

MR. ROY VAN NESS WITH DR. JOSEPH HERZSTEIN, ORAL HISTORY

HERZSTEIN: Good morning. I'm Joe Herzstein, Professor of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Trenton State College and it's my privilege to be here this morning, Friday, March the tenth, 1989 to interact with Roy Van Ness as a part of the college's living history series which was started in 1981 by Mr. Richard Matthews of our library. Roy Van Ness is a former student, athlete, teacher, coach and the first athletic director in the history of Trenton State College. Good morning, Roy.

VAN NESS: Good morning, Joe.

HERZSTEIN: It's a pleasure to have you with us. You certainly have had a long and distinguished career here at Trenton State College and it extends across quite a few decades. I'm wondering how long in years, if you are willing to share that with us, you have been associated with Trenton State College?

VAN NESS: Well, I guess I first came here Joe in about 1940 and we're sitting here 1989.

HERZSTEIN: Right.

VAN NESS: That's a gang of years.

HERZSTEIN: You bet. And you officially retired in what year?

VAN NESS: Two years ago, Joe. Two from '89 would bring around '87 I guess.

HERZSTEIN: So that's, if my calculations serve me correctly, almost a forty-seven year association with the Trenton State College community.

VAN NESS: Well there's a little hiatus in there to play war games.

HERZSTEIN: Okay and we'll deal with that as we go along. I'm wondering with your first association apparently with the college community in 1940, Roy, what were the circumstances involved with your coming to campus and some of the background associated with that.

VAN NESS: I can remember that Joe like it was yesterday. I came up with John Cowry who was my teacher down at Bordentown High School and he brought me up to the campus here at Hillwood and we met Earl Dean out on the track and there was the old Earl out there in his shorts, knickers rather, his coaching regalia and that was my first association relationship, that was the first time I had ever been to campus. So John and Earl Dean was my first experience.

HERZSTEIN: Sounds as though it created a positive impression on you, that first meeting and it was influential on you coming here.

VAN NESS: Oh yes, we rode up in John's sports car, it was quite an experience. He was a great teacher, just recently passed away, he was a great educator too, John was.

HERZSTEIN: In looking back over some of your accomplishments here at the college as a student and as an athlete, I see that even then you were quite involved on our campus. For example, you were the president of Phi Epsilon Kappa, vice president of the Inter-Fraternity Council, you were also involved in football, track and basketball as well as being involved with the YMCA organizations and the Boy Scouts. So you set the pattern very early with your continuation with the college community when you eventually came on board.

VAN NESS: I was vice president of the class too, Joe.

HERZSTEIN: That's right.

VAN NESS: Let's get it all.

HERZSTEIN: Vice president of the class in January of 1942. And as I recall, Roy, one of your many accomplishments even at that point is that you established I believe it was the javelin record that stood for many years.

VAN NESS: Yeah, that's right. That stood for over ten years. That was great. Great feeling I was on. When I was training in the Army I was able to participate in the West Coast relays, throw the javelin for the Air Force competition so the javelin and I have had a long and happy experience together.

HERZSTEIN: Are there any special recollections you have either as a student, athlete or both? The facilities that were available, the program that was a part of your teacher training at the time and some of the existent operations that were going on then that maybe are extinct at this time.

VAN NESS: Well, let's see. The baseball field was about where the Brower Student Center is right now and that was a good field and to my recollection that was built by the old WPA project. What is now Dean Field, that was an excellent track and it still is the best turf on campus and I recall that was also built by the WPA project. So that existed, the gymnasium we had our old pool which I guess now is boarded up and what we referred to as the old gym or the upstairs gym. Good floor and a good gym compared to other colleges around, the other state colleges. The other state colleges, Jersey City and Glassboro, you played up on a stage it was one of those deals and they didn't have a net, the ball went bouncing up the aisle and so on so it was a good, dark, very dark by present standards but it was an excellent floor to play on, so that was about it. There was an archery range out back where the existing tennis courts are and that kind of came and went seasonally. Tennis courts were a little beyond where the new dormitory is now, over towards Norsworthy there, they weren't bad, they were clay courts but they had to be manicured each spring and difficult teaching and so on so forth but they were decent courts if we had the proper care to take care of them.

HERZSTEIN: I remember having been a student-athlete myself on the campus in the mid-fifties and having met you for the first time during that period that Dean Field and the baseball field truly were some of the finest facilities at the time in the state of New Jersey. I also am wondering Roy during your experience as a student-athlete, maybe you might care to reflect on what the dress codes happened to have been and the dining facilities, if they changed to any degree by comparison today.

VAN NESS: Well, there was a dear lady, Vernetta Decker, who was the queen of the campus. She was Dean of Students I guess or the closest thing equivalent to it, and I dare say Vernetta Decker made a lot of ladies out of little country bumpkins. I mean, you had to get dressed for the evening meal and the girls had to

put their stockings and heels on and dress and that wasn't all bad. We had to wear our jackets and we were served our meals down in the now non-existent Old Inn, which was the old Hillwood Inn, which was located directly behind the building we're in now, Forcina Hall up in what would be the northeast corner of the campus. And that was a commercial inn at one time and that was the center of much of the social life. We had dances, the formal dances were there, various holidays we had sort of formal meals and the dress code, yes, you had to dress and you had to—you couldn't wear the cutoffs and all that business that was defunct. Of course it was indigenous to the time, it was a different air back in those days, it was a more formalized structured, wherever you went whether it be in high school or in public or what have you. So it was in keeping with the time and I would have to applaud Vernetta Decker again, a lot of people would like to do less, do something different than that I know but I think she deserves a great deal of credit for that for the way she kind of maintained her standards and helped a lot of us along that way.

HERZSTEIN: In taking a look at your mention of the sign of the times, as I recall the institution was solely a teacher's college, and that might have been a part of that.

VAN NESS: Oh yes, pretty much elementary too, Joe. Which means we had a lot of girls and that wasn't all bad either which made it tough also for athletic teams. The teams were primarily from physical education and industrial arts. That doesn't mean that there weren't any others because there were people from business and so on that did participate but we had an awful lot of women here which made it difficult as in contrast as to say Montclair who specialized in secondary education and by nature they seemed to have more men in their school and they had more men to draw on so they had kind of a running start on us I think as far as the teams were concerned. I must say thought that we're talking about the facilities and the good quality of them although Packer was adjusted, Packer Hall, it was not the facility it was originally designed just like a lot of things, it's designed and costs too much money so they have to cut back but the whole front of Packer Hall as we knew it years ago was cut off. But I think the strong physical education department for both men and women and these good facilities was the basis of a good start

for an athletic program once we could get a system in place and once we could get athletes from a broad base on the whole campus.

HERZSTEIN: So you had those indications early on before you eventually became a member on the faculty on this campus.

VAN NESS: Yeah, the field is so plain after you take a few knocks in year in and year out on the football team it'd be nice to have-- it was so bad sometimes, I can remember George Ackerman coaching when the manager had to suit up, Dickie Vower had to suit up so we could scrimmage, we didn't have enough troops out there to have a scrimmage so that's how thin the ranks got at times. So things have come a long way obviously. Maybe we ought to talk about that a little bit some of the transitions, Joe.

HERZSTEIN: Sure, you graduated in 1943.

VAN NESS: January, right Joe.

HERZSTEIN: Right, January of '43 and then you mentioned earlier that there was a type of hiatus that took place there, you entered the military. I wonder if you might focus on that just a little, Roy.

VAN NESS: Sure. I graduated, we were accelerated and that was one of the greatest things that happened to me is great opportunity. In other words, what happened was instead of taking four years to graduate I graduated in three and a half years by going to school in the summer. So that enabled us to graduate in January which was a great break for me, I was already signed up in the Air Force and when I graduated in January, I went and taught for a month and a half up at Bound Brook High School. Went up there because my girlfriend was up in that area and then I was called into the service and I went into the Army Air Force and became a pilot and, very thorough, great experience. I don't mean to say war is great, don't misunderstand me, what I mean is it was physically and mentally really quite a challenge and I think most people other than the gruesome part of a war would have to admit that basically it was one of the most intense experiences they ever had in their life. Being a pilot, I had a good war, I shaved every morning and all

that sort of thing. I ate well and I don't want to say this incorrectly, what I'm saying, the intensity of it, the rewards and so on that was all great stuff. Okay so after the-- got out about three years in the service then I went directly to Columbia University, went full time to work on my Master's and I attended there three and a half semesters, finished my Master's and a little bit beyond and then I got a telegram from Trenton State, I had already partially accepted a job at other school and Bill Andreas, who was the chairman under the direction of Roscoe West, sent a telegram to me so I came down and I can remember Roscoe. He was all business. Roscoe always had his desk clear and he got his mail in the morning and I think he must have had, the game plan was that if he couldn't clear that desk in an hour he was having a bad day. But I think I was in and out of that office in about ten minutes. He said, "You didn't sign anything up there?" "No," and he's like, "Well here, sign this right here." And bang and so I was hired. I came and started to work in here in about '47 I guess it was, Joe.

HERZSTEIN: You mentioned meeting Roscoe West. Again, in reflecting somewhat, you've interacted with quite a number of presidents over the years in the college community.

VAN NESS: Try seven.

HERZSTEIN: Seven.

VAN NESS: Seven. Yeah that was an experience, too. And it's changed, the role of the president had changed, the problems they had-- as I reflect back, Roscoe West kept his eye on athletics from a distance. But he kept an eye on everything, I mean we were small. I believe the enrollment here must have been eight hundred or so, something like that. But he kept involved, directly involved in every aspect of the college and athletics certainly was part of it. Of course we were part of the physical education department and the number of sports we had were very few. They had on the coaching staff and I guess it hadn't changed an awful lot when you came, Joe, there was George Ackerman and I, George and I coached football together, George was the head coach in the wintertime he was the head coach of basketball, I coached the JV basketball and in the spring he took baseball, I had track and in the fall, I left out Bill Andreas had soccer. And once in a while, Charlie Rounds who was

the head of the English Department had the tennis and Mike Travers had golf once in a while, kind of one year you'd have it, one year you wouldn't have it, one of those kinds of things. But I think that was about all she wrote back then. So then right after the war, which was right after I got back, the flood gates opened. I mean this was a tremendous thing I mean you just, there was federal money available, there were students kicking the doors down to get in, veterans were here with all that kind of experience. Temporary housing on campus was put up to house the veterans and we young faculty were given housing in these old military bungalows. They weren't bad, they were a little cold, little drafty but we got by it never would have made it. I started, my starting salary was three thousand dollars but I had an old wood heater, right, one of those deals.

HERZSTEIN: Right.

VAN NESS: But we did have the housing and of course living standards, the dollar went a lot further but it was a tough scrape, Joe, it was a tough scrape. Where were we? Going back onto programs, the development of programs. So as more students came in and more men, they brought in a flood of new ideas and the departments, all of the departments had to grow. They had to grow right now. That was just because the population, the campus population was there so there was a tremendous amount of growth problems. They were good, healthy problems because every time you turned around there was more money, there was more people, it was growth, there was growth each year but there were a lot of experiences along the way. Now as far as athletics, again, that kind of got coat-tailed. In other words, we went along for the ride so to speak because we were in physical education and there were so many more important problems, academic problems that had to be resolved that president of administration couldn't really direct a lot of time. There was so much time and money to work with so it was like a day to day struggle. I mean to get so called capital improvements, we had to go practically with our hat in our hand to kind of talk to the business managers. The famous John Quimby was there when we first came on board and then Tom Kinner came in but we had to go with-- I never recall approaching John Quimby for anything like capital growth or something like that probably because I was just a young turk and I really wasn't in a position to do that.

But I many times went one on one with Tom Kinner trying to resolve some new load of dirt on the tennis courts or some new load of cinders on the track or something like that. But anyway we began to develop our programs and we were just bulging at the seams it was just—and within the physical education there were other things, driver education, swimming and dancing and health and that was exploding too. I mean you sat down at a staff meeting and it was a room full of people.

HERZSTEIN: So I'm bringing it up to date, you joined the faculty in 1947.

VAN NESS: Yes.

HERZSTEIN: I first had immediate contact with you as an undergraduate student during that growth period in the fall of 1955 and I can recall, one of the things that impressed me, Roy, was a fact that you just mentioned. I would see you first of all in the gymnastics class, I would see you in the classroom, I would see you as my football coach on the football field, I would see you as the advisor to Phi Epsilon Kappa in the evening in Bliss Hall and then after you left the meeting room for the fraternity you then retired to your room in Bliss Hall where you oversaw the entire facility along with Bill Hausdoerffer.

VAN NESS: Yeah.

HERZSTEIN: So, you know I reflect now on the number of hours by union contract, we negotiate and I remember that you were hardly never ever there in addition to doing some more graduate work at that time, so you were a busy man.

VAN NESS: And I also officiated. I was trying to officiate football and basketball which I did on the weekends. There wasn't anything else to do on Sunday, might as well round out the week, right, Joe?

HERZSTEIN: That's correct.

VAN NESS: But we often used to comment about that we wore the inside of our clothes out before we wore the outside out because we were on the go so much. As I recall, I had as much as twenty three hour week, contact week and involved in coaching three sports, that's a bit much. I would be incorrect if I could say



that I thought that I did a great job with either one of them because you were just spread so thin, preparation was difficult. Your energy level goes up and down and so on and so forth. But it was great, I really thoroughly enjoyed it and of course people like yourself, the students and the athletes kind of spurred you on, just kept your energy level up so you just kept on going. We probably ought to go on and talk a little bit about the—if you're ready to go on—how we got into an athletic department because that was to me was one of the most exciting and there again it took administration. I think the role of administration is important. The administration, if you could picture them in a background of always being there but they were so preoccupied really with other things that they didn't have an awful lot of things—they liked you, they always seemed to have a friendly reception and everything but as we've moved along and as the Physical Education Department began to grow and grow, it became evident to me that to have a highly successful athletic program, we couldn't go forward in that context because of a couple reasons. Philosophically, you're a good example, when you came in you were a combination teacher/coach.

HERZSTEIN: Correct.

VAN NESS: And you were actually in the Physical Education Department. So you had two masters so to speak and you have diversified loyalties, interests and time that you had to spend. You were, using you as an example, would be given what is called release time, which meant that from your academic load of twelve hours was it in those days?

HERZSTEIN: It was fifteen at that time.

VAN NESS: Fifteen, okay so maybe you'd be give four or five release hours for coaching. As the administration began to analyze this, those hours were truly academic hours and as we began it became more apparent in academic and in administrative budgets when you analyze the academic you could say the people, the chairperson of physical education could truly say that these release hours are not truly academic hours and they are eroding what looks like a large academic budget is not truthfully so because of all of these release administrative hours. Then as the coaching program began to grow, we needed more release hours, then entered graduate work, so we had people getting

involved in that. And then along with the budgetary thing, this made a good entrée for me as far as talking to the administration, but philosophically, I was faced with another aspect of the philosophy of sports standing and athletics standing separate from the physical education. People, fortunately the majority of the staff, accepted the concept that I presented and if you recall Joe, you were in the room I think when I presented the concept and the idea that faculty should stand along so I was trying to defend it philosophically trying to defend it financially to the administration. That seemed to work out alright so fortunately the staff went along with this thing and the administration agreed that if the staff of the Physical Education Department agreed with concept, that they would allow it to go and so we went forward. The first year I recall the women didn't come because of philosophical reservations and some of it had to do with individual personalities that's alright that's what life's all about. But eventually they did come in and I know that they went on to be the outstanding women's athletic program that they are and it was based on a strong women's physical education department. That was the basis of that stuff, that's where it got started and so we were able to go on and work on that basis and build on it. So that's how that started but you've got to remember the administration has to support you and I must say that all administrations, I would say, smiled on us but I think it had to start, began to start with maybe Clayt Brower who took a more active interest and a lot of it has to do with the time frame, the chronology that things are in place but lord knows Clayt had his problems. Through the roaring sixties and burn baby burn and the Vietnamese business but throughout all of that, Clayt kept an interest in athletics and believed in it and was a supporter. Then, when Harold Eickhoff came on, he was very enthusiastic about athletics and continued to give us the kind of the support that is needed. But any athletic program cannot succeed without the will of the administration to have a good and a successful athletic program. So I would say the common thread throughout our growth, Joe, would have to be that the administration on different levels and people like Pete Mills as you mentioned, the Vice President of Administration and Finance, that man's a genius, I mean he spread awfully thin but he was able to put the financial packaging together to make things come

out. Once they could justify to him that it would work and how it would work and so without this kind of administrative support, a program can't go forward. You step on a few toes along the way but been there before, that's alright.

HERZSTEIN: I guess that's all a part of growth, having to do that and experiencing the repercussions that may occur from that. You know, Roy, in backing up and then moving forward a little, I graduated as an undergraduate here in 1958 and then through your endorsement and encouragement I became a member of Trenton State College faculty in 1963 and many of the things that you have just shared as far as release time and classroom time, I can remember again very, very vividly. I also remember the evening as I shared with you where you took it upon yourself and you were also open and I respected this, you took it upon yourself to share with the faculty of the health and physical education department what you saw as the progression of Trenton State College, of the athletic program, of the physical education program, and how each could benefit, meaning Trenton State College to help the physical education department and the athletic department by your proposed move. And as you indicated I saw some resistance by a few but now I think if we could reflect back as a faculty, I personally in speaking for myself can see the wisdom in that move and the success that has been an outcome of that type of direction. So the progression, the logic of the progression in the development of the athletic program makes sense to me as you share it. Also, something you didn't mention I think is worthy of mentioning, as this growth took place with what you had in mind, it also necessitated some additional athletic facilities.

VAN NESS: Oh, yes.

HERZSTEIN: And I would wonder if you would care to comment on the development and the expansion of some of our facilities to accommodate your projections.

VAN NESS: Well, in traveling around and I mean internationally too, as you know that twice I was fortunate enough to with two Fulbright Awards and I went to Baghdad, Iraq for a year, that was just before you came I guess and then '60-'61 I was in Bangkok, Thailand where I coached their national basketball team among other things. But I think it enabled me to see other

facilities and meet other people from a different territory and I think the proposal that I was suggesting was more indigenous to say a Western or Midwestern philosophy than than a typical east coast concept. I mean the idea of the department standing where it is and separate from the physical education as far as a Division III school is concerned. Well as we began to grow, what were once outstanding facilities such as our gym and so on, we got a new gym in about 1960 I think was the year I was in Thailand and that was a great improvement; lighting, my goodness you could see the ball. That was an improvement. But then as we began to move things around, tennis courts were in the wrong place and they had to be moved, we outgrew a very tired, inadequate swimming pool and then we began to run out of territory for practice fields and game fields, what do you do in the fall when you have to play field hockey, soccer and football and run an extensive intramural program all on the same piece of ground and so on? So it didn't seem to be the way to do it so again with close cooperation with Pete Mills and the approval of President Harold Eickhoff when he came on board but this all started back a few years. Our first approach to this was the Recreational Center. That idea we stole from University of Pennsylvania, the indoor tennis courts and that sort of thing so that was our first effort and we were able to get the students to support that, the referendum to pay for that 2.6 million project. And the front part of it was offices which had paid for through state funding, I know there was the regular college, so there you have a blend of two buildings, a traditional brick building in the front and a pre-fab building in the back and that's what it was philosophically, too, there were two thoughts combined there and two financial things. Well, Pete figured that one out, Pete Mills, so and we began to talk about things, things began to fall into place and Pete came up with this idea of packaging everything in sort of a central area where it now exists. He was able to, this was in conjunction with administrative support, well that was all I needed, that was like coming out of the chute running and I was able to start dreaming and thinking and running around and got some ideas together so we did get some ideas together the way we might want to do things and I think one of the most important innovations was the type of artificial surface that we have on that field. The company happens to be Astroturf but the concept that they

have, it was the first collegiate drain through field, you know but for the sake of the record that traditionally, Astroturf or any artificial turf has an eighteen inch crown in the field and the rain beats down on it and it runs off. But this idea's entirely different. It only has a six inch crown and there are millions of holes all over, every four inches there's a hole through the entire surface which percolates, allows the water to percolate down through and into a runoff system underneath and as you know we were able to play games out there in any kind of weather. We had to overcome many obstacles, we had to support various people, Ed Ban [?] back in the housing authority supported our position and administration did but we had to prove that it was not going to cause more injuries, it was going to work because and why it was better to go with the system we had because it was more expensive and the state usually goes with the lowest bid. Well, this is not the lowest bid and we had to go, when had to have a hearing on it and thankful for the support of many people, we were able to get this. So we have a rather unique system but we kind of crossed our fingers but I didn't because I know that it had been used in Europe for five years successfully and I'd read extensively about that and so that was great. Pretty much the same concept on the running track, I think here again we were fortunate, fortunate we looked around and listened to a lot of people but that also has what is called a vented track where you take most-- many tracks, not all tracks but many of the new tracks were put down in like sheets, they weren't vented but this track was layered on, troughed down all the way around and it's vented and allows the water to go down and as I say to some people, it allows the ground to burp too, it allows the air and the gases to come up. So that track has been down it stays there, it doesn't bubble up. Some of our surrounding people have had lesser success with that. The tennis court idea was just great, we were able to work out, we stole a few ideas, a nice little gazebo concept I stole that from Princeton and then when it came time for the pool, that was fun too. We have a movable bulkhead in there, that bulkhead comes from Ohio but there are many of them, not many, there are others on the market but we flew out to look at that and that seemed to make the most sense, that thing is something like a submarine, it's a floating bulkhead and it has air tanks in there it can allow water in and out to allow the thing to run up

and down on the stainless steel runners. But here again, we were able to bring in a lot of new ideas that I think that when we sat down with the architects UH2A, there was essentially Pete Mills again who was the financial hand behind it and Bob Jenkowitz who was the engineer, Bob is on the staff here at the college, and myself. Bob was the engineering consultant, Pete was the administrative and financial consultant and I was the athletic consultant which meant, the philosophy that Pete projected and I think it's a good one, that we'll listen to anybody and as you know I had committees submit reports to me on their ideas on the pool and a few other things but Pete said "We'll do the deciding in our group, but we'll listen to everybody." We don't want everybody jumping into the act and clouding the scene so we were able to go forward I think and get more of what we wanted, a cleaner act, a cleaner design because they say being pecked to death by a thousand ducks this was not the case, we were able to get a clear vision. The pool is pretty much Holy Cross pool, a lot of the features I must say I got from there. You take that on the football field, that press box, where'd that come from, that idea is pretty much Vanderbilt University's press box only theirs is much longer. But we went around, we went to Rutgers, Bob Jenkowitz and I and the architect, we went and looked at these things to see how they were and I had been in many press boxes, a few others, and we were able to put all these things together. But I'm just thankful for the freedom and for the confidence that the college put in my judgment and we were able to do this. But I think the idea is a triumvirate, the idea of having administration, a finance representative, an engineer's idea and a coach athletic director over here, now you've got a nice balance, I think it was because I'm biased, but I know other universities that have too many people into the act, too many ideas and I think the end result is a hodge-podge, like they say a camel is a horse designed by a committee and I think that's what you get in a lot of places.

HERZSTEIN: As I listen to you right now, it brings up for me again being in your undergraduate class during the mid-fifties on facilities how strongly you emphasized to us being an advocate of not doing anything impulsively, doing your homework, check out what the benefits and the drawbacks happen to be.

Again, I see the Astroturf, for example, you're looking in to that being a part of the positive insight because I know that when they replaced the Astroturf down at Veteran's Stadium, they did away with the Zamboni only because of what you said of the water draining through the turf itself. So once again, I think we were way ahead of some of the facilities that were on a larger scale than our own. And you know, Roy, since I mentioned the word success, I think again a lot of your insight, a lot of your efforts have culminated not only in the aesthetic appeal of our campus and a well-oiled and functioning athletic department, but also with the awards through your efforts that the college has received athletically. I'm thinking for example, the numerous Division III titles that have come our way since your proposal in the mid-sixties and your expansion of your thoughts. I wonder if you'd comment on that.

VAN NESS: Well, that's a pleasure. Of course, here again the system only works if you have the personnel to do it and I think I have been fortunate, I guess that's one word but we'll settle for that for now, to select a good coaching staff. Better than good, good is an understatement, they're outstanding. You need people who can not only know the knowledge of the game, but have knowledge of people, have the interest, know where we are, have an idea of where the college is and where they want to go and I think we were able to find these people. That's the basis, that's where you start. Then you need to continue an ongoing smile from the administration that you're going to have an admission policy that recognizes where we are. We want students to come in and we want them to graduate. We know we don't want to bring anyone in who doesn't have the potential to graduate and that's been a continuing, ongoing philosophy of every administration that I've ever worked with. They've never wanted to back-door someone who didn't have a chance to go through and that continues to be so. So with that we were able to bring in athletes successful enough to win the most national championships in Division III, which is quite an accomplishment, and I am indeed quite happy about that, happy again is a mild statement. It's something you wake up and you think about, different things or certain quiet moments when now that I'm retired, they say you have a chance to smell the roses a little bit. That's one of the things that you're able to reflect on,

the success of these kids and to come back and to know them. That's one thing that I miss too; I miss the interaction with the coaches and the kids. Retirement's fine but it's tough to replace that kind of relationship. So Joe, sure, that success is fine and I'm also gratified by the many, many phone calls I've gotten from all around the country on facilities. Questions on facilities, people have come here from many colleges and universities and looked at our facility and chatted with us on them and why we decided to go and what we think of it. All of that is quite gratifying, to say the least. To say it works. Sometimes Joe, you know, you could be wrong you know but I think in something like this, if you've sorted out. It's tough to deal with salesmen in many ways because you ask a salesman about their product and it's the best, absolutely the best and it has no faults and so on and so forth. At the time, I've forgotten how many different kinds of artificial surfaces there were on the market but they all seemed to have some kind of shortcoming. In many ways they were comparable different kinds of tests. But that sorting out process is a little scary because you could be wrong but you try to do everything to hope that it wouldn't be, you don't make the wrong mistake. But I'm very happy as I reflect as you may well suspect on many of these things and it's a pleasure to me to enjoy them to see the kids use them and see the coaches enjoy them. That's quite gratifying.

HERZSTEIN: I know in speaking with many of our current students, many of the faculty who have been here and have interacted with you and many of the alums as well, they are very proud of your efforts and your given direction does not go unrecognized. And I think that's an award that may not be on a piece of brass or wood but it's an award we can hang on to and I hope you can recognize that. And speaking of awards Roy, I know that sometimes you may feel a little uncomfortable when you're asked to focus on some of the awards that you've received in your lifetime, especially with your association here at Trenton State College. You already mentioned the two Fullbright Awards, I'm aware that you've been inducted into the Trenton State College Athletic Hall of Fame. And I would like you to share with us if you would, the other awards that you've received during your tenure here at Trenton State College.



VAN NESS: Well I want to come back, I have to reflect go backwards. I just this past year was inducted into Bordentown High School's-- I was given their alumni award. Previously, the year I retired, the college Alumni Association presented me with their Alumni Award. The kids dedicated the yearbook to me which I am very pleased about. When you have the alumni recognizing it and the students, that's quite a pleasure. As you alluded to, it's not to be taken lightly and it's something that can't be bought, it can't be purchased and as Smith Barney says the old fashioned way, you have to earn it, right?

HERZSTEIN: Right.

VAN NESS: I'm proud of that as can be. Let's see, I guess we got me into football fame which I got their contribution to Amateur Athletic Award.

HERZSTEIN: That's the Delaware Valley?

VAN NESS: Delaware Valley chapter, right. And since then, too, fortunately our coach Eric Hamilton has also received that same award, so that's very gratifying. I think that covers most of them, Joe. Oh, wait a minute, now I have to back up, I did from the state I got the state of the thirty-one colleges and universities in the state, I got the academic, not academic, Administrative Achievement Award and I think that was in '86. That to me was quite gratifying because you're selected from all of the colleges and universities in the state of New Jersey and that is an outstanding credit and I certainly appreciate it. I think that's all of them that I can think of.

HERZSTEIN: There's one that I can think of, where each year the Roy Van Ness award is given to the outstanding coach..

VAN NESS: Oh yes.

HERZSTEIN: ...here at Trenton State College for their contributions to the community and I believe this past year Kevin Bannon was the recipient of that award.

VAN NESS: That's correct, right, and it couldn't have been more timely. Here he is right now going into the quarter finals for the nationals. I know Kevin's dad, so it couldn't happen to a better young man. I wish him well.

HERZSTEIN: And Kevin is one of those people, I might add, that you personally brought on board to head up that aspect of our program and I don't think that needs any more additional information as far as looking at the positive benefits that's afforded the community. Well we've covered a lot of ground here, Roy, in this given time from 1940 to May 10, 1989 and I'm wondering as we kind of wind down here if there are any things that maybe I haven't addressed that are very memorable at this given time that you care to address.

VAN NESS: Well I think that there are two things just in a moment you were talking there; there are two things as far as the student-athletes are concerned. The ratio of graduation for the student-athlete is higher than it is for the rest of the college campus.

HERZSTEIN: Very interesting.

VAN NESS: I credit the selectivity of the coaches and the counseling that they give them. In other words, they are with them when they register for classes, they monitor their grades. I know when I was in the office there, I had every student-athlete's grade in my desk every semester. In other words, twice a year, all the coaches turned in the grades, we'd monitor them. So I think this is a great assistance to know that somebody cares, somebody loves you and that sort of thing. So I think that should be mentioned because it's quite-- it's regardless of what level they came in at, in other words whether they were at the top or in the middle or whatever, they graduated. That's what it's all about, you know? The other thing Joe, is that we didn't mention which was a very pleasant experience for me and that was the association with the outdoor education program here at the college. A few years ago, under President Martin, it happened to be in his tenure of office, every student in this college in their junior year used to go up to the New Jersey School of Conservation, which is most commonly known as Camp Wapalanne, and that was quite-- this was on top of while I was breaking in as athletic administrator, athletic director. President Martin asked me to do it once, he asked me to do it twice, and then he told me to do it. I had to be the administrator of that. I turned out to be a very positive experience. What it meant was that you were up in these cabins

which was an old WPA camp with about two hundred students, faculty, and lecturers and we spent a week up there. We left Monday morning we came back Friday evening and a series of outdoor experiences, canoeing and hiking and orienteering and lectures on conservation and a lot of inter-living. You know, living together with different groups and up there with your faculty and the idea of facing a challenge and meeting it. Me and a lot of people from other disciplines, not just your same group, I think that was a great positive experience for students and I know over the years I have had several of them come back and they always mention that, always come up, sounded like you are.

HERZSTEIN: Yes.

VAN NESS: You were up there. You always had a little chuckle about somebody falling overboard or something like that. Along with being an educational process, it was successful. As the college grew it became impossible to do that, there was just, you couldn't take every junior up there and the facility was limited. I couldn't certainly go along anymore because athletics was growing so it was time to-- they changed the way that was done. So Joe, if you ask me of one of the positive experiences outside of athletics I'd say that would have to be one, that's a great one.

HERZSTEIN: Roy, maybe we have a few seconds here, knowing that you're officially retired although, again I see you at many of our basketball games and many of our different athletic events as well as social affairs, so you haven't distanced yourself entirely and we're always pleased to see you. I'm just wondering what you're doing as far as the retirement is concerned, some of the activities that you may be involved in at this time.

VAN NESS: Well, play tennis twice a week and continued to sing with the Princeton Barber Shop Chorus, we're putting on a show next month, I'm show chairman. And I'm currently president of the Delaware Valley Football Hall of Fame. That along with trying to catch up with some interior decorating that I didn't do for years at home I think will keep me busy for the next ten years. Along with traveling, when I was retired, the retirement dinner they gave me a nice present. My wife and I, we went to

Turkey and Greece and we continue to take short trips. That keeps me busy and I sure like to fish and run my boat around.

HERZSTEIN: I know. Roy it's really been my pleasure to be here with you this morning and kind of reminisce and in conclusion, I just want you to know as I have stated to you on several occasions you really have been a positive impact on my professional and personal career. It's been a pleasure, sir. Thank you very much.

VAN NESS: Thank you, Professor Doctor Herzstein.

HERZSTEIN: Thank you, Roy.

VAN NESS: Great job, Joe.