

YONGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

The History of Youngstown State University

Personal Experiences

O.H. 1989

Dominic Rosselli  
Interviewed

By

James C. Dunn

On

February 21, 1974

## **Dominic Louis Rosselli**

Dominic Louis Rosselli was born in Youngstown, Ohio on March 19, 1915, the son of Alfonso and Marcella Rosselli. He is a graduate of Geneva College, which he attended from 1935 to 1939 graduating with a B.S. in Education degree; and then University of Pittsburgh from which he received his Master's in Education in 1950. Mr. Rosselli served during World War II with the United States Air Force. He entered in February of 1941 and was honorably discharged in May of 1946.

Mr. Rosselli married his wife Constance on November 8, 1940 and they have four children. He is a member of the Golden Eagles Club and the Old Timers Baseball USA. Among awards he has received are: Ohio Coach of the Year in 1957 and 1964, National Italian Coach of the Year in 1967, and Sportsmanship Awards. He is a member of St. Anthony's Church and his hobbies are carpentry and woodworking.

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Interviewee: DOMINIC ROSSELLI

Interviewer: James C. Dunn

Subject: The History of Youngstown College

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This is an interview with Dominic Rosselli for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program dealing with the history of Youngstown College. It is being done by James C. Dunn at Beeghly Center of February 21, 1974, at 5:30pm.

Dunn: To begin this interview, Mr. Rosselli, I'd like to ask you what were the circumstances concerning your selection as head basketball coach?

Rosselli: Well, you might say that it was maybe a little off in a way, but first of all, I played football and basketball at Geneva College. Football here at Youngstown was only about a year old and they were looking for some help. They had part-time help. Naturally, I graduated from college and was looking for full-time employment so I was glad to get the opportunity through Mr. Dike Beede, who offered me the job as an assistant football coach. Also, there was a vacancy in basketball and I became the assistant basketball coach.

But how I became head basketball coach, the circumstances were that the head basketball coach, it was more or less a part-time deal with him. He had a good job in the mill. It seems odd today to talk about whether you'd take a college job or a mill job, but in those days, the finances were the main thing to consider. He had a good job at the mill. His dad was a superintendent and his son had a pretty good deal. So, basketball was more or less a part-time deal with him. A lot of times, during my first year as an assistant he wasn't able to go on some of the trips because had to work, so I would take the trips. So, the next year he figured he just better give it up. So, I got the job mostly through that circumstance.

D: What was the purpose of the sports program at the time of your appointment as head basketball coach?

R: Well, that has been thirty-one years ago. I would say that other than the fact that everybody had a basketball team, I don't know just, at that time, how much of a purpose it served other than the fact that all schools like to have some form of athletics, whether they get into it real deep. I don't think at that time, for a good many years, athletics, I mean basketball in particular, was a sport where there wasn't a lot of emphasis paid to it. It was just a question of students coming out and participation. There wasn't, I don't think any amount of recruiting. It was whoever came out for school. Kids came out and so on. There wasn't a lot of emphasis put on it. It was more or less a minor sport, even though it was probably the only sport that they had.

D: Has the role of the sports program changed in regard to its importance to the university?

R: As far as the importance, I think athletics has a very important part in all schools. Socially, it's a means of students mixing in with other students, even though the students may not know many of the players personally, I mean there are not that many anyway in comparison with the number of the students. I think the students get a certain amount of pride in giving their support to a team, and I think it helps mold the student body to some extent. In a lot of the bigger schools, you'd notice that. A good example today is Ohio State they get 85,000 students. I don't think there is a student in the school that doesn't figure that when they play at home, they're going to see Ohio State play. Why? They don't know the players, they know who they are, what they look like but they don't know them personally. But it does give them a feeling of importance, the fact that that's out team and they are going out there to support them and so on. So, I think athletics does play an important part in the university's overall picture.

D: What has been the attitude of the administration towards the sports program over your years here at the university?

R: Well, in my thirty-one years, I can only say that the administration has been wonderful. They've never once, that I can remember in thirty-one years, had any time when they felt like they should cut the program out or they did not feel that it was important. I've only been under three presidents here, Dr. Jones for a good many years, then Dr. Pugley and now Dr. Coffelt. And I'm sure that not one of them has ever felt that athletics is not an important part of the educational program here at Youngstown. And I think they all helped to make it an important part. Although I feel that it is an important part, athletics here at Youngstown, at all schools not only Youngstown is an important part of the school system. I'm sure that the presidents here, or the administration or other phases other than the president, have never pushed the president and so on, to the point where "What gives here? Is it important? Should we get rid of it", and stuff like that. I've always felt that they've been an important part of playing it up and also helping push it wherever they could.

D: Has the attitude of faculty members toward the sports program had any effect concerning the success or failure of the program?

R: No, I wouldn't say they have any effect at all, they never as far as I can remember. They've all been very cooperative. I mean there's always some who maybe feel; why have it, and so on, but I would say that's a one percent or tenth of a percent, typical of students. I mean you may have 12,000 students; sure you're bound to find a handful that would feel, "What good is athletics?" There's always a small percentage and it's very small. And I'm sure the way the question is put, there might be one faculty (member) out of four hundred that might play it up or just make a casual remark about it. I would say all in all, the faculty members are wholeheartedly in support of the athletic program and some of them get more involved than others. Naturally, they have their own little program that they maybe have to put a little more emphasis on. So therefore, sometimes you might get the impression that they don't feel the importance of athletics, but it isn't that. I just think that they, naturally, have to be concerned with their own little activities, and put more emphasis in that. But as far as affecting the program, I would say that I've never felt that any faculty member has been a hindrance to the athletic programs here at Youngstown State.

D: How would you measure the success of the sports program in relation to its purposes or ideals?

R: Well, that could vary. For myself, I feel that it has been a success. We started football here and I am talking about athletics, not so much basketball, which I've been involved in for twenty-two years as an assistant football coach under Dike Beede. And I've been involved with baseball for about seventeen or eighteen years, as well as basketball, so I've been acquainted with all of them.

I would say that you can't place the fact that success is always on the team that wins the championship. Because first of all, there's only going to be one out of maybe a thousand. There are approximately a thousand universities in NIA and NCAA, give or take a little bit, and there's only going to be one that's going to come out on top. So, why should 999 be failures? I don't think we should place the emphasis on the fact that you've got to win it all, with all the marbles, or the program wasn't worth it. I think we're wrong in that respect. I mean we have got to look at it from the overall picture or the fact that winning isn't everything. Participation is important, as long as the athletics can help the other students get involved socially and get enthused and so on, because it's only a four year deal with everybody. You come here for four years; you're an athlete; you participate or don't. Even if you don't, you're a student for four years. Okay, you've gotten wrapped up. But when you got out, you've got to feel that if it does you a little good during that time, well, that's all you can expect. As far as the placing of ideals and values as far as the educational program, I think that it doesn't affect it. I think there is a small number participating, true, but I think a lot of students get wrapped up in athletics. I know that you could see it all over. I always try to visualize Ohio State, because they really get wrapped up in football there. And as typical of those students, it just seems like for four years, they live and die for the Saturday afternoons. So, it has done them some good socially they wouldn't have done it. And so athletics, I think, helps in the overall picture in a lot of different ways. It's hard maybe even to pinpoint.

D: What significance has the sports program played in the growth of the university?

R: I don't think the sports program affects the growth of the university. After all, there are probably a small number of students in major sports playing as compared to the student body. And I'm sure that I'm not going to be egotistical enough to say that the athletic program was the growth of Youngstown State University; far be it from that. Youngstown has grown because of the leadership in the educational part of the University. The presidents are the deans and so on, and the other people have really gone out to sell Youngstown State, and not the football or basketball program. But I think they do play an important part. I am sure that you or anybody else, whether you came to Youngstown or not, didn't come to Youngstown because Youngstown has a good basketball team or a good football team or unconcerned about it at all. The growth has been because we're in an area here where there are a lot of schools close. Our growth had been because of the educational part of it rather than the athletics. I wouldn't pinpoint it as having a large effect because we have a lot of students here that commute from Sharon, New Castle, and the area here. A lot of them can't even come to see a game a lot of times because when school's over at three o'clock they go home they maybe don't come back. So, I'm sure that they came here because they want to get an education. I think the educational growth has grown because of the leadership of the people involved. The leadership has been shown here by the presidents, the deans, and the other people, rather than just coming here for the athletics.

D: Have the students' attitudes toward the sports program changed during your tenure at the university?

R: Yes, I don't think it affects them that much, but I am sure that the students get involved and that's why at first I said it has an important place, because the kids like to get involved. And I think it's a way not the only way, but a way for the kids to more or less get out and express themselves. I think there's more of it done that when we originally started to play. I think that has grown.

Years ago, when the college first started it was a business school I mean people came to school here to just take a business course, or learn accounting, or engineering or one particular subject like secretarial students came here to learn shorthand, typing and all the other things that go along with that. And so as athletics didn't have anything to do, athletics got a little more important, students got a little more involved, but not to the point where they were belligerent about it. They have their little pros and cons, but I mean we all do that with all kinds of athletics.

Here, you and I, we get involved about the Super Bowl. You wonder; and you get wrapped, who's going to win, and stuff like that. And I think that's important because it gives you something to do and it's a lot better than going out and handing around a bar and so on. It gives good wholesome things to get involved with.

But as far as affecting their life and so on, no. It's a four-year deal as far as students are concerned. They get wrapped up and make many friends and they get their education. They go out and have to lend a certain amount of loyalty and support as alumnus. Some gain a little more pride about doing that than others. Naturally that's true with everything. It gives them something to associate themselves with at the end, I mean, twenty or thirty years after they've gotten out. There's a certain amount of pride, whether they've won or lost or whether the program's good or bad. Whittier College, the school

where President Nixon went, is popular. They were never great in athletics, but I'm sure that alumni there are just as proud to be associated with their school. It's something to be associated with rather than the fact that it's great. I think at the end we get a little more pride in something, as we get older rather than at the immediate time.

D: Do you think the sports program stimulates students to participate in athletics, intramurals speaking?

R: No, I don't think so. I think that what determines that... well; we all have a certain amount of ego. I think everybody feels that they see something and they think they can do it as well, or they wished they could do it as well. But athletics, the more I see it, there's a certain amount of background that has to go along with it. I'm speaking about grade school or so on, because that's where it begins. And I think that if a kid develops some skill towards it, he'll be enthused about participating in it. If he doesn't, if he's leaning towards something else, if he's gone through grade school and his dad put a gold club in his hands, and he never touched a basketball – I think when he goes to college, he might see basketball games. I don't think it's going to excite him to the point where he wants to go out for intramurals, unless he's been exposed to it in earlier life, because you have to develop a little bit of skill. If your dad gave you a gold club when you were five years old and you kept that little bit, it's going to do something to you to the point that when you get in college you're going to maybe wish that you could participate. Perhaps even try to participate in intramural golf and you might not even be a good golfer, but you might be inclined to want to play. I think the same thing is true with basketball or anything else, even ping pong, you know, even the smaller sports which don't require much skill. They do require a lot of skill, but the point is you have to have a certain amount of background in coming along in life to the point of when you get in college, whether you're going to be enthused to go out for intramurals.

A lot of kids that participate in intramurals, you see them at the beginning, get dejected because sometimes they play against kids who have a lot more skill. And it actually deflates their ego about participating, if they can't keep up with the other kids physically because of the lack of skills concerned there.

D: How has your role as the head basketball coach changed since your first year?

R: I don't think my role has changed any. I always felt that, well, you were given the job to coach kids and it has gotten bigger. It has gotten a little more involved as far as... I think I've learned a lot since when you first start, you're learning just like the kids. Your first year of coaching, I mean it's a great experience, but you've got to admit you're one year out of college and then you're coaching; there's a lot you have to learn, too, about coaching. Therefore, I've tried to spend as much time in learning as much as I could about my profession so that I could do a better job in it. I mean, in this respect, the fact that I've tried to watch how others do it, other coaches, and go to clinics and get involved that way I think I have learned. Because no matter how long you've been in anything there are certain things that you can learn that might help your program. Sometimes it's the little things, one little thing, that could change a program for you.

My idea has always been to play to win, but I've never felt you had to win or die. I've learned to take losses and I always figure if there are two people playing, that someone's got to suffer and you just hope, percent wise, that it isn't always you.

(Laughter)

But as far as I'm concerned, I've tried to feel just like a teacher. I mean if you're an engineer, I'm sure that an engineering teacher just doesn't say, "Well, okay, I know it all now." I'm sure that he gets involved in the new ideas that come out about engineering and with the changes of everything in life. So many things change. I mean, today we're in the space age and I'm sure that the engineering thinking had to change in the teaching and everything else.

So, basketball has been pretty much that way but certain fundamentals, I mean in the game, are basic and important. I'm sure that certain things speaking just in basketball, the passing, dribbling, teamwork and things like that, I was involved with those when I first started to coach and I'm still trying to get those things across now that I've been in it a little while.

Today, kids learn skills better. Just like today in mathematics. I'm sure we have smarter mathematicians today than we maybe had twenty years ago. Maybe not necessarily so, but at least they've changed ideas. Maybe a certain idea that they didn't know then, that they have now. It doesn't mean that they were any smarter then. And the same thing is true with trying to compare kids. Are they better basketball players today than they were then? Well, at that time, if a kid was outstanding with certain skills, and if that was the limit of that time, well okay. But today, naturally, times have changed. The skills today they've learned to shoot one hand, can do it more effectively as compared to when years ago, they used to do it with two hands. They find that you can do it faster and it's just as effective and so you can take more shots and so on. So, from that standpoint, the coach has to make a certain amount of change in that way.

But I think there are always certain basic things that a coach has to consider no matter what. You always have to consider the individual because every individual is a little different in some respects. There are certain basic things that you try to get across to everybody, but there are certain individual differences that may have to be considered in coaching too.

D: Have you ever noticed any changes in the student athlete over the span of your coaching career?

R: Yes, the athlete today is much better in a lot of ways, because I think each time in the development of the game each year, there have been new things tried and found to be more effective. It also has changed the rules of the game, too, so therefore, individuals have learned to adapt to different types of things. For instance, years ago, you have played at a slower pace. Slower kids could play. But as time went along, coaches got to use little faster kids and changed the rules of the game to the point where the game became faster boys tried to emphasize the placing of speed as an important factor in athletics. I think that speed is probably the one contributing factor that has changed all sports, I mean in both football and basketball. Before in football, it was a power game originally, and then a little bit of passing came in, and then speed came in. And right now speed is a very important factor.



And basketball, the same thing is true. Years ago, speed wasn't emphasized too much because the rules didn't make any difference to whether you played fast. I mean there was a center jump, which slowed the game up anyway. At first it wasn't that important. But today, certain things have cropped up because of the rules and because coaches have tried different things. As a result of speed, coaches get into a little more pressing type of defenses and things like that, which become more effective, so it has changed quite a bit. And we have always look at the times as though, well, nothing's going to improve in our time. But I'm sure that ten years from now there will be things that will be done a little different, not a whole lot, but some little wrinkle that a coach will put in that has an effect on the game. It's a result of, maybe the athlete's ability to do those things, which has caused the coach to try. Sometimes those things, certain amounts of skills or certain things that are being done or what coaches do, have an effect even on changing the rules, which have an effect on the game.

D: Do you think that the newfound freedoms on the college campuses and the liberalness affected the student athlete? Is he more receptive to coaching?

R: No. I think that is going to affect some kids. I think we had problem children way back too. I look at it this way, athletics is something that when a kid makes the squad, he gets more involved that he wants to play. And I'm sure that thirty years ago, when you were only able to start five boys, there were five boys that were just as mad at he coaches as the five that don't start today. I think that's just part of athletics. I know, because I went through it when I was in college. I wanted to start. I wanted to play and I'm sure you would feel the same way. If you don't start, why, you just didn't feel too good. I think the same thing is true today. I mean it's just the competitiveness in the kids and so on. I think a certain amount of it was always in athletics. Maybe they don't show it as much. Some kids have a way of not showing it anyway, but that's the differences in the kids' personality. There are fellows who have a way of never showing any emotions at all, and yet they might be an emotional type of individual. Yet they don't show it. They have ways of showing it; maybe when they got home they break a window, punch somebody.

D: Do you think it's somewhat more difficult in the use of training rules and discipline now than it was thirty years ago?

R: Yes, I think today most coaches are getting away from they're being more liberal as far as consuming a kid's time. I think today in athletics, you coach a boy for two, two and a half or three hours, it's a long season. You're occupying the kid pretty long. I think you've got to let the kid grow with the times.

D: What has been the attitude of the administration you've served under concerning the sports program budget? In particular the basketball program?

R: I can never, in my thirty-one years here, recall being held back in any way, as a result of a budget cutback. I mean they've been wonderful right from the start and the only thing I can contribute that to is the fact that the administration has felt that athletics played an important part in the university's overall program. But they have never

interfered in trying to cut the budget down. I think that too I'm not trying to take credit for anything but I think as coaches, and Webster as the athletic director, and people involved in running it, have always tried to use good judgment in not overdoing something. I've always felt that you can't grow too fast because you can cut yourself right out, and you have to grow with the times. If the school is pinching, then you have to pinch. It's just like depressions and good times. You have to learn to give and take with the situation and I'm sure that that's the way we've always operated. If we had it and it was available, we were able to ask for it and get it. And if we felt that things were tough and we better pinch here ourselves, we've done the same thing. We've helped to keep the program on an even scale where it wouldn't affect the school in any way. They've been wonderful and never interfered in any way to the point where we're had to say, "Well, gee, we might have to cut the program," or something like that.

D: Has there been an overemphasis of the sports program at the expense of the average student?

R: No. We've never been a school that has gone overboard on athletic scholarships. It has been a good many years before we actually started to help a few. There have been many times when we were unable to help anybody, as far as affecting the school's budget at the expense of a student. Usually at the early part of the program, the best we could do is try to get a student a part time job where he could pay his own bills. And that was for a good many years until they were able to give aid to some of the athletes. But I'm sure that it has never been at the expense where we had to raise the tuition as a result of keeping or maintaining our athletic program. And that's where it shows. I would say that we never affected the intramurals or other student activity functions in any way, that I can recall.

D: Have you experienced any undue pressure regarding the subject or winning here at the University?

R: Never, never. And that's why I say it has been wonderful with the presidents that we've had here, the administrations and so on. They've kept their hands out. They've given us the responsibility and put the faith in us and we've always felt that they've had the confidence in us to do the job and in proportion to the overall teaching and other parts of the program here. I've never felt that in any way that they put any undue pressure on us that we had to win or goodbye.

D: To what do you attribute your overwhelming success?

R: Well, I don't know if I've had overwhelming success. I just feel that I've been able to get along and I think when you start giving credit to anybody, an individual's success, you have too many people to thank and give credit to. Because no one succeeds or gets any overwhelming success without a lot of people contributing, and maybe contributing a lot more than the person that gets the credit for the success.

I mean we've had a lot of players who have been cooperative and had to go through a lot of hard times, such as trying to play basketball, working part time, driving across town to play, and all that. That's what I mean by undue, little things that they've

had to do. And I've always wonder why I didn't have a strike by the players because I forced them to go across town to practice every night for about 28 years. And so I often wondered, is anybody going to be here tonight? But they've all been wonderful and they've contributed. So, I would say that any success that might be attributed to me has to be given to a lot of people that have played for me and worked with me, plus the administration, who have been wonderful. Peace of mind is important, and that's one thing I've always felt, the administration has always let the athletic program have, and that's peace of mind. Go out and do a good job. Just like hiring a teacher, go ahead; do a good job and no one's going to bother you. And that's the way I've always felt.

But as far as the players that I've had as far as basketball is concerned I can go back to my first team. We had a good bunch of bys the first team. I can remember many of the ball players then. A couple of them have passes away, Leo Mogus, John Paulen, two boys from Scienceville High School. Both from Scienceville High School both passed away. One a couple of years ago, and one passed away during the service. Jim Heberk, Corletzi, Rowland, and Kenny Burdon; I can remember most of them, but right now just trying to think real fast. I'm sorry I started to mention names now because I know I'm going to get a call tomorrow from someone that I missed. But they were a good bunch and it just seems like character. We've had kids with good character throughout my thirty-one years and I think that is a big factor in getting a lot out of kids. They don't do it for you, and I think it's true with even scientists. There's the little guy that didn't get any credit, that maybe spent a lot of time with those guinea pigs, and found out things and told his boss, "Hey, this is going to work here." Before you know it he got credit for it. (Laughter). So, I think basketball and athletics are pretty much the same. I mean, the boys go out and do it. In football, they go out and get touchdowns for it, and the head coach gets it. And the basketball is the same way. You've got a lot of credit to be given to a lot of kids that play for you.

D: What has been your most frustrating experience in relationship to the sports program here at the University?

R: Well, see I've coached here for thirty-one years and we didn't have our own gym for twenty-nine of them. And like I said before, it was tough. I often wondered how the kids did it. I know, I lived on the north side; we practiced on the south side; we practiced down at Struthers; we practiced at Fitch; we practiced at all the local high schools wherever we could. I think the most frustrating thing that I've had although I put up with it because I love the sport and I didn't mind it, the thing that frustrated me is, how do these kids take it? And I often wondered, my God, it's a wonder they don't strike on me. I mean we'd go to a practice at the South High; they'd have to get in cars; they'd have to bear the weather, because there were many times when it was tough getting there. You start at 6:30 and get through at 9:00 or 9:30, kids get home at 10:00 o'clock and I think that was the hardest thing that I had to endure. I didn't mind it, but I figured that was a hardship for all the kids to go and yet, in my twenty-nine years of doing that, I never had one kids come up to me and say, "Coach, this is too tough. I'm not going to put up with this." And I expected it. It takes a lot of courage on the kids' part. I'm sure that it was aggravating. I mean to have to get out in the cold, go out get back in the car. Now it's a lot easier. They just come across the street here and practice and go back in the dorm. So,

I would say that was probably the most frustrating part for me, to see how these kids endured that.

D: Why have you remained as a head coach in two sports at the University? It would seem that it would take up quite a bit of time.

R: No. It does, but what's the difference whether you put time in this or that, and that's the way I look at it. They overlapped a little, but not to the point where they affected each other. Basketball starts October 15 to about March 2. I started baseball immediately after that, and it's no different that somebody else having to go to work at the same job the next day. So, I don't find that they overlap to the point where they affect each other in the least. My life has been with athletics and I love athletics. It's not like doing something (where you feel), look what I've got to go through. It hasn't been a chore; it has been a happy experience and sometimes you just look forward to a change.

I remember years ago when I used to work in the summer time. I used to get a job doing carpenter work. It was wonderful; you used to get up on the roof and hit those (nails). It was wonderful, pounding those nails. I'd get them in sometimes with one stroke. It would get your frustrations worked out. So, it's good to do something different and break the spell and monotony, because I'm sure that we all get into a rut in no matter what we do. It's nice to have something to break that spell.

D: Have you entertained any ideas about resigning your post for any reason? If so, when?

R: Right not I'd say maybe when I get in fifty years of coaching; maybe I'll give it up. But that's a tough question. I still like the sport. I'm still physically able. And I think that anybody that's in coaching, just like you have a job teaching or anything else, when there comes a time when some illness or something affects it, or some tragedy or something, there could be something bad happening that could curtail anything in our lifetime. But right now, as long as I enjoy it, I'm physically able to go through with it, so I'll just have to let time take care of that.

D: Have you at any time, in the past years of coaching, been approached by any other university for a position which you may have thought as more lucrative, that you were considering it?

R: Twice. I won't mention the situations. I always liked Youngstown. I had situations when I was in the service for four years and came out a Captain, and I had some offers to stay there. But I was born and raised in Youngstown and the grass doesn't look green to me anyplace else. I think the main thing with my situation was the fact that I was happy with the people that I was working for and with. And I think, in life, that is a big thing. If you're working for a boss that's a louse, put it that way, why, you're just happy to make a change. I've been blessed and I would say awfully lucky to be working with people in all the sports, in football, in the AD, and the presidents and everybody. You might say it has been luck that it turned out that way, the fact that I've never had aggravation with anybody to the point where: I had to get away from this. And I think that has attributed to the fine people that I've worked with.

D: Who or what has proved to be the greatest influence in your career?

R: Well, Dike Beede gave me my break. What you do in early life, who guides you then, and influences then, is maybe more important than what takes place later on. Because in life, there's a point that really makes you or breaks you. I've always been lucky in sports. I was always able to compete in sports, even when I was young. So, that was my life, sort of. I did anything I had to do to be good in a particular thing, and that was even not to smoke. I realize that today that isn't a pressing thing. But when I was a kid, I thought it was awful for a kid, if he was going out for sports, to smoke, and yet I saw kids smoke on teams that I played with in high school. I thought that was a big thing, so I put a lot of emphasis in little things like that. So, athletics had a great influence.

Then there's always someone who gives you the break. I would say that Dike Beede gave me my biggest break. I played football for him at Geneva College. He took a liking to me, and got me my start here at Youngstown College at the time. And I couldn't think of a better man that had good ideals and high ideals to be influenced by. He probably, without a doubt, was the greatest influence in my life as far as my job is concerned.

I was lucky to marry a girl that just sort of blended in with me from the standpoint of giving in to what she thought was important to me, which now you might say was selfish, but I think she was happy. She didn't know anything about athletics and so she converted her lifetime to me and it could have been the other way around. It could have been that she didn't care about athletics, and I would have had to convert to her influences, I mean her mom or other things that she played more important than my job. She was willing to do anything that she thought I was happy in and that was helping our cause. There was no question about it that my wife had never interfered; she always made me feel happy. To this day, I can't give too much credit to the influence of even my wife.

But Dike Beede gave me my break, kept me straight, and I sort of looked up to him because he had high ideals. He was a square-shooting man and he was a brilliant man, a brilliant man. I wasn't hanging around with a rum-dum, and that's the way I feel. He was a fellow that if anybody just followed him along, he was not going to get you out of line in any way. As a result you learn good things instead of bad things. So, he played an important part, and my wife in sort of cooperating. You're raising a family and so on, young, I mean. I'm not talking about now. My kids are grown up and so on. It's a little different now. But in early life when they go through the periods of problems that young kids have, there's nothing like having a good wife.

D: What do you consider the future of the sports program at Youngstown University is?

R: Well, I think it has been put on good grounds; athletics is put in its proper place. We shouldn't try to put athletics above education. The school is first. Students come here, like I said before, it's something that they can associate themselves with, participate in if they have the ability, but there are few that can do that. But they get a benefit in other ways. I would hate to see it to the point where the emphasis would be put that you had to win, and you win the championship. Before you know it, there are so many evils that take place before you in athletics as a result of people having to win. I mean coaches bring on their own problems because of that. If a president hires a coach because he says, "Now

look, you go out and get yourself a championship team. We want recognition here.” And there has been situations like that. Those situations are short-lived; they get a bad reputation. It’s better off if they didn’t have the sport at all. And that is true; you read about it every day. Ever at those places, the president puts the pressure on the coach to get ourselves a big-time team and all that. Yet those might be in schools of twenty thousand. It’s a small number involved. But the president, I think, lowers himself by doing it. The coach lowers himself by trying to go ahead and follow and do a lot of dirty tricks to get himself a winning team, if he has to get a winning team. But there are some who just think that that’s the only way to do it. Those things are short-lived. The students go there for the education. They go right by and they get along and so on. It has no effect on them. But it does, maybe tarnish a little bit the school, or a few individuals, the coach and so on, who asks for his own problems.

D: Just one final question, that would be, what would you consider to be your philosophy of coaching?

R: Well, if you’re thinking about mechanics or are you thinking in terms of individuals and people? If you’re thinking in terms of the mechanics of the game and so on, my philosophy of coaching is you’ve got to make it exciting for the fans, in some form or other. I like to feel, even if we didn’t win, I hope we made the fans get excited, because that’s why they came there. They like to see you win, that’s the primary objective, if he’s a diehard fan, but I always hope that he isn’t that type. I hope he’s the type of fan that he would like to see your team win. If they didn’t win, they gave it a good try and it was interesting. Now, if it was dull or you didn’t mix in things or try to do some juggling, not to make it exciting or interesting for the fans, then I’d feel that I didn’t do a good job. I like to dell that I at least, well, we lost, but it was an exciting game. We could have won. My philosophy is just that. I feel that way. I’m not a great believer that you have to win and I’m not going to do anything shady to win, because I think that you undersell your kids. First of all, you don’t fool anybody. You don’t fool your ballplayers. If there’s a coach that thinks he fools his ballplayers, he better get out of coaching, because kids are smart and you can’t put undue pressure on them. And id you’re doing things illegally to put undue pressures on kids, they’re smart enough to catch on to those things. It doesn’t take much to get a few kids to say, “Well, our coach is a rum-dum”, or something like that. They have got to respect you for the fact that you’re honest with them, and honest about the way you do things. And that’s my philosophy on coaching.

END OF INTERVIEW.