

ROBERT CROWE

Narrator

KIM HEIKKILA

Interviewer

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Saint Paul, Minnesota



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TRANSCRIPT—ROBERT CROWE

Interviewee: Robert Crowe
 Interviewer: Kim Heikkila
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[START OF INTERVIEW]

Kim Heikkila: This is an interview for the Oxford Community Center Oral History Project. It is Tuesday, January 27, 2026, and I'm here with Robert Crowe at the Minnesota History Center. My name is Kim Heikkila. Today I'll be talking to Robert about his involvement at Oxford Playground, as well as his long officiating career. We want to make sure we get that in, per Billy, and then just your general sports experiences. So, thank you so much, Robert, for being willing to do this.

Robert Crowe: Glad to be here.

KH: So if you could start maybe by just telling me a little bit about yourself, where you were born, where you grew up.

RC: I was born in Omaha, Nebraska. I had four sisters, three brothers, and I stayed in Nebraska until sixth grade. My parents moved up here to Minnesota in the late '60s—'68, '69. So I was in sixth grade when I first went to school in Minnesota. Completely different environment for the family. Totally.

KH: How so?

[00:02:00]

RC: Well, we were probably in more of a segregated environment in our community in Omaha and we moved into the Rondo neighborhood. By then, 94 already

came through, so the neighborhood was a little different than originally, but we moved in there where basically most of the African American families were at, lived probably two blocks from two, three blocks from Maxfield Grade School. But our parents decided to send us to Hancock Grade School, which was a completely different environment for us. The population shifted, so to speak. As far as minorities in a class, I had a class with probably three minorities.

KH: Where was Hancock?

RC: Now, it's Hamline Elementary, right across from Hamline University, Snelling and Englewood, in St. Paul.

KH: And why did your parents choose that for you?

RC: I think they were a lot smarter than we even knew. In my opinion, I think they were looking at a bigger picture of how we would have to approach the world. It was real nice and safe and comfortable to be in our community. But beyond that, what was the world going to be like. That exposure to folks outside of your gender, your race, your creed, in the long run ended up being pretty valuable for us. We didn't know that at the time. Of course, we were probably a little disappointed that all our friends were going to school together, and we had to get on a bus and go across town to go to school. But out of that came some great friendships with those other people we rode on the bus with *and* some folks that I actually ended up going to school with at Hancock. So, again, I think they were a lot smarter than we ever had any idea about what they were doing.

[00:04:00]

KH: And where in Rondo did you live?

RC: We lived in three places over there. We lived on Fuller Avenue. We lived on Aurora Avenue and then we moved back to Fuller Avenue. This was all probably within a two year time we lived in that area over there. Then eventually we moved over north of

Selby Avenue, or whatever it is, Portland and Victoria, probably when I was in junior high school, we moved over that way.

KH: And what junior high did you go to?

RC: Wilson Junior High School.

KH: Where is that?

RC: That's over off of Edmund and I'd say Pascal, Thomas area over there. It's a magnet school over there.

KH: So there were eight kids. And where are you in number?

RC: I'm in the bottom third.

KH: Are you the top of the bottom third?

RC: I'm the top of the bottom third, yeah. So I have a younger brother and a younger sister.

KH: And why did your parents choose to move to Minnesota?

RC: Well, my father had worked for Armour Star Company in Omaha, Nebraska and a transfer came to the Twin Cities.

KH: So it was work.

RC: Yeah. And there were quite a migrant of folks from Omaha who made that transfer to the Twin Cities with Armour and Company.

KH: And did your mom work?

[00:06:00]

RC: No, not traditional work. But she had eight kids, so yes, she worked. She worked. As we got older and we reflected on me and my siblings, we reflected on what was going on and we wondered how they did what they did with the eight kids and knowing who we are as those eight kids, how they pulled that off. Considering that my father worked multiple jobs, also. Yeah, she worked. I'm sure it was quite a task to try to

maintain us as some civil human beings over time.

KH: Eight kids. It's almost a baseball team. Did they know anybody up here when they moved? Any connections up here?

RC: I don't think they had any. They may have had possibly some friends who maybe had moved up earlier from Omaha, but as far as any relatives or anything of that nature, none whatsoever. None whatsoever. My parents were both originally from Texas and they left Texas for Nebraska. And then from there, we moved up to Minnesota.

KH: And what was the biggest change for you in the move from Nebraska to Minnesota?

RC: Again, it was a change of scenery. You have to understand that we were pretty much segregated. I never saw a person with a tan until I came to Minnesota. I remember asking one of my best buddies who I've known since I moved to Minnesota, he's been my friend, my longest living friend, the first time I saw somebody with a tan, I remember asking him, "Who is that? What is that person?"

[00:08:00]

RC: And he said, "That's a white person with a tan." I said, "What's a tan?" And that's how segregated our community was down in Omaha. And then again, later on that fall, hey, I'm thrown completely. I become the minority in that situation on a regular basis. And all those things that came with that, at that time, in the late '60s, times of civil unrest. You can imagine the challenges of being in different neighborhoods at different times for us.

KH: You and your siblings, when you moved to schools, to Hancock, were you well received? Did you encounter any racism from peers?

RC: Oh, of course, we encountered racism. Of course, we were. We were the minority up there, of course. Like anyone else, everybody to some degree is a product of

their environment. And, of course, we had different ideals of how life goes in different ways. Sometimes that merges and sometimes that clashes, being young and impressionable and not always comfortable in the environment and being called racial slurs and things like that.

[00:10:00]

RC: I remember during that time of going to Hancock and to Wilson how that we would always be on that bus, and days we weren't on a bus our main concern was could we get to University Avenue quick enough, where the regular bus was without being harassed or being chastised, or being chased, or whatever it is. But that was a regular occurrence during that time for a while. I think about when we went to Wilson, everybody would go. They'd either get on the buses, they'd leave, and then if we stayed and played basketball, we'd be there later. Well, again, our biggest challenge was getting from Wilson to University Avenue unscathed without somebody calling us a name or following us or chasing us. But it was a common stance during that time, you know? Sign of the times. Civil unrest, late '60s.

KH: Oh, for sure. So much going on in the late '60s, certainly with the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement, is kind of becoming very visible. Vietnam is happening. I mean, so much.

RC: So much going on at that time. Assassination of Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy. Just a real tough time to be an American and definitely an African American.

KH: So your family was up here by the time Martin Luther King was assassinated?

RC: Right, we were here at that time.

KH: And so University was kind of the dividing point?

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RC: University was the dividing line. Everything, let me think, would that be south of University, I think?

KH: Yeah.

RC: We didn't venture over too much. You got to Sherburne and everything heading toward Pierce Butler and all that stuff. I was more toward the Rondo area, back 94 area and back up toward Marshall and Selby Avenues and things that way. So, yeah, University was pretty much the dividing line at that time for us.

KH: So I'm going to ask a question. Let me think about how to ask this. A lot of the Civil Rights Movement, especially with early efforts like *Brown v. Board*, was about integrating, and about doing away with segregation on public transportation in schools and neighborhoods. You've been talking about moving from a segregated community in Nebraska to a more relatively more integrated place in Minnesota, but also how difficult, challenging that was, particularly when you go to a school that's not part of Rondo. I guess I don't even know what my question is there. Is my description of what you just said a fair reflection of your—

RC: Yea, and I think if you thought about it, if you flip that script, would some person of the other race coming to our school feel that same type of uneasiness, possibly scrutiny, getting the question, what are you doing here? Which is the same thing we got, same questions we were asked when we were over there on that side.

[00:14:00]

RC: It would go both ways because everybody was pretty much proud, possessive of their area. Like you said, we were all about that. Yeah, okay, we're good while we're all together. In a big picture, that wasn't a reality of what life would be, on either side. When you think about when, say, you get out of high school and you go to college, you got different people from all over the world, all over the country meeting together for a better

education and things like that, and those are experiences that you get. That opportunity to be exposed to an uncomfortable situation but being able to adapt to a situation. A friend of mine I met in sixth grade. We lost him a couple years ago, but you remember the movie *Brian's Song*? We were like that. He's a white guy from sixth grade.

We met in sixth grade, and we went to school at Wilson and we went to school at Central together. We just stayed in touch forever. We had that bond. We had that thing like, okay, why don't you come and watch a hockey game? It's cold. Why don't you come watch a basketball game? But we did that for one another, because we had that friendship and that trust that we developed back when we were young. Maybe it was a moment where we were competing and something clicked. We just got to sort of break down that bond that even though you might be different with a skin tone, you got a lot in common. You're just human beings.

[00:16:00]

KH: That's what you meant a few minutes ago when you said your parents were very forward thinking.

RC: Exactly.

KH: It must have been a hard decision, though, for them, because they saw all their kids stepping out of the safe, comfortable community of Rondo and going somewhere else and leaving their friends in Rondo as well.

RC: And then we'd come back home. I mean, you get off the bus and there we are with our friends again. But all day long, we'd be separated. But, again, they're much wiser than we were in that big picture. Yeah, because we wondered why we couldn't walk with our friends and walk to school.

KH: It's right there.

RC: It was right there.

KH: All my friends are over there.

RC: It's right there. But they end up making the wise and best choice they could for their children at the time, I thought.

KH: So you've talked about the wider context, the late '60s and what was happening. I think oftentimes when people think about that time period, there's somewhat of a false distinction, or an exaggerated distinction, between the Martin Luther King part of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement.

[00:18:00]

KH: But, given that, if there was a spectrum of the Civil Rights Movement and African Americans who were working for change and social justice, where would you have described yourself or your family falling on that?

RC: Well, I was only about 12 at the time when that stuff really started to hit its unrest peak. So I had a visual of a lot of things. You pretty much watch and react to how your parents and your older siblings—I had an older brother who was at that time a senior in high school, so he had views on things about that. He had views about the war and things like that. About improving our plight as people, and as we know, it takes people out on the front, be it young, old, middle aged, whatever it is, to get out there and make that known. I remember seeing that thing. I also remember the sadness and the uncertainty of my family and surrounding families the day Martin Luther King was assassinated.

[00:20:00]

RC: And, of course, there was rage, obviously. But, again, you had to keep in perspective what he was trying to accomplish, especially in a nonviolent manner. But then you have this event that is going to cause violence to happen to a person who was strictly trying to improve the plight not only for African Americans, for anyone who was downtrodden or didn't have equality. And, of course, it hit harder in the heart of the

African American community because, hey, here's our leader out front and somebody decides his life isn't worth it anymore. I think about my parents, how they must have thought about my older siblings, about what they were doing, and how they were probably, again, I can't speak for them, how they were probably aware of their need to do that, but also scared for their safety in that situation of what could happen to them.

So I mean you have to advise and try to do what you do to keep them safe but also know that they're at that point in their time where they need to make their own decisions and you just want them coming back home every night. Similar to things that we've got going on now.

KH: That's exactly what I was thinking when I was listening to you describe all of this. These are the same calculations that people have to make about how we need to stop some things from happening. But it's really dangerous to do that.

[00:22:00]

RC: Right. I mean, the same talks our parents were having with us back then about what to do when you're confronted by people, even law enforcement. You still have to have that conversation today in certain places, about how we have to do different things when confronted by the law compared to a white person. We have to behave differently. Law's supposed to protect everybody, but we have to do things differently just to stay alive. So equality isn't always equal.

KH: I have a son who is not white and we've had those conversations. Like, I can speed, I can roll through a stop sign. If I get pulled over, I'll be okay. I'm a white female. You? That's not fair. But you've got to be more careful.

RC: It's the reality.

KH: Well, that's a very heavy topic. I'm going to shift to something a little bit lighter.

RC: Kim, you brought it up. [laughter]

KH: I did, fair enough. Sports. Tell me about how you got involved in sports.

RC: Well, our family's always been a sports related, athletic family. Our father used to play baseball in the Negro leagues.

KH: So he played good baseball. I mean, he was a good player.

[00:24:00]

RC: We lived in Omaha, Nebraska and the family used to go down on Sunday afternoons and watch them play down at the ballpark. They'd be playing and we'd be running around the park and things like that. So we always had that athletic thing going around with all the family members. As we grew up, we all branched into different sports. Be it baseball, basketball, wrestling, whatever it is, it's just something that we always did.

Our parents encouraged us, supported us. There was nothing more memorable than having your parents there to watch you. Win, lose, or draw, just have your parents there watching, supporting you when you're doing those things. We just had a whole family of athletes just running down the line, and, hey, you do what you see your brother and your sister do, right?

KH: So boys and girls?

RC: Boys and girls, whatever you'd see what they're doing and then we just always did that. Depending on where you're at, what you were doing, what your interest was, a lot of times what your peers were doing, sometimes had an effect on what you were doing. A lot of times at that age, we play just because our friends are playing. Even if we're not interested in it, we play because our friends are playing because, hey, we're doing this all the time and now let's go out. We're playing in the alley, we're playing in the streets, we're out there playing football and baseball and stickball in the streets all the time out there.

[00:26:00]

RC: I remember when we moved to Minnesota, me and a couple of my buddies, we found some paint one day after this little project. We made a football field in our alley. We had markers and we had yard lines and the whole nine yards. Just in the alley. You think about it, alleys aren't that big, but here we are. We're in the alley out there playing football all the time. And things just improvised. You know what to do, but it was fun. You'd get everybody around us, and they're hey, we're on this block, and somebody from this block wants to come over and challenge us at our alley. So just fun times to get a chance. You got to know different people from different parts of the neighborhood because athleticism brings that stuff together from time to time.

But, yeah, sports has always been a big part of our life, and the things it has done and the things that it's helped expose you to over time, especially the things that helped expose me to over the course of my life has been unforgettable. Unforgettable. I've been truly lucky, truly blessed to be involved in a lot of things that I've been involved in. And they all started with just the ability to compete somewhere.

KH: I want to talk about that kind of as a main theme as we go forward, but before we do that, I want to make sure because I often forget to ask, what were your parents' names?

[00:28:00]

RC: My father was Clemmie Lee Crowe, Senior, and my mother was Otharee Crowe, O-T-H-A-R-E-E.

KH: Names are important. I just want to make sure I got them in there. Now, you talked about your dad having played baseball. Was your mom athletic? Was she involved in sports stuff herself?

RC: That's a great question. That might be a better question for that Gwen person

you're going to talk to later on. Because, I mean, I knew my father was, because I saw him doing this, but that conversation about asking my mother, "Hey, did you?" It just never crossed my mind about that time. I probably presume how my father was still doing things while he was working and all that stuff. Of course, my mother's job was to raise us. And him, too, and taking care of everything that was pertinent to make the household run.

KH: For 10 people.

RC: Yeah, for 10 people. Right, exactly. It's not like she had the opportunity to go out and golf or shoot up some hoops. It's a full time job taking care of that Crowe clan. So I can't specifically answer that question, but again, that's probably a question that the daughters probably had a better clue on than I would.

[00:30:00]

KH: Yeah. And as kids, many kids, most kids, I as a kid, my kid, currently, your parents are just parents, right? You don't necessarily think when you're young to ask them about their lives outside of what you see at home.

RC: Exactly. That's true. We had a little idea of my father because the other things he was doing besides his regular job, we were sometimes involved with and we got to see it, being him playing, being him officiating things of that nature. So we had an idea of what he was doing, but that doesn't by any means discount what Mother Crowe had done in the present or in the past. She could have been a heck of an athlete and we just never knew.

KH: Yeah, parents are people. Kids don't know that.

RC: Genetics come from somewhere.

KH: Right? And you said all eight of you kids played sports in some way.

RC: We all did, at some level. Yeah.

KH: So tell me then, and we'll talk more specifically about the sports that you

really enjoyed but tell me how you first got involved at Oxford then.

RC: We moved here in the late '60s. You had your friends and your neighbors, and somebody said, let's go down to Oxford and play some ball and what have you. It seemed to be the local community place where you could gather and get together. Now, back at that time, the recreation center pretty much just had a warming house and a field. They'd have some equipment in there. The basketball courts were outside outdoors so you could play out there in the summertime. There was nothing going on in the wintertime.

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RC: The warming house. And come fall, you'd go to that same warming house, and all the football equipment would be in there, et cetera, et cetera. A few years later, a building was erected and that changed a few things down there. You could actually go out and play basketball. They had more room for all the other equipment and other sports that you could get involved in down there. I remember, I think the first time I went down there, I mean, God, it might have been sixth, seventh grade. It might have been seventh grade, getting ready to possibly play some football down there. We weren't playing tackle football in Omaha, Nebraska. We're playing touch or flag football. And even at the junior high level, we were playing flag football in Minnesota.

But I think down there, they had the Peewees and the Midgets, and they were playing tackle football. I think the first time I went down there, I probably got my bell rung. I said, "That's enough of that." So I said, "Hey, that ain't my sport." But it was down at Oxford. There are other things going on down in Oxford. Baseball, basketball, football. I hear at one time Billy had a hockey team down there at one time and things of that nature.

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RC: But, again, after a building got erected, it changed the scope of things that

could happen down there. It became even a bigger place for the community to gather and do things down there. I was playing baseball down there. I played some baseball down there. Billy, Steve Winfield. Met a bunch of guys over there, ended up being some of my also high school classmates later on. But we all played baseball and things down there together. Basically, I was playing baseball and basketball down there. Again, it was a community place where we went down there, and we all knew right across the street was St. Paul Central. And our deal was, hey, we're going right across the street and up the hill.

KH: So that was the goal, was to play ball.

RC: To play right there at St. Paul Central. That was the goal, to play right there at St. Paul Central. You'd have to understand at this time the facilities were improved, but they were not great. Like, for instance, we had a baseball field down there. But you had Billy Peterson, who everybody would tell you was the heart and soul of Oxford Playground. I remember Billy down there dragging our softball field with a piece of gate behind his truck. All right? But, hey, improvisation and that's what was needed, you know what I mean, down there.

[00:36:00]

RC: But bringing folks together, bringing people together, you know, different athletes from different walks of life and different economic things all getting together and getting a chance to play together and becoming teammates, better individuals who maybe didn't like each other off the field, but became brothers and teammates on the field. And that was something Billy always preached about. So there were a lot of foundations built down there, being on the recreation fields of Oxford Playground.

I think about when I finally started playing football, I was literally in the gym at Oxford. At the time, it was a nice gym. It had a tile floor. That was nice for us because all we had outside was a concrete thing, right? But I was literally in the gym throwing a

basketball in the summertime, and my buddies were out playing, practicing for football. And we knew each other. I mean we had played against each other in junior high football. We knew what we could do, skill wise. No big deal.

I just remember Dave Goodlow coming in and saying, “Hey, Crowe, why don’t you come out and try some football?” I said, “No, it’s not my deal. No, that’s okay. I’m good in here.” And the second time I’m in the gym, Mr. Goodlow comes in again and says, “Hey, all your friends are out there playing football. Why don’t you come on and try?” I say, “No, I’m a cream puff.” I mean, I’m a skinny dude, long arms. I said, “It’s not my deal. It’s not my game. I’m good in here. They can do that thing out there.”

[00:38:00]

RC: And, again, this is way back when I got my bell rung back in seventh grade, so it’s not my game. Then the third time, Mr. Goodlow comes and says, “Crowe, why don’t you just come on out, give it a shot. If you don’t want to do it, I won’t bother you again. You can stay in this gym.” I said, “Okay, if that’ll get you to leave me alone, I’ll come on out.” Well, I go on out. I had a great time with my guys. I played football through high school.

KH: At Central.

RC: At Central.

KH: Which was the goal, right, was to play ball across the street.

RC: All of us going up the street, going and playing at Central and never had any intent. But again, you’re out there with your guys, and I had got a little more meat on them bones than I had back in sixth, seventh grade. So I could stand a little contact. But, more importantly, it was a camaraderie being with all my friends who I had always been playing with, and now we’re all out here doing things together and winning, losing, suffering, but just becoming teammates. And football will do that. It’s a thing where

everybody has to do their part to be successful, and multiple people have to do their part to be successful.

KH: So you played three sports then?

RC: Yeah, I played football, basketball and baseball.

KH: And so you played all three sports at Oxford and at Central?

RC: Yeah.

[00:40:00]

KH: So you were talking about football specifically, but you said it's a sport where everybody, multiple people have to do their jobs well to succeed. Do you think that's true of all team sports, or is there something different about football?

RC: Well, let me be more specific about there. There's so many people. I mean you got 11 people on offense; you got 11 people on defense. But the same thing can be said for basketball. It could be said for soccer. A lot of people have to do their thing to be together, you know? And sometimes in football, it's 22 people, you've got 11 on each side who have to do that sometimes, currently, today. At that time, we played both ways.

But, for a lot of sports, team sports anyway, a lot of things have to come into play. Now, if you want to be a wrestler, you want to run track, you want to do individual things like that, which is great, and you have no one to blame but for your success or failure but yourself. The thing about being a team is that you learn how to win together, you learn how to lose together, you learn how to support one another.

One of the great things I probably learned about that is that during that time at Oxford, and one of the many lessons I learned, somebody would mess up and one of us would be in their case. I just remember one time, one of the coaches, it was probably Bill. Billy said, "You know what? Don't you think he feels bad enough about making a mistake without you piling on? And how would you feel about him piling on if you made a

mistake? So, instead of doing that, why don't you support him and see what you can do to help him get better and eliminate the mistake next time?"

[00:42:00]

RC: That's team stuff, and that's team camaraderie. That stuff, hey, you don't think about sometimes when you're just in there trying to compete and thinking it's all about you. And those become life lessons. Those become life lessons because it isn't all about you. Those things stick with you if you listen to them and you try to apply later on for other situations. One of the great things about sports, it teaches you lessons you can apply on to life, in the business world and other things. Disappointment, rejection, perseverance; all those things become important. You experience them early and you have a foundation of how you may or may not react to them later.

I know we all have things sometimes as we get older and we have had some disappointments in our work situation, and how you react to that. Do you blow up about it? Do you sulk about it? Do you evaluate it and say, "Okay, I'll show them that they got it wrong, there's a different way to do this? They thought I couldn't do this. I'll show you that I can do this." That's one of the great challenges about athletics. A lot of great athletes, and I was one of those people who told me I couldn't do it. Well, guess what? We'll find out about that. Okay? We'll find out if I can do it or not. So that was always one thing that usually motivated me and not necessarily telling me, "Well, you can't do it because of this." Well, let's find out. All right, we're going to find out.

[00:44:00]

KH: Nothing more motivating than somebody saying, "You can't do that."

RC: That's right. And if you believe you can't, you can't.

KH: Now, did you play sports in junior high for school? Were there organized sports at junior high? At Wilson.

RC: Yeah. At Wilson. Again, at that time, the junior highs were playing flag football. So we had flag football. We had basketball and we may have had baseball, and I know we had track.

KH: And now Wilson was also, am I right, predominantly white?

RC: A predominantly white school. But it was more mixed than Hancock was. It was more mixed than Hancock was. It was located in the predominantly white neighborhood, but there was a lot more integration at Wilson Junior High School than there was at Hancock Elementary School. So, I mean, at Wilson, my older brothers and sisters were there, and all their friends were there and things like that. That was more of a secure situation up there in numbers as far as that was concerned, so that was a different thing. But, again, the location was still there at any time. Most of the time, if we left and if we weren't riding home, we were walking home, we usually walked in groups. We walked as a pack, wherever we were going. If we were walking home, safety's in numbers.

[00:46:00]

RC: Like I said, did you want to be caught stranded solo by yourself? And so, yeah, Wilson was. And then, again, a lot of those folks from Wilson ended up at Central. And other places. So that was a little different setup over there. Now by this point some of those same folks who I went to school with at Hancock also went to school at Wilson, white and Black. And then we all went to Central together. So I've got some friends over there I met at Hancock, white and Black, I've known since I've been in Minnesota. We've been friends since I've been in Minnesota. My neighbor lives right across the street from me.

KH: Wow, that's amazing. So when you were playing sports at Wilson, was race ever an issue on your teams, amongst your teammates, or even other schools?

RC: No, not so much. Not so much. I remember playing basketball. Floyd Smaller

was my basketball coach over there at Wilson. What a good dude. To this day, what a great dude. He didn't care who you were, he didn't care what you did. He just wanted to get you prepared and have you try to do your best. Again, sports, sometimes, when you get teams together, it kind of melds depending on where you're at. It kind of helps dissipate that racial thing, because you're all going toward a common goal from time to time.

[00:48:00]

RC: And don't get me wrong, I mean, hey, there are some people over there that got mad saying, "Hey, why is this dude playing?" The white boy ain't better than me, the Black dude ain't better than me. You'd have that stuff over there. It's just a natural thing because of your mindset of who you are. But coaches want the best player and sometimes they'll just put you up against one another and hey, just see, the best player is going to get it. Don't care what your color is. The best player is going to be the best player, at that time. Doesn't mean that your quest to become that best player ends at that time. It's just at this moment, that's what it is. And it's how you follow that. It really matters.

But not so much at Wilson and definitely not so much at Central either, as far as that went. Because at that time, we have a generation of people who now know each other, trust each other, and went through some things together from sixth grade up until senior high school together. And stand up for each other now, because of who they are and what we've seen and what you've been through. So different, unexpected. Great move by the parents.

KH: Yeah. So is it true then that some of the even white friends that you made at Hancock and in Wilson then also go to Central along with your African American friends from Rondo, and so now you're kind of all together at Central?

[00:50:00]

RC: It was a unique situation. It was how you think you'd want it to be. It was like that with us. It was like that with us. Because we all had moments during our times, say from Hancock up to junior high school, where someone within our race, say somebody from the African American race or somebody from the white race, tried to do something to intimidate or tried to do something to your friend. At some point, you stood up for your friend. At the same time, your friend stood up for you, you know what I mean?

I'm sure there were times when some of my African American friends were verbally assaulting, or whatever it is, some of my white friends, male or female, you say, "Hey." And vice versa, if I was on the other end. Friendship is about standing up for one another no matter whatever it is. With that type of trust and tribulations you went through, by the time we got to Central we'd had four or five years of having each other's back. So we were just a blended family up there. Again, man, I've known some of these folks since I first moved to Minnesota. We still get together and talk. We love and respect each other as human beings.

[00:52:00]

KH: And most of your friends, were they also teammates? Did most of your friends play sports?

RC: Some did and some didn't. You would tend to hang around those folks that you'd spend most of the time with. If you could spend a lot of time on the athletic fields and things, those people tend to be the people you hang around with sometimes. But then sometimes, you meet people in class sometimes. Sometimes the person you'd least expect would come up and just ask you something out of the blue, and you'd say, "Who are you and why are you asking me this?" But, the fact is, they had an interest in you, which was unexpected. They didn't care about you as an athlete, they cared about you as a person, and said, "Hey, what do you think about such and such and such and such?" And "What?"

Okay, all right, here's somebody who doesn't care about Robert Crowe the athlete. Here's somebody talking about Robert Crowe the person. What do you think about this? It's like, okay.

Or somebody wanted to know my thoughts about something because it's something they never knew and they felt comfortable enough. What was my point of view as an African American man on this, such and such? I'm a person they felt comfortable enough asking that question to. I mean, why? Maybe they couldn't ask somebody else without feeling insulted or not getting, "Why are you asking that question? It's not your business."

[00:54:00]

RC: But yeah, friendships open up things like that there. You can have truthful, hard conversations about stuff if you really want to get to that. As we know, sometimes hard conversations are just that. They're hard.

KH: And sometimes the most important.

RC: They are.

KH: So when you were at Wilson Junior High and playing sports there, were you also then still playing sports at Oxford?

RC: Absolutely.

KH: Okay, so tell me what was the relationship or dynamic between your sports at Wilson and sports at Oxford?

RC: Well, at that time the high school wasn't starting at ninth grade. We still had junior highs, which were seventh, eighth and ninth grade. So, eventually, for instance, we could go and play basketball at the junior high and then play on the recreation teams at Oxford on the weekends. And same thing with football. We'd play touch and then we'd go, and I think by the time we got to ninth grade, we were pretty much playing tackle

football, pretty much, itself.

[00:56:00]

RC: So you do stuff in the day, then you'd come after school, and you'd go to practice down at Oxford, or wherever else you'd be playing. West Minnehaha or whatever it is. Some of the same people you're playing with at junior high school, you're playing with down at Oxford.

KH: You mentioned something, and I forgot to ask you at the time, but when you were talking about the physical facility at Oxford, you said, yeah, we had a building, but it still wasn't like we were enjoying and Bill was out there dragging the field with a gate. Did you have a sense that Oxford, compared to other rec centers in St. Paul, or elsewhere, was different in that regard? Did you have any way to contextualize how Oxford was relative to other places?

RC: Well, there was the Ober Boys Club, and there was the Hallie Q. Brown Center, which is now, I think the Martin Luther King Center. They had gyms and they had other facilities over there. So you could go there and play basketball inside and things like that and have some other things there. But Oxford didn't have that until that building, again. Just think about a little warming house.

KH: Was that the little brick rectangular house?

RC: That's it, yeah. We got all the football equipment, and we got all the equipment in that thing all the time. Whatever it was, whatever the season was, we got the equipment in there. But when Oxford actually got a facility, and we had a gym, and now we've actually got some field space down there where we can do some things on a baseball field.

[00:58:00]

RC: We've got some rooms where they can have meetings. We've got a weight

room up in there with some universal equipment, things where you could come in there and do some working out, which was never accessible before. Not only for that, but for the community in itself. You had the Loft Teen Center, which was down there for years, which was a place where teenagers could get together and get guidance and stuff, say post school, things like that, do projects and things like that. Mr. Jim Robinson ran that thing for a long, long time. So it became a true community center at that point, and a place to gather. And stayed that way for decades.

I mean, not only for youth, but for adults. We used to have softball leagues down there for men and things like that and women, or whatever, softball leagues at nights and there used to be multiple teams from the neighborhood playing down there. Everybody would meet down there and we'd play down there. They'd start playing at maybe six o'clock at night and they'd play through maybe past 10:00, but everybody would be down there and you'd have four, five, six, seven teams down there. Everybody's meeting down there, everybody's competing, everybody's socializing with one another. It was a meeting place down there doing things like that. So multiple fields became a community place to go once they got a building.

[01:00:00]

KH: And this may change a little bit when you get into high school, but from the time you moved to Minnesota through junior high, how much time would you say you spent at Oxford? Were you there every day?

RC: I wasn't there every day. I wasn't there every day. In the summertime, I could be there every day, but during school time, after school I'd have things to do. I mean we had a house of eight. We had things to do around the home, stuff like that. In the summertime, I could be there quite a bit because, hey, school's out. We're looking for things to do. But, again, during the wintertime if we came down there, we had basketball

practice. We had things like that.

I would say you could definitely be down there two, three times a week, easily, just for practices. Then maybe you went down there once a week just because everybody wanted to meet down there on a Friday night or hang out. So it could easily be two to four times a week you could be down there at Oxford.

KH: And were you close enough to walk? How did you get there?

RC: Back when we were young, we had no concept of distance. [laughter] So yeah, we walked everywhere, or we walked or we got on a bike. We walked or we biked everywhere. We had no concept of distance. I mean, I think about this here. I think we're down here maybe close to Dale and Univ, or up on Fairview, because we had no concept of distance.

[01:02:00]

RC: It's just where we're going. Or we'd get on the bikes and we'd ride up there, because we could go. We were curious and we could go. But, yeah, I remember many, many, many a walk from Oxford after a basketball practice, after a football practice, walking up and down the Oxford hill street up there and walking back home.

KH: So how far was it, do you know? Roughly?

RC: Well, at that time, we were probably living over on Portland and Victoria, so it was a bit of a walk, but we were always walking. I mean, yeah, we occasionally get a ride dropped off there. But it wasn't a case of, hey, somebody dropped us off, somebody picked us up. Somebody might drop us off, but we were walking back.

KH: Because, I mean, for crying out loud, how do you manage eight kids' schedules when you're busy yourself?

RC: Exactly. That's right. And not that we had multiple cars. So we're on bicycles or we found a way. Or we walked. We just got there. That's what we did.

KH: So, you've probably already mentioned some people that were important to you, but who were the adults, the mentors, the coaches at Oxford who made the biggest impact on you?

RC: Man, there's some great folks down there. Some great folks down there. Of course, again, you start with Billy. You start with Billy Peterson. He's the heart and soul of Oxford. Dave Goodlow down there was coaching the football team.

[01:04:00]

RC: There was a coach, the father of one of my best friends, David Earl Mims. We had such a staff on that Midget softball team of coaches. I think that picture is still hanging up in Oxford right now today. Of course, down there was Steve Winfield who I played baseball with. To this day, I still just call him mentor because of a lot of life lessons from a lot of people who were interested in your athletic ability, but they were more interested in you being a better human being. And life lessons that were just turned in down there. Just a variety of coaches winning out. The Carters. Tiny [Landrum]. Oh, God, there's a guy named Tiny. And he wasn't tiny.

KH: Yeah.

RC: You know who I mean? But just a bunch of guys who just donated and gave up their time to invest in us as human beings and try to get us on the right path. There's still some there now who've been there a long time, like Mr. Carter. Just some guys who have just been there and always were looking out for everyone in the community who had to come through there, who was interested in being an athlete or in that particular sport at Oxford.

[01:06:00]

RC: I don't know if they were compensated, just took pride in the community. Took pride in how the community felt about supporting their athletic teams coming out of

there and where they could go. Nothing brought the community together than having teams out there competing and competing in the right way.

KH: And what does that mean, competing in the right way?

RC: Well, you can get this stereotype about, hey, these African American teens are going to go out here, they're going to be less than sedentary, they're going to be hoodlums, they're going to be thugs. If they don't win, look out, the fight's going to start. These guys were not about that at all. They're about being proud of what you did, representing your community. Not only on the field, but off the field.

You could be kicked off the team for fighting or doing stuff that's unnecessary or suspended, and things like that. There were actions and consequences. Those were standards that they tried to set and we all knew that. I mean, yeah, we'd get frustrated with loss and things like that, but hey, as you grow along, you know that very few people go undefeated in whatever they do. Losing is part of learning how to be a human being, so they taught you how to handle yourself in those situations, too.

[01:08:00]

KH: What you were just saying about the coaches and mentors at Oxford teaching all of you younger people how to win the right way or compete in the right way, because you were representing a whole community, and people, not just a geographic community. But it reminded me of what you were saying earlier about your parents and thinking about some of your siblings and how and what they might be involved in with regards to civil rights. That there's a calculation about, fair or not, that you were representing a race that at that time had so many negative stereotypes and policies and practices set up to discriminate against. So when you're a kid and you're hearing this from your coaches and your mentors at Oxford, that, hey, look, losing is part of life and you can't react badly to that because you're representing the community. I don't know what my question is again

here. How did that feel to you?

RC: Well, of course, we're young and we can't really process that at the level we do now. But we understood that, if we did those things that they told us they did not want to do, they could take away the thing we wanted the best, which was to compete. I think it's the ultimate action, consequences. Bad actions had bad consequences.

KH: And it would have been your coaches at Oxford who would have inflicted those consequences.?

RC: Exactly, and our parents would have probably backed them up. My parents would have backed them up because they said, hey, because they'd certainly believe that it was a privilege for you to participate in athletics. Not a right.

[01:10:00]

RC: Our big thing is, hey, if our grades weren't right, my parents say, "You're not smart enough to play. Your grades, you're not smart enough to play. You can't understand the play. You can't understand school. How are you going to understand the play? You don't get the grades right, you ain't playing." They made it pretty simple. So, like I said, it was a privilege, it wasn't right. It's an extracurricular activity.

KH: So it was in its proper place, relative to school.

RC: Exactly. It's extracurricular. It's not an extra that you're necessarily entitled to have. Entitled. We were never entitled.

KH: You think that's a good thing?

RC: Absolutely, absolutely. We never believed that, hey, we should get this because we exist. We got something because we went out and earned it. We went out and did something for it. I think one of my parents' things was, okay, well, I want such and such, such and such. Well, okay, well, how are you going to get it? You want to work for it? Then save up your money and you can get it. I can get you what you need, but you go

get what you want and find a way to get what you want.

KH: So parents' responsibility is to provide for needs. Your responsibility is to figure out how to get what you want.

RC: If you want that, you don't necessarily need it, well, then find a way to go get it. If that means working extra, if that means whatever it is, all right, then you can get that. If you want this and you work all summer and you got it, well, okay, you did that. And there's a lesson in that. In that, okay, if I do this, if I work at it, if I put in the time, I can accomplish that goal if that's what I wanted to do.

[01:12:00]

RC: Parents said, "I'll get you what you need. You need these things. Hey, you need these things to go to school. You need such and such and such. If you want that, okay, find a way to go get it."

KH: So that leads me to think about this. So your parents have eight kids, all of whom are involved in sports, and there's equipment needs for almost every sport.

RC: Well, back then, we didn't need a lot of equipment. It's a different situation now.

KH: Certainly, more specialized now.

RC: Right, exactly. Now, for instance, hey, the equipment was all the football equipment was always there at Oxford, okay? It was always there. All we needed for basketball was some shoes, some shorts, and a shirt. Baseball, we needed spikes and some gloves. They had uniforms, they had hats, they had stuff like that there. So we didn't need the specialized shoes, and we didn't need all the stuff they got going on there. We just needed the bare minimum stuff to get out there and play.

Granted, we weren't getting new equipment every year and all that good stuff. Some of that stuff hung around for a long time, especially when it came to football and

baseball and things like that. So it's a lot more expensive these days to play than it was.

KH: Speaking of the cost to play sports, do you know, did you have to pay you or your parents have to pay to be part of any of these teams at Oxford?

RC: Yeah, but it was minimal stuff. There wasn't stuff like traveling stuff now. We traveled. We didn't travel anywhere, you know? We might get on a bus and go up to Duluth, or something, once.

[01:14:00]

RC: Otherwise, we're just in the local area over there. They might pay a minimum amount of money for registration, things of that nature there. But all these thousands of dollars that they're paying now to go and travel across the nation and do all those things like that; we didn't have the opportunity to do that. I didn't know if it was necessary or an option even at that time.

KH: Right, kids' sports are really different now.

RC: They're really different now.

KH: But, speaking of traveling, we had talked earlier about how Oxford may have compared to other rec facilities, in particular in Rondo, Ober Boys and Hallie. So when you were playing for these teams at Oxford, did you travel, I assume, to other rec centers in St. Paul, like Highland or, I don't know, the East Side or north of University?

RC: Well, most of the time, all the games were played, like most things, you might go to their gym to play basketball. A lot of football was played at McMurray. Everybody played over on the McMurray field over there. So, I mean, you'd have multiple leagues and multiple teams playing down at one spot.

KH: So everybody was going, rather than—

RC: Everybody was playing at the same spot most of the time, and not everybody had big enough gyms. So, it's like hey, okay, we're going to have three or four or five

teams playing at this gym because it's got the capacity for an audience and maybe multiple floors, or things like that, et cetera, et cetera.

[01:16:00]

RC: Similar to right now. In the rec leagues, you play at Oxford, Jimmy Lee, you play at the newly renovated Martin Luther King Center. You play at the Arrow Rio Vista center over there. But those places have multiple gyms and multiple capacities for parents and spectators. That's a real efficient use of those facilities as far as that goes. But, at the time, yeah, we might go over to Scheffer, or we might go over to one of those other places to play at their place once in a while. Things like football, they were all generally played at one spot.

KH: So let's talk about your athletic life at Central. What sports did you play and what were your highlights from Central?

RC: I played football, basketball and baseball.

KH: So the same three sport athlete.

[01:18:00]

RC: Three sport athlete there at Central. I enjoyed my time on all those sports. Again, we start with football, because again, I remember all these guys I played at Oxford and we're all up here playing at Central. We had some really good athletes. We had some really good times. We had some excellent coaches up there. God, we had some excellent coaches up there.

KH: Like, who? Who were your senior coaches?

RC: Mel Branch, Steve Studer, Ron Priggy, Oliver Spencer, Dave Heuller. We had some great coaches up there who were guys of high character.

KH: White, African American?

RC: Combination of both. Instilled school spirit. Mel Branch played at Indiana

last time they went to the Rose Bowl. He got to be happy right now. They're national champions. His thing was that whatever we did in football would set the tone for everything else in the rest of the school year. That didn't necessarily mean that we had to win every game, but how we conducted ourselves, and how we presented ourselves on and off the field would set the tone for everything else that happened the rest of the year. We all knew the school song, and we had to sing it after every game, win or lose. Who knew it before that? Right? Setting that tone about what was important. Football games were played at Harding and Central for the St. Paul City Conference.

[01:20:00]

RC: Prior to my senior year, with all the things that had been going on with unrest, we could not play football at night at St. Paul Central. By the time we got my senior year, we were playing football at night at St. Paul Central. There was unrest after games earlier, before my senior year in previous classes. Unrest, fights and things after games and stuff like that. So then they started making sure all games, et cetera, were being played in the afternoon.

KH: And what year did you graduate?

RC: Seventy-five. So, in the late '60s, early '70s, things like that, they didn't have the opportunity to play at home at night. But, by my senior year, we were playing at night, which was a nice deal.

KH: I mean, you want to play under the lights, right?

RC: Yeah, it was a nice deal to finally play at night. But, again, some of that probably had to do with the fact that, hey, we were dispelling that stereotype about how things are going to happen after the game, win or lose. Our coaches weren't going for that. By the time we got to our senior year, hey, okay, I can play at night. They ain't got nothing going on over there. Just playing ball, taking care of business.

[01:22:00]

KH: And, I mean, obviously, nighttime under the lights is specific to football. Maybe baseball?

RC: Now, we'd play at night over at Harding. Couldn't play at night over in the neighborhood at Central. Yeah, we played night games there at Harding, so we played day games there at Central.

KH: Because that was the high risk?

RC: Yeah, you could say that. It could be interpreted that way.

KH: Clearly, somebody interpreted it that way.

RC: But by the time we got to my senior year, we got that changed around, and we got to play at night, which was great.

KH: And was there any of that kind of conflict or unrest or fights or whatever with baseball, basketball? Or was it specific to football?

RC: Well, no, we never had anything with baseball, anything like that, and you could get basketball depending. A lot of times it did not necessarily have to do with our school. Sometimes it might be the opponent, they'd come over there and some things like that. Not so much during our tenure over there that we had those things going on at all. Again, we were a different type of class, as far as that goes. But, at times, you could have things going over there in the past.

Let's say we'd have a visiting team come from somewhere over there, and they weren't successful winning, and there'd be some stuff going on outside, or whatever it is. But I think they made quite a point of trying to say, that's it. You can't be involved. You can't be involved in that and continue to play for us.

KH: Actions and consequences.

[01:24:00]

RC: Actions, consequences. So yeah, we had a pretty good understanding of those concepts when we were there. Basketball, we had a bunch of guys I played with down at Oxford, and we're all up there, and we had a good thing over there. Football, like I said, we had a good year. We had some really good teams. Fell short just a couple times. I don't know how, I got voted MVP of the football team my senior year. I don't know how that happened. I don't know how that happened, but it did. Then we got to basketball and we had a lot of talent. Really a lot of good talent. Don't know if we were the best team, but we had a lot of talent and we were successful enough. Not as successful as we probably should have been.

But, again, those are the wars you go through with your brothers and your sisters, and you learn things about each other. While the majority of my friends went and were track, I was baseball. I was probably one of maybe two minorities on the baseball team at the time I was there.

KH: And what position did you play?

RC: Second base. I talked about that friend of mine who I met at Hancock. We played baseball together during all that time. He was a pitcher, but we played baseball together during all that time from Hancock all the way through Central. So, yeah, baseball was probably my favorite sport to play.

[01:26:00]

KH: Why?

RC: Probably because I watched my father play it all the time. That's probably what it was. When the weather was right, it was great to be out there. If the weather was right, it was a fantastic time to be out there and I enjoyed the immediacy of it. My big thing was I liked to get on base, and I liked to steal bases. I liked to create havoc and things like that there. Again, another one of those sports where you can have a dominant

pitcher and take care of things, but you've got nine players and a whole lot of different skill sets.

KH: Are there any particular games that stick out in your mind, in any sport?

RC: Yeah, I mean, when we were sophomores, our basketball team was fantastic. We were the Twin City champions. We were really, really good. I mean, sometimes people went there to see us before the varsity. We were really good.

KH: And what position did you play in basketball?

[01:28:00]

RC: I was a guard and forward, but we had 15 guys. We had guys who were unselfish. We played for one another. Instead of having somebody averaging 15, 20 points a game, we probably had four, five, six guys averaging 10, 12 points a game. So a balance was out there and we were really, really good. I remember we played the Twin City game, I think, over in Hamline University, or we played Marshall U High and they had some incredible talent over there. We were able to beat them in a Twin City game. We just had crowds, which you don't get for JV games, but we were really good. We were really unselfish, and it was a great group of guys to play with as far as that goes. I would say we were impressionable. I'd say we listened to instruction better when we were younger than when we got older. How about that? And different results, okay? How about that?

KH: So just to clarify, even though your JV team, your sophomore team was so good, you couldn't play up, right? You had to be on the JV.

[01:30:00]

RC: Not then, yeah. There was a lot of talent on that varsity team, too. Yeah, there was a lot of talent on the varsity team, too. They had guys up there. It's not like we could not like we were going to come up there and take some spots. There were some guys up there that could play, also.

KH: But people, if you played back to back games, they would make sure to come to also see the JV.

RC: Oh yeah, they'd come. We always played before. I mean they're playing at seven o'clock, we're playing at five o'clock, 5:30. I mean we'd have crowds there. And it was great. It was big time fun. Big time fun.

KH: So what did you do after high school?

RC: Graduated from high school, went to Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

KH: What college?

RC: C-O-E, Coe College. Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Played basketball and ran track down there.

KH: So you did do track, also.

RC: Well, and this is the funny thing about track. I went down there to play basketball. And me and my college roommate—actually I just talked to last night as a matter of fact, because he called me. He lives in Florida. He called me about the unrest that's going on right now. He wanted to know how I was doing. We lived together in the same dorm for four years and we played basketball together. He ended up being the national champion at Division III in the high hurdles for two years, his junior and his senior year. They were just having so much fun on track things, so I just went out my junior and senior year and ran track because they were having fun.

KH: And what did you run or what events?

RC: I was a sprint guy, sprint and relay guy. But I just went out because they'd have so much fun. It was ironic because we had a fantastic track team and we didn't have a track. We got in a van every day and went to the high school and practiced.

[01:32:00]

RC: We won like 11, 12, 13 conference championships in a row. We just had great

athletes with great chemistry and tradition. And, more importantly, it was just fun. It was fun. Something to do after the end of the basketball season. Unfortunately, my senior year, my last game of my basketball season in college, I twisted my ankle. I rolled my ankle. I had never had a basketball injury, *ever*.

KH: Wow.

RC: Right? They were halfway into the track season before I even got to get to the track season. I was halfway done because of an injury, and it was unfortunate. But I'd never had a basketball injury of that type. I mean, hey, you might pull a hamstring. Well, actually, my junior year, I pulled a hamstring in track. I got injured in track more than anything that I ever did. I got injured in track, now that I think about that. But I'd never had a basketball injury that took me out of anything. I pulled a hamstring in I think my junior year in track, and then I got injured at my very last basketball game. Rolled an ankle. But we had such a fun time there. I went there and played basketball for four years, ran track a couple years.

KH: And this was a D3 school?

RC: D3 school, yeah.

KH: Okay, so no scholarships?

[01:34:00]

RC: No. At the time, it was the Midwest Conference, and Carleton College was the furthest team north that played in our conference. So that was kind of cool because when we came to play Carleton, my family could come down and watch the game and stuff like that. So that was kind of cool.

KH: And what was your degree in?

RC: I had a double degree. I have a degree in economics and a degree in business administration and a minor in physical education.

KH: Oh, a minor in physical ed. We still have to talk about your officiating as well. We're getting there.

RC: We're getting there. I've got all this other stuff to bore you with first.

KH: No, no. But yeah, what'd you do, work wise?

RC: Oh. So when I came out, and it's weird because I first came out of school and I was working in retail for about four or five years. I was actually doing some work at Control Data in the warehouse after I left retail. One of the guys came down and saw my resume and he said, "Wait a minute, what are we doing with all this down here?" So he got me involved in the IT department of their health management company, which was called StayWell and I got involved after a couple years. Then StayWell broke off and became its own health management company. Then I worked for 35 years there in the IT department.

[01:36:00]

RC: I had no idea that I would have anything to do with IT. The guy just said, "Wait a minute. There's too many skill things here for you to be messing around here in this warehouse. Let's see what we can do with this." I was fortunate that I caught a little aptitude for it. Fortunately, as things changed and the technology changed, and I mean, I saw things go from floppy disks to CDs to big mainframes to laptops to—I mean, I'm not talking about that. I was living that. And the Internet, boom. When all those things came in and how that affected us technology wise and things of that nature. All that stuff was going on during my time there.

I was fortunate. I worked with some great people. A lot of IT departments have turnover, but we were a different group of guys and girls. We had a small company. I'd say at the best, there were probably 200, 300 at the most. But we had some great guys and a lot of us worked together for 10, 15, 20 years. We weren't nerds. We were nuts. And we

enjoyed each other. More importantly, if we always had a problem, we just dropped what we were doing and helped each other take care of the problem.

KH: Well, see, now this sounds very similar to how you described teamwork on sports teams.

[01:38:00]

RC: Yeah, I mean, hey, I could be doing something. “Hey, you got a minute?” “Yeah.” “Okay, let’s go.” And that’s just the way. It was a pleasure. If you’re going to spend that much time at work and, on my typical day, I’d spend my eight, ten hours at work and then I’d leave and I’d go officiate. But I was fortunate to work with some fantastic people. It’s funny, I’m still in touch with them now. I’m going to their kids’ high school graduations and all that stuff. I was lucky to be in that situation as long as I was.

KH: Well, maybe that’s our segue.

RC: That segue into that officiating thing, right?

KH: So how did you get started officiating?

RC: All right. Well, after my father passed in 1987, I think he always wanted somebody there. He and Billy, they officiated baseball together, town baseball together, things like that. They went to a bunch of places. My mother would go with them, and they’d go to places where they’d be the only coal in the sugar patch. I thought you’d appreciate that one.

KH: That was good. I’ve got to write that one down.

RC: But they’d be the only ones there.

KH: And this was around Minnesota?

RC: Yeah, around Minnesota, a lot of these great Minnesota baseball towns. But he’d be out there and doing that thing. I thought that after that, he never mentioned it, per se. But I said, “Well, I can do that.”

[01:40:00]

RC: I was still playing a variety of sports at that time. I think one of the main things that got me started doing it, I was not liking the quality of some of the officiating I was seeing. And somebody said, “Well, if you want better officiating, why don’t you become one yourself?” And I said, “Well, I’ll do that.” Bingo.

KH: And so where in your life was this? After college? During?

RC: Yes, this was after college. It was probably a decade after college, ’87, ’88, ’89, in there. I started to umpire softball. Fortunately, for us, Billy Peterson was the umpire’s umpire for a lot of stuff; baseball, softball wise, nationwide, putting on national clinics and things like that. So he got me involved in doing some softball umpiring. At the same time, I was dipping in and out doing basketball also, but the softball thing came first. I’d been doing that for probably about three or four years. It was funny because you think you know what you know until you get in the situation to find out that you don’t know what you know. **RC:** I was complaining about, man, why aren’t I here? Why aren’t I there? Then I got a chance to get exposed to some other stuff. I said, “Yeah, this is why I’m not here.” [laughter]

[01:42:00]

KH: Answered that question.

RC: I’m not ready, but somebody already knew that, right? But then I got some more opportunities. I think one of the things that really turned it around for me might have been ’91, ’93, the International Special Olympics. By that time, I’d been to maybe one or two national softball tournaments and we were well prepared because fortunately we had Billy here as a national staff member, so we were fundamentally pretty good. We got to nationals. We kind of had an eye over what we were doing. But the Special Olympics came here, and Bill was the umpire in chief, and he said, “Why don’t you come on out?”

Just come out for a day or something like this and give this a shot.” “Okay.”

Well, one day ended up being four days. Then when I was out there, I met a guy named Wally Kiffmeyer who asked me, would I be interested in doing wheelchair softball? And of course, my immediate response was, “Why ain’t nobody rolling no wheelchairs over this grass out here?” He said, “No, that’s not what I’m talking about. Meet me down in Aldrich Arena next week and see what we’re talking about.” So, we had the International Olympics, right? That’s where I met Wally.

[01:44:00]

RC: Then went down there and a year or two later, may have been in ’93, in ’91, ’93, we started. We had another Special Olympics. That was in Connecticut. We went to that one. Went to two International Special Olympics. But to begin that introduction to Wally started me along the wheelchair softball and wheelchair sports type of thing. From there, by now softball, I’m getting the opportunity to travel across different places in the nation to participate in national championships anywhere from Texas to Mississippi to the Midwest. Just all around the place. Then we got involved with wheelchair softball and then the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in 1996 decided they wanted to bring wheelchair softball to their games.

So me and Mr. Kiffmeyer took the sport out there to Seattle, Washington the first year, and we have 30 people. In San Diego, the next year we had 60 people. In Pittsburgh, the third year, we have 90 people and they make it an official sport. And with that, just with that National Veteran Wheelchair Games, I’ve been to Puerto Rico, Alaska, Denver, Memphis. I mean, God, just all kinds of places I probably wouldn’t have been. Next year marks our 30th year of doing wheelchair softball at the veterans games.

[01:46:00]

RC: Again, all started with a nice little introduction at the International Special

Olympics in Bloomington in '91. Then from that I eventually branched out into some wheelchair basketball for a few years, also. Actually, we had the National Wheelchair Veterans Games just here in Minneapolis this past summer where we've got 20 something sports, 5,000 participants, 500 athletes and their families and things of that nature up in here. So I've been very fortunate. Again, something that just started with a little flip of the thing, of officiating.

Then also during that time, I started to officiate some basketball. I talked about Jim Robinson who used to run the Loft Teen Center. Well, he was the head clinician at the Minnesota State High School League for a bunch of years. I remember one of the first times I met him, we were down at Oxford, and he was putting on a clinic for minority officials, trying to get minority officials up in there. He talked about the need and the challenges and the things he went through. I just remember that meeting right down there.

I dabbled for a little while and I left and I came back, because, I mean, there was a Steve Winfield, there was a Roger Neal, there was a Gayle Anderson, there was a Frank White, there was a Carl Britt, there was a Louis White. These guys were all out there being on the headlines of officials in basketball down there.

[01:48:00]

RC: And me and three or four buddies said, "Hey, those guys aren't going to do that forever. We need to." Then some of those people were kind enough to take us aside, give us some tips, help us move up along the line so we could try to do that now to the next generation of people down there. So the basketball thing fell in pretty good for quite a while. For quite a while. But a lot of good people are there. I talk about, well, going back to Steve Winfield. Talk about Hamilton Bell and his brother, Project Bell, the first guys who got me to do a varsity game together with them. They said, "Come on out, Crowe." Trusted me to go out there. Al Gregory, Lou Garrison, I mean, guys just said,

“Okay, come on. We’re going to show you some details.” During that time, I was also officiating for municipal athletics and a lot of time I was officiating down at Oxford on the weekends.

To this day, I still supervise officials and officiate on the weekends. Just finished their tournament Saturday down there at Jimmy Lee. But I used a couple years down there to work on my technique and stuff. I worked on my technique and after about a year or two, my mentor said, “You’ve been working on your skill. I could see you’ve been working on your skill. You just haven’t been going down there on Saturdays and running up and down the court.” So that was positive enough to get me to follow up from there. To this day, I’m down there working with officials, trying to get them to where you want to go. We’re just teaching fundamentals.

[01:50:00]

KH: What are the skills that an official needs?

RC: That’s a great question. Well, first of all, you need to have a belief that, one, it’s something you want to do. Two, you have to be willing to believe that even if you played the game, you don’t know the game until you become an official.

KH: Oh interesting. Do you think you have to have played the game to become an official?

RC: No, absolutely not. It helps you though. It helps you to be able to dissect and observe situations. You can anticipate things as a player that you probably couldn’t see as you would an official. You’ve got to be in some reasonably good shape. You’ve got to have some conditioning. You’ve got to have somebody around you to help you with the details of knowledge and techniques. There’s a lot of people out there that provide that.

But then you’ve got to have somebody who trusts you and who will continue to help you grow and let you know you’re not doing that quite right, or you may consider

doing this differently. You have to be open minded because things change, situations change, rules change all the time. You have to decide if you want to adapt to that. You have to be committed. You've got to be professional.

KH: That's got to be hard as an official, if there's a conflict over the call and it's on you, and people are looking at you.

RC: Well, another thing, you've got to have some thick skin. You have to realize that as an official in most sports, half of the people don't like your call because it didn't go against them. When you take that in consideration and consider your study and training, you are the smartest person on the floor.

[01:52:00]

RC: There's nobody else out there that has read that book, took them tests and prepared like you have. So when you think about that, you're the most prepared person as far as administering the game in that situation on the floor.

KH: Even more than coaches?

RC: Only the best coaches. The best coaches, they've got a great idea of what's going on with you.

KH: I'm in the boxing world less so now, but I've not coached competitive athletes and I have not officiated, but I know enough about it. Do coaches, like in basketball or softball, generally read the officials rulebook? Like do they know it that well?

RC: Not most of them, no. The best ones do. You can tell because they'll ask you a question that only a situation in a book would know about. They may just come out to ask you to see if you know what you're talking about sometimes. They'll just come out and ask you something that you say, "Oh, okay. Somebody's been in the book." They know you got it right. They just want to come out and ask you to let you know that they

know.

But my experience has been that most players don't know. Most fans certainly don't know. And only the best coaches know. Now, don't get me wrong. Some coaches, a lot of coaches got some concept, but the finer ones have the detail down. The finer ones, the best ones, they have detail because they know situations.

[01:54:00]

RC: For instance, I remember when I was still playing and officiating, if one of our fraternity fellow officials on the softball field made a call, or did not make a call, I would just go up to him and ask him a question like, "Shouldn't that have been an infield fly?" And I'd just walk away.

KH: Just dropping off.

RC: Yeah, just walk away. "You think you could have been in a better position to make that call?" And I just walk away. Not questioning their judgment or anything, just asking the question and I got them to think about it. Okay, all right. But, yeah, to answer your question about that, as the official, you are the most prepared person up in there. A lot of questions, a lot of comments, there's no definitions or backing in a book to back them up sometimes. A lot of the conversations are emotional. And that's okay. That's okay. Coaches are fighting for the teams and their players. But I think it's the ones who know the rules, apply the rules, and in most situations, try to be the coolest, most composed person on the playing surface.

KH: Was there ever a time where that was particularly hard for you?

RC: I'm pretty good at phasing you out. And what I mean by that is that the more you scream, the less I hear. Because I can appreciate you being upset with a call. Yes, that's okay. All right. Okay. I can appreciate you disagreeing with the call. Okay. Half of you people do.

[01:56:00]

RC: Until you get personal, we're all right. When you say, "You, such and such and such and such," well, to me that means you've got to go. Because it ain't personal. But we can have that conversation. I can explain the rules to you. I can explain to you my point of view. I can explain to you what I saw. You can explain to me what you saw. We can agree to disagree. Oh, that's great. Nothing wrong with that. But we're going to keep it on this professional level. The more you talk, the more you scream, the less I hear you. I will have a tendency to do you a favor if you continue to scream and walk away from you, because it's more important you stay in the game than me make a scene and throw you out of the game.

KH: So your goal really is to keep them in the game, if possible?

RC: Oh, they're not there to see me. They're not there to see me. I'm going to walk away from you. If I come back and you continue, well, then like I always say, we never eject anybody. You eject yourself. I'm going to do everything. Hey, I'm going to give you an answer. You don't have to like it. I'm going to walk away. And if you continue, you might get warned. After that, one of us is staying, and it's usually going to be me.

KH: Has there ever been a time, and can this actually happen where you make a call, a coach complains, and they're explaining, whether heatedly or calmly their point, and you go, "Yeah, I missed that one."?

RC: Oh, no, no, no. If you hang around long enough, you're going to miss some stuff.

KH: And do you reverse your call? Can you reverse your call?

[01:58:00]

RC: You usually can't reverse your call once you'd made it, unless you're in some

situation where you got TV, which we don't have a lot of at the high school level. You might have some of that thing at the college you can do, where you got video stuff, you can do that there. Sometimes I say, "Coach, you might have been right about that one." There's nothing wrong with that because you don't always get every call right. You just don't. Some coaches respect the fact that you do that, and some take it the other way, and then think that every time you make a call, they could question it. Can't have that going on.

Sometimes you see things and you don't react to it. You see it and you say, "Did I just see that?" "You go by, and the coach might stop you and say, "Hey, Bob, I think such and such did such and such." And then I say, "Coach, I think you might be right. I'll catch the next one."

KH: Because it's too late.

RC: It's too late. The play has passed. But I acknowledge the fact that, yeah, I saw the same thing you did. I probably didn't react to it quickly enough, or at all. But, again, we just have the conversation.

KH: You must have to, as an official, especially for basketball, you've got to react fast because it's a fast game, right? Then if you miss something, the next play's happening, the next thing's happening.

[02:00:00]

RC: Yeah. Oh, you're going to miss them. Yeah, you're going to miss them. I mean, there's a lot of athleticism going on. There's a lot of speed going on. Sometimes you just can't get to the spot you need to get to, to see things, and you're better off not calling it than trying to guess it. You need to be able to see what you see and justify what you say you got. You hang around long enough, it will happen. You just won't be able to get everything. Depending on the dynamic of your crew or whatever it is, hey, sometimes

they don't see things, and they talk to you about it. And that's okay, too. The main thing is you hope that, as a crew, you get the obvious stuff. You don't miss the obvious stuff, because it looks like two or three blind mice out there. All of you out there, and nobody saw it? So you really want to do that. You just need to have a lot of confidence in your ability, in your preparation, and your timing, and your ability to manage the game. And people.

KH: So I am looking at the clock here. We could probably talk for the next four hours, but I won't keep you that long. You said, and this is so interesting, you officiated wheelchair softball and basketball. Am I understanding this correctly, wheelchair softball is played in a gym?

RC: Well, it's played out on a concrete surface or sometimes a rubberized surface. Have you ever seen those miracle fields? You'll go and you'll see some of the little kids playing softball on those miracle fields? Some of those are made larger in some places when they play wheelchair softball.

[02:02:00]

RC: We've got great wheelchair softball here in the state of Minnesota. We had the first original dynasty, which was out of the Courage Center, what's known as the Minnesota Thunder. We've had the Minnesota Twins, who until this past year were the defending champions. There's a great squad out of Nebraska who has been running a little dynasty. We had a Saints team. A lot of the major league baseball teams sponsor some of these wheelchair softball teams. So like the Mets, the Yankees, the Royals, the San Francisco Giants. A lot of these major league teams they sponsor. The Twins, of course, they've got a team out here. Cincinnati, they've got a squad. Columbus, Ohio. A lot of major league teams sponsor these teams out here. We played the national tournament this year out in the parking lot over at Mall of America.

KH: How come I didn't hear about this?

RC: I don't know why. Because it was out there and it may come back next year. It's fantastic. We had, oh, 20 something teams, three divisions and it's just fantastic. It's just a great event. We set up three fields out there in the Mall of America in the parking lot, right out there by the Ikea lot out there. We had two, three fields right out there. And yeah, we ran the tournament for two days. Two, three days.

KH: Oh that'd be fun to see.

RC: Yeah. So it may return. They've done a fantastic job with it this year. It may return again next year. Sometimes they end up doing the tournament in the same place for two years. Previously we'd been in Chicago for the past two years, but they've done a great job with it this year in the Twin Cities. So we'll see if it comes back. But it was a great job out there. Yeah, so it's played out there.

[02:04:00]

KH: So besides the obvious, that these athletes are in wheelchairs, what do you think would be the most significant difference between regular softball and wheelchair softball or basketball?

RC: From a competitive standpoint? Absolutely nothing. They are just as competitive as anybody else out there. They just have a different skillset. Some of them, we play with a 16-inch softball in wheelchair softball. Some of these guys hit the ball a long way. It's very common to see an athlete get thrown out from outfield in wheelchair softball. There's some fantastic arms out there. Double plays.

KH: Softball is a sport I've played. I'm just trying to imagine like fielding a grounder from a chair.

RC: Yeah, well, everybody's strapped in, and they can bend over at the waist. Most guys can get down to the ground, and sometimes it bounces up, but most of the time

they're just bending over there, reaching off the ground to get it, picking it up, throwing it right from there. Some of the guys are extremely fast in the chair. I mean those guys can just whip around there with extreme speed. Some of them got great arms. A lot of first basemen wear gloves over there because their guys are throwing the ball at fantastic speed.

KH: How about batting? Because it seems like batting is so much dependent on the rotation of your hips.

[02:06:00]

RC: No. It's all upper body. It's all upper body.

KH: So yeah, different skill set, different muscles.

RC: Different muscles, all upper body. Twist, turn, and roll. Fantastic sport to watch. If you ever want to take a look, go out to wheelchairgames.org or www.wheelchairsoftball.org, and you can see videos and things like that. Fantastic stuff.

KH: That's amazing. That would be fun to see.

RC: It is. I'm hoping it comes back again next year.

KH: I'll keep my ears open for it. I'm really close to the Mall anyway. So, I'm just looking at your officiating resume that Bill sent me.

RC: I've done a thing or two.

KH: Yeah, a thing or two. My printer was bad, so now I'm having a hard time. But aren't you in some Halls of Fame? Let's just ask that way.

RC: Okay. Yeah.

KH: [laughs] Come on. Which ones?

RC: Well, I got inducted into the St. Paul Central Hall of Fame in 2017.

KH: As an athlete?

RC: Yeah, and then I got inducted the same year into the Wheelchair Softball Hall

of Fame as an umpire. This April, I'll be inducted into the Minnesota State High School League Hall of Fame as an official.

KH: Congratulations.

RC: Thank you.

KH: That's exciting.

RC: Yeah. That's a big deal. They tell me.

KH: This April, April of '26?

RC: Yeah, April 19th in '26.

KH: For that, is it for a specific sport or just for officiating?

[02:08:00]

RC: Well, fortunately, I've had the opportunity to do a variety of roles for the high school league. Besides officiating football, basketball, softball, volleyball, I've been the Midwest Coordinator of softball for 12, 13 years, coordinator for softball. I've had the opportunity to be on some committees to help select some distinguished officiating awards for a few years. So I've had some opportunities. I've been on some official committees that help change and administer some policies over time. So I've had some opportunities to do some things beyond just being on the court, which have been very nice.

I've been able to work some variety of positions at state tournaments, be it at the clock, at the book, or some things like that there. So I get to see the game and my peers at a different level sometimes at state tournament time. I've been able to be a clinician for softball, where we put on clinics and things like that, which has allowed me to travel to different parts of the state that I haven't been before. Last year, Minnewaska, places like that. They tell me it's been 40 years. I didn't know that, but it's probably close.

[02:10:00]

KH: Forty years. Wow.

RC: That's what they told me. But, as I said, when somebody first asked me about this, I said it wasn't a goal. I was just doing what I was doing. In the course of doing these things I enjoyed doing, stuff added up, stuff built up, and somebody made me take an audit of it. It got pretty extensive.

KH: Clearly.

RC: I didn't know, but I know now. So I've been really fortunate to have those opportunities. A lot of people invested in that to make that happen. A lot of people. I didn't do that alone. Hopefully, I'll be smart enough to invest in some future people that they can get along there, because it's a big deal. It's a big deal. I'm honored at the opportunity and the chance to join some other distinguished people going in that day.

KH: I am working towards wrapping up here, so you can get on with your day. Do you see any connection between your long and really successful career as an official between that and Oxford?

RC: Oh, yeah, absolutely. Like I said, some of the fundamentals. Some of the fundamentals of life. Some of my fundamentals of life were developed down there at Oxford. Some of the fundamentals of how to treat one another. Some of the fundamentals of how to respond to adversity, right?

[02:12:00]

RC: I think this will give you an example of how fundamentals could go. I played baseball for Billy, and he's had actual Hall of Famers, Winfield, Molitor, et cetera, et cetera. But I remember when I was still playing recreation co-ed softball. We played for Bill. We just ran everywhere. We ran everywhere. On the field, off the field, we ran everywhere. When I was still playing, I still ran off the field. My compadres would be walking, and I'd be looking at them like, what are you doing? Fundamentals.

Fundamentals just stick with you.

How you have the opportunity to be patient about what you need, and perspective. Steve Winfield shared this one with me when I was early in my officiating basketball career and I was complaining about the quality of the games I was getting. He was saying, “Mr. Crowe,” and this is a line I still use today when I’m talking to younger officials when they have the same thing I say. He said, “You could go across town and go to some of these other higher conferences and do games over there and drive all the way across town and all that and get hollered at and screamed at and justly so, and maybe not at all. Or you could be down here at some of these other places where you think are not worthy of your talents.”

[02:14:00]

RC: “But teams not as skilled as the ones you’d like to go, they deserve good officials, too. And guess what? They get paid the same as the guys out there who’re hollering at you in the other conferences. Less skilled teams deserve good officials, too. They actually appreciate you more because they don’t always get them all the time.” When somebody talks to me, I said, “Hey, actually, they deserve your best. And actually, you probably need to be sharper at your game there because things happen there that don’t happen in other games.”

I found it’s easy to do good teams. They don’t make a lot of mistakes, right? You just got to be there and catch the weird stuff and make sure that you get what has to get done. Their talent can take care of the game most of the time. It’s the other ones where all the stuff that you see in casebooks happens, and that’s where you’ve got to be on top of your game. So the challenge for you is to give them everything you got because they deserve it, too. Your compensation is still the same. They deserve it. So don’t go in there saying, “Oh, well, I got such and such and such and such.”

Hey, well, you know what? The coach, the team, the fans, they're all out there. They worked all week for that night. So you need to be a professional and go out there and give them what they deserve. But, again, that's from Mr. Winfield, that's from Oxford. Fundamental life stuff about being professional, about giving your best and don't judge that book by its cover.

[02:16:00]

RC: You never know what's been going on in somebody's head that day when they get to the court, or when they get to whatever it is. All you can do is try to be professional to the athletes, to the coaches, to your table staff, and let them know that, hey, it's going to be okay. We're going to get through this and we're going to take care of everything. It's going to be okay.

There's so many fundamental things that happened at Oxford that stuck with me that I can apply to my everyday life, to my work life over time. When things didn't go my way, somebody did something I thought was untoward, and instead of saying, "I need to do something to even this score." I decided, well, just take a beat, take a big perspective and change the narrative yourself. Tell me I can't do this. Tell me I wasn't ready to do this. Okay. All right, well, okay. Now it's different if you just say, "I'm not going to give you the opportunity," that's a whole different thing. But the way you react to that.

Sometimes there's the art of provocation. They just want to see if you're going to be calm under pressure. What are you going to do in this situation? I'm going to do something and just see if he's going to act like I think, quote-unquote, they're going to act. And here's the thing. I've had this conversation with a good friend of mine for years. We talk about, as African American people and as African American men, we are always on display.

[02:18:00]

RC: Every time I go out and I'm doing something, I'm realizing that somebody's looking. My deal is to try to be the best example I can for anybody who's looking, especially somebody younger than me who's looking and saying, "Okay, Robert Crowe's going to the Hall of Fame. I want to do that. What is he doing? What is he doing? How did he do? How did he comport himself? How did he do it? How did he get there?" It's sort of like when I talked about Hancock. When I worked at StayWell, I was the only person of color there for years. It's okay.

When I went to Coe College, and I was in a liberal arts class for the first time down in Iowa, I was the first person of color some of the people ever saw. So I understood how I comported myself might be the thing that puts in their head how my race is for the rest of their days. As small and minute as that might be, I realized that.

KH: Did that feel like a burden or responsibility?

RC: Oh yeah. It's a challenge, but we're up to the challenge. Martin made us get ready for the challenge. It's a challenge every day. That's the stuff you handle down at Oxford. Challenges. It's a challenge every day. It's all right. I'm just trying to make sure that our youth understand that challenge is out there. Don't run from it. Get up to it, stand up to it. It's a challenge every day.

[02:20:00]

RC: I understand that anything I may do might be blown out of proportion compared to my white counterparts. It may be blown out of proportion by my people, also. But that challenge ain't unbeatable. We're built for that challenge. We're built for that challenge. I want to get the next people ready to handle that challenge. Because when you think about what's going on right now, you think about what's going on today, you think about the marginalization and the racism and things that's going on today. Some of it is pervasive, and some of it is just underneath it, you have to be ready to say, "Hey, there's

other ways to handle this. There's other ways to handle this."

You just can't say, "Okay, well, yeah, I can go out there and I can be violent and I can go get your head," and sometimes that's necessary to get attention. But, in the long run, it doesn't always get results.

KH: Right. That's an interesting distinction between attention and results.

RC: Right, but be ready for the challenge. I mean, hey, I'm not the only person that has been in that position. I know principals and other people out there, and they're toeing that line, and they're out there and they're just setting expectations for our generation of upcoming future leaders. Setting expectations. There's no shortcuts for you. Go get after it. Get after it.

[02:22:00]

KH: You've said this more eloquently than I will, but that, to me, go get after it. It's a challenge, yeah, go get after it. That's a sports thing, too. Like, what are you going to do? You're going to sit down? you're going to lie down? Go get after it. Robert, is there anything else that you want to make sure you say before we wrap things up here?

RC: I am so proud to be a product of what is Oxford-slash-Jimmy Lee. A lot of friends, a lot of relationships. So proud of what it means to the community. So proud of how the facilities have gotten so much better and up to date, which is well deserved.

I just hope that this next generation of people understand what they got down there. How every time they go down there and they interact with people in there, if they happen to get a chance to play for those teams and wear that Jimmy Lee or Oxford jersey, that what they're representing, not only at that facility, but outside that facility, and what it will mean to their sons, daughters, brothers, sisters coming in the future. It's a legacy we cannot overlook, cannot forget. God bless all those people down there who laid that foundation, who made it what it was, and for all of us old heads who will still call it, God

bless Jimmy Lee, but it's Oxford to us. It always will be.

[02:24:00]

KH: That's a great place to end. Thank you so much for doing this. This is really, really interesting.

RC: Kim, thank you for your time.

[END OF INTERVIEW]