who were seniors, were very competent and experienced players. And I learned, I made many mistakes, there's no question about it. And then I started acquiring the ability of, "Okay, how far can I push? The more that youngster had improved. . . ." Danny White's probably a good example. Now, he was a great athlete. I just kept pressin' him, kept pressin' him, kept pressin' him, demanding more. And the interesting thing about it, is as THEY progress, it goes from -- if they're outstanding individuals -- it goes from what I call regimented discipline to self-discipline, then the youngster's doin' it himself. He knows what it takes for him to improve and progress in the preparation. So yes, there's no question in my mind, do good athletic teams -- I don't care what sport it may be, or the good students, ANY student -- the key to it is, success to me, is getting the maximum out of that individual. I used to tell our players, "I don't care how much ability you have, how much potential you have. It's not what you have, it's what you get OUT of what you have." And I think that was the key to OUR success, was

also recognizing the limitations, and then working around that youngster's limitations. So getting him to fit into the system where he can have success. And there's no question in MY mind, that was the key TO our success at Arizona State all the years.

PRY: Now, as your coaching career progressed, you acquired a reputation. (KUSH: Yes.) In fact, I was looking at a *Sports Illustrated* article published in 1985 that referred to you as "Mr. Tough."

KUSH: Eighty-five?

PRY: Yeah, you were coaching the [Arizona] Outlaws at the time.

KUSH: Yeah, okay.

PRY: Now, when did you first become aware that you were acquiring a reputation as a disciplinarian?

KUSH: Well, Mark, it's really. . . .

PRY: This takes time to develop, right?

KUSH: Yeah, but I was always that way. When I look back at my career now, I played that way in high school, and I was coached that way in high school. I played and coached that way at Michigan State. I did the same thing when I was in the military as an infantry officer. I'm not talking about athletics, I'm talking about my responsibility. As I said, I LOVE to see people be successful. And this character is now developing, this doesn't happen overnight. I'm talking about from the time that I was a youngster. So yes, I developed a reputation for being very demanding, disciplined, tough, et cetera and everything else. But I didn't think I was.

PRY: When did you begin to see that other people saw you that way?

KUSH: Well, there was an article in *Sports Illustrated*. This had to be in the. . . I'll give you a good example. Go back to Tontozona. We used to go there. There's a hill they call Mount Kush.

PRY: Oh, that's up at Tontozona. Yeah, I saw a mention of it.

KUSH: Okay. Well, it never was Mount Kush, say, the first ten years or twelve years of Tontozona. It was just a hill, and I used to send our players up that hill after practice if they made mental mistakes. I was adamantly opposed -- and when I say "opposed," if a youngster made mental mistakes, that means he was not concentrating, he was not focusing, or WE, as coaches, did not prepare him properly. Take the first one first. And if they made those mental mistakes, they took their pads off, and they tried to jog up the hill -- there's no way you could jog up. You had a mountain, so to speak. And that was the punishment for screwin' up -- pardon the expression. Or takin' it through the different parts, around that Kohl's Ranch area, and run 'em. In fact, what I used to do -- this is before we started receiving all this recognition, see -- I would say, "Okay. . . ."

PRY: This would be in the mid '60s?

KUSH: Sixties, that's right. I was as demanding then as I was in the '70s. Then we started getting -- after the Peach Bowl -- then we started getting this recognition, and the media started coming in, the *Sports Illustrated* and all that. Now I'm developing a reputation of an Attila the Hun, see? (laughs) And I was the same guy I had always been, and I was quite demanding. As I said, I played that way and I coached that way. So where it really came about, as far as me being recognized as a disciplinarian or whatever, I would say once we started receiving national recognition, which was the Peach Bowl

game.

PRY: So it seems then that what you're suggesting is that this reputation is developed by the NATIONAL press.

KUSH: Is developed by the -- exactly right. For example, let's go back to that Mount Kush. It was never called Mount Kush -- the MEDIA called it Mount Kush. And then everybody started the war stories. I'll give you an example. I have a picture down. . . . Say, like Mount Suribachi. I don't know if you recall, during the Second World War, where the Marines captured Okinawa and put the flag up there. Well, there was a picture of us puttin' a flag on top, with the football players planting the flag on top of this so-called Mount Kush. (laughs) I still have a picture of it downstairs. It's kind of comical when I look at it, because we'd been doin' it all those years. But the media hype was fantastic. And then that's the kind of recognition we started getting. And it enhanced our recruiting because the players wanted to come, the parents wanted to send them to a disciplined program.

PRY: So the PARENTS were the ones who liked it?

KUSH: Yeah, the parents loved it, because they figured it was a disciplined program, the youngster's going to get an opportunity to develop and progress socially, academically, et cetera, 'cause I didn't put up with any nonsense OFF the field as well as on the field.

PRY: Yeah, let's talk about that a little bit. I mean. . . . So this extended to academics, for example?

KUSH: Definitely academics. If the youngster would cut classes -- at that time we had

no tutors, coaches were tutors. We had no what I call academic support. So if a youngster missed a class and the coaches had to check on whether they were going to class or not, if a youngster missed a class, I'd say, "Okay, I'll meet you the next morning at six o'clock in front of the stadium," and we'd go jogging through the desert. Then that would be the punishment for not going to class. If I found out those rascals would go back and go to sleep, we'd get 'em again. So that's what I did. And again, the whole concept was. . . . We had a GREAT player by the name of J. D. Hill. He only got involved in stealing some shoes out of the salesman's car and gave 'em to some gal. He was only a junior at the time, and I disciplined him and I says, "You cannot play football next year, but you will have your scholarship, a portion of it. I'm going to give you your tuition and fees, your board, you'll have eat[s], and you've gotta work for your rental of your dormitory." And so we kept him out the whole year. He could have gone to the Canadian League and signed a pretty good contract, and he desired to stay here. So another incident, anytime that we had disciplinary problems, we had a Judge Hennessey in Tempe, who was really great. I kinda got a kick out of him. If our youngsters got in any kind of Mickey Mouse problems, we'd put 'em in the Tempe jail over the weekend. Get 'em out -- put 'em in Friday night so they wouldn't have any social activities, and get 'em back out Monday morning to go to class. It taught 'em a lesson, and that would get around.

PRY: Oh, they couldn't do that, for a lot of reasons that just simply wouldn't be possible these days.

KUSH: Well, those are the type of things that we -- I should say I -- did. I don't mean to

say "I" as an ego thing, but I did, and I felt that I was the extension of their parents, that, when we recruited these kids. I'm talking about social responsibilities. We didn't put up with any nonsense. For example, drugs -- we had very little of it. We had six drug problems, marijuana. I gave them an opportunity to resolve their problems, and I got them medical advice, et cetera, and everything else. And I told 'em, "If you don't do it, if you don't straighten up your act, et cetera, and everything else, to the doctor's report and everything else, you're gonna lose your scholarship." Bing! Five of 'em lost their scholarship, because they did not change their habits. And so you were able to do that at that time.

PRY: Now, do you think generally that it was easier then to maintain this sort of control and influence over your players, than it would be now?

KUSH: Mark, I think it depends. Once you set the standard, in MY opinion, and I feel very strongly, you can do a horrendous number of things, like we DID do as far as making them accountable. I think that's the key to it. I think if they know the standards, they know the accountability. Otherwise, they won't come to your institution. And the good programs, you take right now, Notre Dame. Even though they may have their problems and everything else, you know what you're gonna get into. And I disagree with people that you say you have to be more liberal today, you don't have to be as demanding. I disagree with that concept. If I were coaching, I would demand the same type of discipline from the standpoint of wanting those youngsters to be successful. I'm talking about socially, I'm talking about academics, and I'm talking about athletics.

PRY: Yeah, one of the things I had in mind when I asked you that question is that Tempe

is simply -- it's a city now, it's not a town, so that just even knowing what students would be doing around town. . . .

KUSH: Oh yeah, they're all. . . .

END SIDE TWO

END OF INTERVIEW