



WILLIAM "BILL" MASAO KAJIKAWA
1912 - 2010

Honored as a Historymaker 1993
ASU Acclaimed Educator and Coach



William "Bill" Masao Kajikawa
photograph by Kelly Holcombe

The following is an oral history interview with William, known as Bill, Kajikawa (**BK**) conducted by Zona D. Lorig (**ZL**) for Historical League, Inc. on October 26, 1992 at the Kajikawa home in Tempe.

Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.

Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Historical Society Museum Library at Papago Park, Tempe, Arizona.

ZL: Would you tell where you were born and when you came to Arizona?

BK: I was born in Oxnard, California, September 6, 1912.

ZL: When did your parents decide to move to Arizona?

BK: My parents and family, brothers and sisters, moved to Phoenix, Arizona in the summer of 1929.

ZL: How old were you then?

BK: 17 years old.

ZL: You were in high school at the time?

BK: I was just starting high school.

ZL: You attended Phoenix Union High School?

BK: I attended Phoenix Union from 1929, my class was 1933. From there I went to Arizona State in Tempe in 1933 and my graduating class was 1937.

ZL: Was that the only high school in Phoenix at the time?



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BK: Yes, that was the only high school in Phoenix. Most cities had only one high school: Glendale, Mesa, Tucson, Peoria and others.

ZL: There was a high school in Tempe?

BK: We only had one high school which was located by the shopping center at University and Mill.

ZL: How large was Phoenix Union at the time?

BK: Phoenix Union was reported to be about forty-five hundred students. It was stated that it was one of the largest high schools west of the Mississippi. I don't know if that was true or not, but it was a large high school.

ZL: What activities were you involved in at the high school?

BK: Well, I was mainly in sports. I was involved in football, basketball and baseball.

ZL: I understand you were quite a football star?

BK: That is a relative term, I think. If you consider today's players, I may not have received a uniform. The boys are so skilled today and have so much preparation such as baseball, Little League, and Pop Warner Leagues. We didn't have those. So actually we just started. For instance, if I came from out of state I would have just started playing at the high school level. We didn't have any elementary school level or Pop Warner to prepare us.

ZL: In your senior year you were quarterback for the All-State team of that season. What schools were the other players from?

BK: The All-State team is not like today where you have 5A, 4A and so forth. We had one level and that was just high school football. The All-State selection was from the entire state. Most of the players selected were from the larger schools such as Tucson, Mesa or Phoenix. Occasionally we had players selected from Miami, Globe, Glendale and Buckeye when they had some outstanding players.

ZL: Did they divide you up into two teams to play each other?

BK: No, we didn't have any contests.

ZL: It was just an honor to be selected.



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BK: Honorary, yes.

ZL: You must have been an awfully fast runner.

BK: Well, let's see, how I would answer that? I don't think I was very fast from the standpoint of speed. But for 50 or 75 or 100 yards I think I was quick. So it was quickness with just average speed.

ZL: Probably you could maneuver really well.

BK: Yes, I wasn't very fast.

ZL: I read that in those days at the end of the football season there was a game between Phoenix Union High School and Phoenix Indian School.

BK: Phoenix Indian School used to be on our regular schedule and during our time period it used to be a Thanksgiving Day game. Then we had what we called a post season game which was after the season. Our school would invite the champions from Colorado or Utah, and we had a team from Chicago come in once, so it was sort of a post season. Today we would probably refer to it as a Bowl Game.

ZL: So during the time you were playing football that game with Phoenix Indian School was played on Thanksgiving Day. Was that a really big event?

BK: Yes, it was quite a ceremonial game. The boys from the Phoenix Indian School would come to play us and we would play in the Montgomery Stadium which was probably one of the finest stadiums in the state at that time.

ZL: What was the location of that stadium?

BK: That was right on the campus on the east side of 7th Street. Before the game we had a ceremony. Most of the Indian boys painted their faces and before the kickoff they would bring the peace pipe and have a little ceremony, as I recall.

ZL: With the Phoenix Union team and their team?

BK: The two captains. It was very colorful.

ZL: Immediately after you graduated from high school you started to ASC in Tempe?

BK: Yes, it was Arizona State Teachers College.

ZL: And what did you major in?



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BK: I majored in Education. As you know, Arizona State was originally named Tempe Normal—Normal signified teacher training I believe. Most of the students were ladies. They principally became teachers, especially in elementary schools. You didn't have very many men teaching in elementary schools I don't think. When we came to school in 1933, I heard that was probably the start of the balance between men and women. As time went along more men came to Arizona State Teachers College.

ZL: They probably started expanding their curriculum.

BK: Oh, yes. Our largest college was probably the College of Education, naturally. Then we kept adding other colleges. Today we have so many more colleges.

ZL: Yes, it is one of the largest universities in the country today. Do you remember how many students were there when you started?

BK: I will just make a generalization that we had probably less than a thousand. When I started, it could have been about 800 or 900, something like that.

ZL: Did you live on campus?

BK: Yes, I lived on campus in a dormitory. We had Alpha Hall, East Hall and I think Matthews Hall—although when I came, Matthews Hall was changed to the ladies dormitory. The girls had North Hall, South Hall and West Hall, and then they had Matthews. We just had the two I believe, East Hall and Alpha Hall.

ZL: You had a football scholarship and played for Coach Rudy Lavik.

BK: Our scholarship was an opportunity to work for our room and board.

ZL: He gave you a job, right?

BK: Well that was quite an incentive and a big help. As you recall, the so-called Great Depression was around 1929, and that is when I started high school. When it became 1933, it was still the depression. The depression probably lasted until almost the beginning of World War II, which was 1941. So then my schooling, during the depression, was high school and college.

ZL: Your parents had other children to support besides you.

BK: Yes, so those of us that had an opportunity for work scholarship worked an average of three hours



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a day.

ZL: You worked all of the time, not just after football season was over?

BK: All the time.

ZL: What was your work?

BK: I had several kinds of work. I worked as a helper to the gardener. I worked as a helper to the plumber, and of course we all did this. Like janitors we worked to clean up the library and many kinds of things. Many of the fellows worked in the dining hall called Krause Hall. I don't know what they use it for now. After the dining hall closed, they used it for a carpentry shop. That is when we had the Student Union.

ZL: Did you work in the dining hall?

BK: No, there is a little story about that. Only the big strong football players got to work there. The reason was that each table seated eight people. You had the father and the mother and three students on each side, and these were assigned tables. You sat at these tables on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. On Friday it was called a weekend table and you could sit any place you liked.

ZL: Did the males and the females all eat in there?

BK: Yes.

ZL: You were mixed up at the table? You had males and females both?

BK: Yes, it was like a family teaching you table manners. Mrs. Krause was the head of the dining hall and her husband, Mr. Krause, was the chef. They ran the dining hall as well as the employment and everything else. She was a top lady, Mrs. Krause. She stood at the entrance of the dining hall and you were to be well groomed, not necessarily in coat and tie, but you couldn't come in with sweatshirts or tee shirts or anything like that. She was against suspenders, so no one wore suspenders. You couldn't come in just off the playing field. Then she walked around the dining hall, and if you were not using the proper knife and fork, she would give you a little tap. We had the entire table settings. There were pitchers of water and milk. When we ate grapefruit, we didn't cut it up, we had to scoop it out. When we came in the dining hall we stood behind our chairs, we could not sit. Often times a football player, or it could be someone else, got the most lucrative assignment which was to be the head waiter. He had a table with a bell and when he got ready he rang the bell and everyone sat down. In the meantime, all of these big fellows came out carrying trays with the milk, water, meat and vegetables and brought it to the table. It came in centerpieces like you do at home. Then it would be left up to the father who would start passing it around. You usually had boy, girl, boy, girl, like you were in the family.



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ZL: When you had these other jobs would they assign it to you for a whole semester?

BK: Yes, in a way. You would probably stay with them, or they might need some help some place else that took you off that assignment and put you over there. Often times if you were a janitor in one of the buildings you would probably stay there for the whole semester.

ZL: You had those jobs for all the four years you were in school?

BK: Yes, I had different jobs. We didn't have any professional janitors or workers. We had the main plumber who might have a helper, and the carpenter who might have a helper, but all of the other help would be students and that was an opportunity for students to go to school. They didn't have to be athletes. They could be anyone.

ZL: Sounds like a good plan.

BK: Yes, the girls also had opportunities. They had different work assignments.

ZL: When you were at ASC, where were the football games played when you started?

BK: The first field was called Irish Field. That was located about where the Memorial Union is located today. Then we had a field that the University bought. It would be about where the Student Recreation Complex is now. It was a football field that was full of rocks which we had to pick up. Then we built a nice little stadium which held a couple thousand. Then they built a concrete stadium on the east side.

ZL: That was Goodwin?

BK: Yes, then there was Hayden. It was built by the W.P.A. [Works Progress Administration]. They had to combine in order to get this W.P.A. project. Underneath were the locker room and the showers. Then you had dormitories and athletic facilities upstairs. The roof actually was the seating. The other building had the stadium, but it was not concrete. The bottom was the electrical shop and wood shop.

ZL: For classes?

BK: Yes, that became the Goodwin Stadium. We were there until about 1957, I think somewhere around there, when we built the Sun Devil Stadium.

ZL: It was pretty exciting when the Goodwin Stadium was completed, wasn't it?

BK: Oh yes. It was dedicated in the fall of 1936. I remember that because I was a senior. I played in a game against Cal Tech during which we dedicated Goodwin Stadium. That is the tech school that is in Pasadena.



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ZL: Did you win?

BK: Yes, we won. That was the first game in 1936.

ZL: In 1937, you graduated with a degree in Education and that fall you began to coach?

BK: Right, freshman football.

ZL: Since you had just graduated from college yourself, was that a real challenge to start coaching freshman?

BK: Yes, it was quite an opportunity because during that period, and even several years after that period, it was very difficult to obtain a position teaching so I was very happy that I played for Coach Lavik. He was a disciplinarian and yet a humanitarian, a man of high ideals. He gave me the opportunity to stay there. So that is the way I got started.

ZL: How long was he in Tempe?

BK: He came in 1933, and I remember that because I was a freshman. Dr. Gammage came from, what then was, Arizona State Teacher's College in Flagstaff. When Dr. Gammage became the president of our school, he brought Coach Lavik.

ZL: Then Lavik was there until he retired?

BK: Yes, he was my coach and then he coached through the season of 1937. Then we had a change. I think Coach Dixie Howell of Alabama fame became our coach.

ZL: Did you teach also?

BK: Yes, I taught. Most of the classes would be in reference to teacher preparation such as physical education in elementary school. This was a required course for elementary teachers. We had things like first aid and school and community health which were requirements for education majors. We had classes for physical education majors. We had classes in football, basketball, baseball and track and I helped in those classes. We had large classes and two year blocks. We would change sports after every six weeks. Whoever went through that program would have an orientation in many things.

ZL: Did you change with the block or did you teach the same thing?

BK: I taught football, baseball and basketball to start with. Then we had more people coming in to



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teach, so we used to split up into blocks. I may have had two blocks or three blocks but I didn't have to teach every single sport.

ZL: You married Margaret Akymoto on June 15, 1941. Where did you and Margaret meet?

BK: We met in Los Angeles where she was living.

ZL: During the time you were in college?

BK: I think it was a few years after graduation.

ZL: And so she moved over here?

BK: Yes in 1941. Then the war broke out in December 1941.

ZL: What did that do to your lives?

BK: It caused many changes. The war was declared in 1941 and things kept evolving. Many of the men students were gone, so it became a lady's school again. At that time they had Air Force training, the basic I think. They attended classes and were on the campus.

ZL: They started at Williams Air Force Base and then they would come to ASC at Tempe?

BK: They would come here before they went to those training centers.

ZL: And you would house them on campus?

BK: Yes, they were here on the campus, and some of the instructors were working with that. Then in 1942 they activated the so-called 442nd. That was a regiment composed of all Japanese Americans. Shortly after the war began there was an evacuation. They had camps all over. There was a request from many of our Japanese American leaders that the government should form a special unit of all these fellows so they could prove their loyalty and fight for their country. I think it was in 1943, the first of the year, when they called for volunteers and quite a few came from the camps.

ZL: They did allow those people to come from the internment camps?

BK: Right. They could volunteer from the camps. Quite a few of them who volunteered came from Hawaii. So I volunteered.

ZL: How many men were in that division?



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BK: About 4,000. It was a regiment. There are three regiments in a division. A division is

approximately 12,000 troops and they are self-supporting. We weren't a division. The procedure was that when a division was committed into battle, it would have two regiments fighting and one in reserve; then they would rotate. In any regiment there were three battalions of infantry, a battalion of artillery, and a company of engineers. Of course, there was medical corps. That's the unit I happened to be with. We usually have a reunion every two years. They alternate between Hawaii and what is called the mainland over here. This March will mark the 50th anniversary of the activation of the unit. They are going to have a grand reunion. We have had reunions before but this is approaching the end, I think, because the boys are all pretty elderly. They are probably around 75, close to 80. There were some young boys there but they should all be retired by now. Some were younger than 20 and some were older.

ZL: Your wife had two brothers?

BK: She had three brothers in this unit, and one is visiting here today. She had two brothers and me over there. I was the only one fortunate enough to come back. She had three brothers and we lost two of them. The third brother they didn't send over because she lost two brothers. There were some very outstanding battles. Incidentally, just recently there were two books written by a couple of ladies. One author interviewed these fellows during the reunions, so it is an actual recount of the experiences of the boys that came back.

ZL: This is all from the 442nd?

BK: 442nd. Now going back, in Hawaii they had a battalion called the 100th Infantry Battalion. It was all "Japanese" and "American." When the war broke out they didn't want to keep them there, so they were sent over to the mainland to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. Now you can imagine the change of weather from Hawaii to the snow country. They were trained already, so then they trained a little more. They went to Africa before us.

Then the 442nd was organized and we trained at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. In the meantime, the 100th was having casualties. Unlike other units they didn't have a replacement group. They asked for volunteers, again from our unit, for the 100th. That is when Margaret's two brothers volunteered and went with the 100th Infantry Battalion, which means about one-thousand troops. They started fighting in Africa and went all the way up to Italy and north of Rome. By then our unit was ready, so we went to Italy and there we combined forces. They became our First Battalion. They have First, Second and Third Battalions. The 100th became our First Battalion because we were depleted . . .

Then we became a unit. Although we were 442nd, they retained their 100th infantry battalion because they were very proud of that. Our unit, when we have a reunion, is called the 442nd and 100th Infantry Battalion Reunion. They didn't want to be absorbed into the 442nd because they established themselves



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another outstanding record when we got there. When we joined we continued to win some honors. I

think our unit, the 442nd– 100th, received seven Presidential [Unit] Citations and that's supposed to be pretty good.

ZL: It was the highest number ever received, wasn't it?

BK: Yes, for Presidential [Unit] Citations. They put banners on your flag. That is the short story of that.

ZL: How long were you over there?

BK: We started the unit in 1943. It was 1944 when we went over. We were only over there about a year, year and a half. It was all combat time because they always put a unit with a division that was fighting. We couldn't prove anything if we were back here in the supply. So we were there starting in 1944, I think it was summer. Then in 1945 the war ended about June, in the summertime. Then a short time later Japan surrendered. Naturally they wouldn't send us to the Pacific because of the confusion there with troops, so we were sent to Italy. We started at the bottom of Italy, then went to France, then Germany, three countries.

ZL: Then after the war was over you were in Occupied Germany for a while?

BK: Yes, we were there for a while. Usually the requirement was duration and six months, I think they used to say. But you came home on points. If you were married, if you had youngsters and all the accumulated points, you could come home. I came home on the second unit.

ZL: After the war started but before you joined the 442nd, what happened here in Tempe? What were you doing and what was the attitude?

BK: Well, I continued to work. You see there was a restriction; I forget the certain distance, but these were the places like bridges and these big transformers. In Mesa there's a place and I think there were some in Tempe, those were kind of off-limit places. We had to be so many miles away from them. They were afraid some of us would go and tamper with the bridges. You could drive over the bridge, but you couldn't stop on it.

ZL: Did they have guards?

BK: They usually did, yes. For example, the bridge at Blythe would have little tenants of troops there, but that would be off limits. What they had was a line I think, one-hundred miles from the coast, coming down the West Coast. You couldn't be in that area. From this restricted area toward the ocean you could be on the eastern side of it.



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Friends of mine would come through Peoria and Glendale. When it came to Phoenix, I think it took the northern boundary of the city and then came down Van Buren across the bridge through Tempe and Mesa. So actually, one side of Tempe or Mesa would be restricted and if you were on this side then you would be free. But for example the Tempe bridge--I forget what the distance was, a mile--you couldn't be any closer or live any closer to the bridge. The University, at least around the gym where I worked, was free.

We lived in a house but we had to move a few times. We were too close so we had to move. Now there were many people who went to camp because they didn't have any means of a livelihood. They could live in a free area but they couldn't earn a living.

ZL: And they couldn't return to where they normally worked?

BK: No. For instance, in areas of Glendale where someone was farming they had to move to the other side. If they moved to the other side, they may not have any farms. Some people may have not sold fuel for the Japanese farmer's tractors or they did not sell the Japanese cars or tractors for work. Many of them went to camp. Some could move into the interior, say Utah or some place, but it would be difficult for them to earn a livelihood.

ZL: How did that make you feel?

BK: Well, you are kind of lost because from the time you were a youngster going to school your country was going to take care of you and protect you. You were a citizen and that is one thing we were told that you would never lose, your citizenship. But during that period, you see, you didn't have that. That would be a sad time for people. There was a ruling for our parents. It was difficult for them to come to the country but they couldn't earn their citizenship.

ZL: They were not allowed to become a citizen?

BK: No. Some people ask why they didn't become citizens like others. They were restricted until after the war. They lifted that and then they could become citizens. We were born here so we were automatically citizens. After the war our parents took lessons and then they could become citizens like anyone else. These are the things that happened. Margaret's family was in Los Angeles and they had their home, cars, and many things. They were given a certain time to evacuate and all they could take is what they could carry.

ZL: Where did they go?

BK: They had what they called assembly centers where they had to assemble. Many of the assembly centers were horse race tracks like Santa Anita. They had places up north, you see, where they kept the



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horses where they ran around. But what they gave them were these mattress covers and then they put

some straw in there for their mattresses. People slept in these stalls where they kept the horses. In the meantime they were building these camps. As you know, Arizona had a couple of camps on the Sacaton Indian Reservation and Poston had one. They had to build those.

ZL: How long did they stay at the race track?

BK: While they were getting ready for these camps. They had to hurry and build them. I forget exactly how long, but they were put on buses and taken there. They all received numbers. Almost treated like something . . . Now for instance, in Utah if some farmer wanted to hire them, they could probably leave the camp. After they went to the camp, they could leave. But it was difficult and probably frightening to be leaving there to go to another place where you were kind of out in the cold, so to speak. The kind of work they had was work in the sugar beet field. There was no regular farm work and there were many people who probably couldn't do that kind of work anymore. Some, like parents, were getting a little older. Some of the younger people left to work. They would go to places like Chicago and places like that but after the war many of them came back.

ZL: Now, their property was still . . .

BK: I think most of the property was kept because of the sons or daughters, you see. It was in their name and some of those fellows did well after the war. When things settled down the land became very expensive again and they did quite well, like in Orange County. That is a very expensive area today. We visited someone who had a piece of land where he developed a shopping center and housing. He did quite well. But for one who had good fortune, there were probably many that didn't. Before the war and during the war there were numbers of people who had taught at the universities. Some were doctors and lawyers but their opportunities were not very good. It is much different today, much different for all of us. Hispanics, Blacks – you name it – I think the opportunities are much better. If you want to, you can go quite a ways up. Our daughter, Christine, is very fortunate. She is doing quite well. She went to Arizona State because she's a loyalist, I guess. She is a Sun Devil through and through. In her junior year she studied in Rome, Italy in a program with the University of Loyola, Chicago. Then she came back and graduated with her class. After her graduation she went to Cal-Berkeley and worked on her masters. That was in the 1960s and I think that is when a lot of excitement was going on. Then she came back to Phoenix. Her major was English so she taught English and she was also a counselor.

ZL: At ASU?

BK: No, at Coronado High School in Scottsdale. After the first year she was qualified to become a counselor but she was so young looking they didn't want to give it to her. Then they checked the Arizona state records and she qualified. She was an English teacher as well as a counselor for about a year. When she was a student at ASU, she was the Vice President for Student Activities. ASU was



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looking for someone to head the activities program at the Memorial Union so they went after her. She

was at that job for a while. Then there was an opening in admissions so she went to admissions. Later on she became the Director of Admissions. Then there was an opening for Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs so she became the assistant. Then there was an opening for an associate and she became an associate. Then the Vice President of Student Affairs, Betty Asher, became the President of South Dakota University. The position was open for about a year and so they made Christine interim while they made a national search for a possible candidate. It came down to three—two men and Christine—and she was appointed the Vice President of Student Affairs. When Dr. Lattie Coor became the President of ASU, I think Christine was probably his first appointment. Of course he made several changes. We are very happy that she was educated locally, went to high school and university here. She went through the ranks so to speak.

ZL: Somewhere in there she earned a doctorate degree.

BK: Yes. She was director of orientation, I think, at that time and she was taking a few classes. It was suggested that she work for her doctorate. She didn't think that she had time or didn't want to, but they encouraged her so she finally decided to take it. So she was working and working on a doctorate at the same time. She received her doctorate in higher education and administration so then it just fell into her type of work. She has her undergraduate degree from ASU and her masters from California. I think California at that time was probably one of the top graduate schools in the country. Then she received her doctorate here. She belongs to quite a few organizations nationally.

ZL: You have one other daughter?

BK: Yes, two years younger. She went to the University of Colorado. Her name is Carol O'Connell and she lives in Mission Viejo, California. Her husband is with a Mission Viejo company in the land development division. He was also a Marine helicopter pilot. He was in – I forget which one – the Korean War or the Vietnam War, but anyway he was a full colonel and he is retired now. They have two youngsters. Kendall is fourteen, just starting high school, and a little fellow who is eleven. She is substitute teaching now in the elementary school.

ZL: Education is definitely the mode in this family.

BK: Yes, there are three of us in education and Margaret was the banker for about 20 years. She was one of the first women to be an assistant vice president at First Interstate Bank. She received some recognition nationally as one of the first women in that position. There weren't very many then. I am sure there will be a woman president pretty soon.

ZL: After World War II you came back to Tempe?



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BK: Yes, I came back in 1946, I think it was.

ZL: Had you started working on your master's degree prior to that?

BK: No, I think I got my master's degree in 1948.

ZL: You started working on it after you came back from the war and went back to coaching?

BK: Yes, I just started right away. I think it was midyear when I came back.

ZL: You achieved the rank of Associate Professor of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. When did you receive that rank?

BK: I don't remember the year. I would have to look at my certificate.

ZL: You were also a basketball coach at ASC.

BK: Yes, I was a basketball coach after the war--I think from about 1949 to 1957.

ZL: I think I read somewhere that you did a lot of recruiting for basketball in the summertime?

BK: Recruiting mostly in football. All of the recruiters, or all of the assistants, were given different areas. For instance, most of us helped in Arizona, some were in Southern California, some were in Northern California, some were back East, some were in Texas, but my assignment was in Hawaii. I went there for about ten years. We had some pretty good luck. Do you remember Al Harris? He became an All-American. He was black and his father was career Air Force personnel, which is why he was in Hawaii. We had the Apuna brothers. Ben was very outstanding for us. Remember, he was a line backer and his brother was outstanding also. He came after Ben. Then we had Rocky Matali, a defensive guard. In fact, he called me the other day and said that he is going to be here December the 8th. It is nice to hear from them. We had Connie Kawahi who was the hiker for the Cardinals over the years. He would hike the punts and extra points. Then he was released. He is with the Chiefs today. We had quite a few but they were good players. Then we had Tony Louia. Do you remember him? He was a big tackle. He was Samoan but he was from California, a place called Paramount not very far from the International Airport. We have had some good players. So, Hawaii was my assignment. I enjoyed going there because of the friendships I developed with the coaches and the principals as well as some of the teachers and counselors. In addition I met many of the 442nd veterans. We used to have lunch or dinner together. We had some nice visits.

ZL: Did you recruit the first black basketball player at ASU?

BK: I think so. His name was Johnny Burton. Now we have lost track of him. I understand that he's in



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Tucson but we haven't been able to catch up with him. Another black was Christopher. That is when they still had black segregated high schools in Phoenix and he came from the black school [Carver High School].

ZL: What year did you recruit Burton?

BK: Probably early 1950s because I started in 1949. I don't think he was with us then, so it could be early 1950s.

ZL: What happened when you traveled?

BK: We had some interesting incidents. We would go into the restaurants in Arizona. I think what we should bring up is an interesting incident in Lubbock, Texas when we were playing Texas Tech. We knew that Johnny Burton couldn't stay with us in the hotel so we arranged to have him stay at a black hospital. He stayed with the nurses in the quarters. We were traveling in tumble-down buses. It wasn't the day of air travel and Greyhounds and things of that nature. We reported to the gym to play and then a black doctor in his big black limousine brought Johnny to the front door. He traveled first class for that game and we were in a tumble-down bus. We would always talk about that. Then there were times when we would go into a restaurant in one of the other towns and we would all be sitting there eating crackers and getting ready to order when the manager would come and say, "Well, 'so and so' can't eat here." Then we would ask, "Where can we eat together?" He would say, "Upstairs," and I said, "Okay boys, we'll go upstairs," and we would.

ZL: So they would serve you all together upstairs?

BK: Yes, so we went upstairs. We had a few incidents but not really major things – I mean any bad feelings or anything like that. They just told us and we said, "Fine. Where can we eat together?" So we would eat together. We didn't have any incidents while playing or anything like that.

ZL: In 1954-1955 you received the Basketball Coach of the Year Award in the Border Conference. What schools were included in the Border Conference?

BK: We had the University of Arizona, Arizona State, and Northern Arizona University was in it for a while. In that central area were Texas Western (University of Texas El Paso), New Mexico A&M in Las Cruces, and the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Those three were right in a row. Then we went to Texas and you had a school in Abilene, Harden Simmons; West Texas in Canyon, Texas; and Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas, so you had three there.

ZL: So Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

BK: Right. That would be the Border Conference. Then we went to the WAC Conference. Then we



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were in the PAC 10 Conference.

ZL: Do you remember what year they went to the WAC?

BK: I would think probably in the late 1950s. Now some of the schools are still in the WAC, like Texas Western, New Mexico and UTEP. A&M left I think. Then you have schools like San Diego State and Hawaii in the WAC. I know we were in the WAC until 1977, 1978. I think it was around the middle of the 1970's when we went to the PAC 10.

ZL: In 1958 the state voted to change Arizona State College to Arizona State University. What kind of changes did that mean to you?

BK: Well, not only for myself but for everyone associated with the University. I think that put us in another level, not only in athletic competition but academically. It did increase the stature of our school to go from Tempe Normal, around 1929, to State Teachers College. They had to drop the "Normal." Then they picked up "Teachers College." They dropped the "Teachers" around 1945. In 1958 they dropped the "State College" and it became the "University." At that time I think it helped the alumni. I think it made them feel a little prouder that they went to a school that became a university. I think a few years ago we were the fifth largest as far as student body enrollment. I think the university status meant a great deal to all of us who were associated with Arizona State.

ZL: If you were employed by Arizona State at that time, could you actively campaign? Was that an initiative on the ballot?

BK: Right, yes. They wouldn't give it to us because of the strong opposition from the south [Tucson and the University of Arizona] I think. It was on the ballot that year. They decided to put it on the ballot and then we didn't have any problem. At least the people wanted it, which made it better than if we had received it otherwise.

ZL: That was a real mandate from the people.

BK: I think so, yes. That was 1958, I think.

ZL: You received the Outstanding Service Award of the Arizona Interscholastic Association for 1961 to 1966.

BK: That is when I assisted in the signing of officials. We had three regions in Arizona in the Scholastic Association. One region was around the Tucson area. This was the central area, the largest, and one was in the northern area. Each area had a commissioner who assigned the officials.

ZL: You were the commissioner here?



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BK: Yes, the Central Division, probably the largest. It had more schools.

ZL: So you had to assign officials for all the football, basketball, baseball . . .

BK: No, just basketball and there were quite a few teams. I covered the area from Globe-Miami, and then down toward Marana, all the way to Yuma, and up toward Prescott. You had to pair the officials and sometimes a person couldn't work and you would try to get someone else.

ZL: That was all volunteer work?

BK: They paid us a little bit. They gave us a little mileage to travel but not very much. It was kind of an enjoyment in a way.

ZL: You did that for five years?

BK: Yes and I coached baseball for a little while. In fact there for a little while I coached three sports and then had classes at the same time. They wouldn't do that today. They are all specialized.

ZL: Were you the head baseball coach?

BK: Yes, I was the head baseball coach and head basketball coach at the same time. Then I was in charge of the freshman program plus classes. Then I dropped a few responsibilities but I was with football from the time I started. All the way, I was connected with it.

ZL: In 1964 you were awarded the ASU Lettermen's Association Appreciation Award. Was that for both football and basketball?

BK: I think that was in general, so I don't know if that was one sport or another. It combined two or three sports. I guess they just made it an achievement award.

ZL: In 1968 you were elected to the Arizona Basketball Hall of Fame. How did you feel about that award?

BK: I felt very good about it because it was not from our school, it would be another activity or another group.

ZL: In 1974 the William Bloys Post Two American Legion honored you with the annual Americanism Award. Was this award for your service during World War II or for your community service in Tempe?



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BK: Community – this is not the military. It is given to someone who has worked in the community – like Hascall Henshaw [former Athletic Director for Tempe Union High School District]. I think he received it. I think we had a minister receive it once, different people who worked in the community.

ZL: You had devoted many hours to the baseball and softball program for the American Legion A League.

BK: Yes, I worked in that for a few years.

ZL: Did you start those programs?

BK: No, I didn't start them. You see it is a program that the American Legion had for many years. It is called the American Legion of Baseball. It is a national program and they have a national championship, of course. When I was in high school, you could only play at a certain age. When I was in high school I had to play in it. I worked in it here. We had many boys from around Tempe, naturally, play in it. They had a team or two in Phoenix. It used to be just one but the Phoenix community grew and they had more than one team. I don't know how strong it is now, but they used to have teams in these various cities and the American Legion would help sponsor them. They bought the uniforms and provided the fields.

It is called American Legion Baseball and now they have Babe Ruth and Little League. Teams would be sponsored by different companies or groups like Rotary or Kiwanis.

ZL: You coached?

BK: Yes, in the American Legion of Tempe and the boys were about high school age. After that they went up to what they call a semipro-older. There would be no age limit.

ZL: I understand you volunteered with the Vista Volunteers.

BK: These Vista Volunteers would come to ASU and many of us would take certain special areas, like Physical Education for elementary schools, and teach the volunteers how to organize games, that sort of thing. Then they would go to another class and they would study about something else.

ZL: They were at ASU for a specified time period?

BK: Right. From here they would be assigned to the Southwest, like the Indian Reservations. I remember some of them went here and there. They came to ASU because they received orientation and general information for our region. Then if they were going to Colorado they would probably have another place where they would go such as the University of Colorado or Colorado State. Ours was principally designed for those people who indicated a preference to work with the Indians, so they were



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sent out to these reservations after they finished at our little place.

ZL: You received an honorary degree from ASU.

BK: Yes, that was a very high point. I never expected anything like that. That was a real surprise. The crowning point at that time was that Dr. Richard Peck was the interim president [Peck's term lasted from July of 1989 to March of 1990] and Christine was acting vice president. Christine got to read the proclamation, and then Dr. Peck announced that I would receive the degree and he gave all the information about what kind of degree it was. He had Christine hood me which was a real honor. That may not happen very often in the country. That was a real surprise and honor. Just at the conclusion Dr. Peck announced that Vice President Wilkinson was the daughter of the recipient. Then there was quite a response. I think it touched many of the students because that was a rarity. It made all of us feel good. It was a summer commencement. We have three commencements—winter, spring and summer. At each commencement they honor one, two or three different people for honorary degrees. It so happened, I think I was the only one honored that summer so that was special too. Academically that is the tops, I think.

ZL: Would you share some of your thoughts about the tremendous growth at ASU?

BK: I wonder how I can approach that. Firstly when I came to school, as I mentioned before, we had less than a thousand students. There were very few faculty and you got to know all the faculty members. You knew the president and you could say hello to him. We had dining halls. They didn't all eat in there but all the students who lived on the campus ate there. It wasn't a large place but it was like a family. Then you had Mr. and Mrs. Krause who ran the dining hall as well as many other things. They were like your parents looking over the school and they really gave you a start. We were in dormitories and there were housemothers or housefathers. They became part of your family. There weren't very many students so for those that lived in the dormitories it was also like a little family. You worked on the campus and you helped the campus grow, even physically. You planted some flowers. You did many things to enhance the campus. Incidentally, we had a wrought iron fence going around the campus to keep the intruders out. They even had gates to lock it up at night. The girls had to be in during the weekdays about ten o'clock. Of course, the men didn't have to do that but they figured if the girls were in, the men would be in. On the weekends, I think, they could stay out until 11:00 or 12:00, what they called weekend hours. They had to sign out if they were going to visit their mother or parents. I think from a small family atmosphere it gradually started to grow and grow. There were many things said and done with the procedures, limitations and all. If you compare that with the days when I came to school it is almost like night and day.

ZL: Do you think the emphasis has changed?

BK: Some of the emphasis we had in the early days has probably changed a little. Some things are probably not quite as important and some things are much more important today. But everything is at a



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faster pace today.

ZL: What do you think about the athletic program? ASU has had a rough time this fall.

BK: It is very unfortunate. I know that sports in particular has accelerated from our days to what it is today in many ways. They recruit men and there is pressure put upon them. We are playing on a national level now. When we are on TV, you are seen nationally across the country. When we played, we were lucky if everyone in the city of Tempe would know, and half of the people probably didn't care. That is a relative thing. You are seeing more pressures applied.

ZL: Do you think more emphasis is placed on winning today?

BK: I think so. Of course, that is a relative thing too. In our days we wanted to win and our wins were probably just as important to us as the wins today. Some people say it isn't but there is more pressure. Consequently you think that you want to win that much harder, but I think it is a relative thing. For example, our first bowl team was in 1940-1941. There were only four bowls in the country and the Sun Bowl was one of them. To be invited to a bowl was a distinct honor. That bowl meant just as much to us as to go to the Rose Bowl. Today I don't know how many bowls there must be, probably 100. There are bowls everywhere. You could have just an average season--like six wins and five losses--and still go to a bowl. Many years ago you almost had to be undefeated and untied to be invited to a bowl. The Rose Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Orange Bowl, something like that, were the only bowls available. I think, relatively speaking, we had a great deal of pride to go to that bowl, to be asked to play a team from back East. We played Catholic University in Washington. It was cross country -- usually the Western team versus the Eastern team. That's the way the Rose Bowl used to be. It was the Western team versus the Eastern team -- like Columbia against Nebraska or Tulane versus Duke. They had to be very outstanding to be invited.

The emphasis on winning is still there, but because of the acceleration of the program--the area, national recognition and all--it seems to apply more pressure to the coaches, the players, the school, even to the president. There is pressure all along. For many years there probably wasn't that wide range of people applying pressure.

I don't know how to account for these youngsters getting into problems. People say, "Well, it is happening all over." It may be and it may have been happening in our days. At least it didn't surface like it has. It is unfortunate because we were just getting to a point where, gosh, we didn't have these problems. Now they are magnified when they are associated with the athletic students. There may be two English students that could have the same problem and it doesn't surface like in athletics. You have to pay for the bad things with the good things.

ZL: Bill, you have received many awards for service to the community. What is your philosophy about helping the community in which you live?



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BK: I think if you live in a community for any length of time and you reap some of the nice things that happen to you from the university, or if you went to high school and then had neighbors and so forth, you feel like you should repay them some way. It is not measured in monetary terms but I think it is part of the things you should do in life. Like the Good Book states, if you receive something you should share it. I think sharing is a better term than paying back. Sometimes paying back may mean more than one thing. If you gain some good things in life for yourself or your family then you should share it. It doesn't have to be sharing something that is edible or money or anything like that. People will value nice things that you say to someone, that doesn't cost anything. You could give a pat on the back or you might recommend someone for something nice and they may not know where it came from. It isn't important that everyone knows where something comes from. It doesn't always work that way. Sooner or later you do something, not because you are waiting for reciprocal action, but it makes you feel good. There are many people like that even today. It is a fast world but there are still some people left who are not really making an effort. But if they are of that sharing nature each day they do something for someone. Not looking for it, not, "Today I am going to do this or that." It is a natural. I think I might be boasting, but Margaret is that way. It is just automatic and I think Christine is that way too. I think she has developed many friends who are very complimentary, professionally speaking also. It is harder to do it professionally because there are so many people and obstacles and it is harder to get through it. Everyone wants to get to the top.

ZL: You retired in 1978?

BK: I retired in 1978 officially but then Coach Kush asked me to help in 1978 and 1979 to do PR principally. He wanted me to go around the state and visit the coaches and other people because he thought our PR was kind of down and we should improve it. That is what I was doing, partly recruitment. I would visit about half a dozen schools and go to the coaches and principals and people like that. I visited most of the schools in the state.

ZL: What years did you do that?

BK: That was 1979. It was about the mid season when we had that big blow up, and of course I said, "Well he [Frank Kush] is going out [as ASU football coach] and everything is in turmoil. This is a good time," so I left in 1979 but officially I retired in 1978.

ZL: You have been retired around thirteen years. Would you talk about retirement?

BK: Well, let's see how I can put that. We talk about retirement and we always look forward to it. "When I retire I am going to do this," and, "It is only five years to go, four years to go," and so forth. I think it is natural. We all do this. But if you are doing things you enjoy time passes and, "Oh, it's time to retire." When I retired I think the ruling was at age sixty-five. It was mandatory that you retire. Then I



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think they removed that and retirement was at age seventy. Then they changed it again and you could

work indefinitely if there was a need or if they wanted to hire you. I think I was caught in the sixty-five ruling. So I was sixty-five when I retired and then I could work and earn so much – you remember – Social Security. I think for a while at age seventy you could earn as much as you wanted so I missed out on that. I think that most of us will continue to do things we enjoy doing. For instance, I enjoy working in the yard. I don't work as hard as I used to. I learned to play a little golf and we traveled. My wife and I traveled to Europe and visited some of the places where I happened to be during the service. We traveled to Japan when our basketball team went there. It was a gift from, I think the Sun Angels [supporters of ASU sports]. They gave us a gift, a trip to Alaska, so we went to Alaska. That is one thing that many of us look forward to – some travels. We don't travel as much now but we go to California to see our daughter and grandchildren. I still putter around a little bit but not like I used to. As you go along the things you value the most, of course, are your family and your health. I think that is very, very important. There are many cases where someone looks forward to retirement and they only use just a small part of retirement. Health wise you have heard of people who might last six months or even a month after retiring, so I think we must value those things. If there is something wrong with your health, some major ailment, it is hard. For your car you can get another part. They are almost doing that now for humans, replacing the heart and other parts. In a couple of generations from now we might have a lot of centenarians, a hundred years old.

ZL: Are there some things about retirement that you dislike?

BK: No, I don't think so. This is a relative thing too. It is individual. Some may not find enough things to do to occupy them so they become very frustrated. In other words, they were in a certain kind of work but can't continue that kind of work. They didn't develop any hobbies so they do not have any alternate outlet for their energy or interests. Some will say, "I like to read and I would read if I had time. I would read all the time," but they could just read so much. Even in the yard you can just do so much of the yard work and you can play just so many rounds of golf. I think what will make someone dissatisfied is probably poor health. Now you can't do the things you want to do or you had planned to do physically, a simple thing like travel. You can't travel because you may not be able to fly or drive or even ride in a car. These things would make you very unhappy. Some people may have amassed a fortune and they may not be able to use it.

ZL: You have had such a full life. From your perspective today, if you could pass on to young people lessons that you have learned, what would you tell them?

BK: What I would tell them probably would be outmoded. Today whatever you tell these youngsters, their answer would be, "That is old fashioned. You've got to be with the times," and that sort of thing. I think there are some basic things no matter what era you live in. I think you must have some discipline and respect law and order, whether it comes from the police, or your parents or wherever it comes from. This law and order may not be perfect but that is the way we must travel. We could make specific rules



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and regulations which would vary according to the situation. There are some basic ones. When we deviate from these and make our own rules that is when we get in trouble. For example, some people take things but you still have to pay when you take them and if you don't, you get into trouble.

ZL: What do you see as you look back? What do you think are the biggest changes, like technological changes, that have occurred during your lifetime?

BK: I think there are many things. Of course, it is relative too, regarding the person. For instance it might be a simple thing like the telephone and what it has come to now from the crank up. And now we have these things we travel around in, and the next thing is you can travel around with a TV that you can see or talk in and smile. It is probably out already, but some of us can't afford it. That is one thing and I don't understand the telephone. Even today, I don't know how it works. The TV is certainly a change. When they first came out, we had to have magnifying glasses. Our girls used to go to the bank president or manager who lived near us to watch the TV. Look what the TV has come to today. Another one is the VCR.

There are so many other things, even cars. My day was 1912; you see the cars were just starting out. We came to Arizona in a Model-T that would only go 35 miles an hour or so. You had to carry spare tires and tubes and today look at the cars. It is almost as smooth as riding in an airplane. Look at all the horse power. It is nothing for a car to go 80 miles an hour and you can go across country. Another one is the airplane from the Wright Brothers. I was after the Wright Brothers but it wasn't much better than those, even say 80 years ago, and look at it now. In just a few hours you can go across the country. Look at Lindbergh. That plane, the Spirit of St. Louis in the Smithsonian, why it would be nothing compared to today. I don't know how that made it across the ocean. Today a person can get in a plane and in a couple of hours be across the country with these jets. Many things, common things like building a house, used to take a long, long time. Today if you want to build a house you could probably almost build it in a day. If you got all the people together they could have a house built.

All of the new appliances: microwave, even the oven, and the washer – that is a long way from the corrugated aluminum washboards or wringer washing machines when you cranked the ringer with a crank. I think all of us are living in the age of great advances. Now there is something in the paper about a fellow in Litchfield who is going to make watermelons grow twice as fast, something about controlling photosynthesis. I don't understand that but I can understand greater production and faster. You don't have to wait for a certain time for a watermelon. So I don't know whether I answered that question but there are so many things that you can point out. There are great advances.

X-rays, because I have taken some recently, gosh they could almost find a little . . . Now the scariest thing is people going into the MRI and they have claustrophobia and they won't go in there. They didn't tell me about that. They just put me in there and I thought it was just another ordinary test. It's not bad if you have to have it. Just smile and go in. It is like two hammers hitting each other. I call it a torpedo



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ZL: What do you think are the most pressing issues confronting society right now?

BK: I have answered most of them but we have to pinpoint the society, what affects you. There are so many things.

ZL: Are there things you look at and you say that you are worried about them for the future?

BK: I don't know how I am going to answer that. There have been many changes with the level of thinking and living and all. As I said before, once certain things were taboo or not common, today it's an everyday affair. The way we think or talk and how we look at situations is a social thing. For example, discipline and respect. In the early days if we saw a policeman that meant law and order. You wouldn't call him a pig and throw things at him. That is a societal change. Today I don't know why a person would be a policeman. They are there to try and help you and my goodness they just do everything. I think it is terrible, like in the last riot. There was a fireman trying to put out the fire and they were shooting him and he couldn't even defend himself. At least a policeman might be able to fire back. But a fireman, he is like (in the wartime, they called them aids) the aid man for first aid. So he doesn't carry a gun and is marked with a Red Cross, and he is out there helping the wounded and some people shoot at him. That has all become a societal thing with discipline and order and all. Teachers used to be revered. Now, even in the lower grades, they just use some kind of inappropriate language. That's what our daughter tells us—first and second grade, gosh.

ZL: What advice would you give to a young person today who would like to go into teaching and coaching?

BK: There are so many leaving. [He chuckled] I don't know what I would tell them. The first thing is to try to establish some discipline. That is the most difficult thing I think to establish in a school. You don't get the cooperation from many people. Maybe the principal is behind you, but sometimes when a student brings a parent into the situation the administration doesn't back you. That has happened to our daughter. Somehow discipline has got to come back not only in school but in the wider society. Somehow, I don't know how. That has to come back as well as respect for the elders. The elders – they are just kicked to the side now.

ZL: Instead of being revered.

BK: I don't think it is all gone now, but quite a bit of respect is not here anymore. I think that is a very important part. That would take care of a lot of other things such as respect for law and order. That doesn't mean someone has to hold a stick over you but it just ought to come with the territory. When you come into this world respect would be a part of it. I think it used to be that way. That is what I think you see in the small villages in outlying areas. When you get caught up in this jungle, you can become



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like that. It is not as wholesome as it used to be. Church isn't everything but even the churches don't really symbolize what they used to be.

ZL: As a long time resident of Arizona, what do you think are some of the strong points of this state?

BK: I know there have been many changes. I think the state, of course, is quite a new state. It used to be the youngest for a number of years but we are not anymore. Still, comparably speaking, with some of the states we are still a little behind. We are trying to emulate some of these big cities in the metropolitan areas and it might be better if we took it a little easy and lived a little. Sometimes we would like to emulate some of the big cities like New York or Chicago or even the closest place like California, in particular Southern California. Los Angeles and the surrounding area are getting so bad. Traffic, you can't control that I guess, but gosh, it is like a race track out there. You are afraid to go visit and get on the freeway. You go 70 mph and you're going too slowly it seems. I don't know, I think we have a nice state. We have a nice combination as far as territory is concerned. You have the desert, the city and the people. Of course we have a lot of people coming in from other areas and many of them bring their philosophy, whatever they have. Some are good, and some may not be. I am not a politician but that is an area that has got to be straightened out a little bit. It is not only our state but many states. As I said, I don't study politics that closely but what you hear and read, sometimes we are not seeing the best ones. The politicians have lost track of that discipline and dedication. Not that a lot of us are perfect but they are in a position to lead the way and I think it is their responsibility to give us some leadership.

ZL: Well, Bill, thank you very much.

BK: It is my pleasure and this is a real honor. This one right here, because it is going to go down forever. Many of us do things that will go on forever, but this is for people to see and hear in the museum.





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