

CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Eric Beardsley

Smith: This is March 20th. We are on the fourth floor of Barge Hall, room 407 and the interview today is of our wonderful wrestling coach, Eric Beardsley. This is, of course, an ongoing part of the Living History Project preserving some of these memoirs of outstanding people on our campus through the years. Good morning, Eric.

Beardsley: Good morning, Milo.

Smith: Ham Howard is running the camera. I am Milo Smith, former custodian of Barge Hall. All right Eric, what did you do when you first came to Central and when was that?

Beardsley: When I first came as a teacher?

Smith: As a teacher.

Beardsley: Well, I was hired as the - as a physical education teacher and a coach and the coaching assignment was in track - track and field. Then, the next year, Leo Nicholson was able to come up with \$900 and we started the wrestling program. The first wrestling program in the history of the school.

Smith: Good. What year was that?

Beardsley: That was in 1959 that I arrived and in 1960 was the first year for wrestling.

Smith: And you were actively on the university faculty until what year?

Beardsley: I retired in 1986. Twenty-seven years on the faculty.

Smith: Okay, good. What rank did you hold when you first started?

Beardsley: Assistant professor.

Smith: What rank did you hold at your retirement?

Beardsley: Associate professor.

Smith: Good. Now, you were also a student here at Central, right?

Beardsley: Yes, I was.

Smith: What were the years that you were enrolled as a student?

Beardsley: I was here in 195- or excuse me, 1947, '48, and '49.

Smith: Did you graduate from here?

Beardsley: Yes, I did. I had gone to Yakima Valley Community College for two years prior to coming to Central.

Smith: What was your major?

Beardsley: It was physical education and an art minor.

Smith: Now, I understand from friends of yours who knew you in those years that you played a little football at Central?

Beardsley: Yes I did.

Smith: And whether you would admit it or not, I understand that you were quite a fine football player. Do you have memories of being successful carrying the ball?

Beardsley: Yes I do. I had some great years in football. It seems they always remember the things that you don't want them to remember. Like the year we were playing PLU on the old rodeo grounds and I got the ball at the - on the kick-off on the two yard line and a big hole opened up and I ran through the hole and I was - anyway, within 15 yards of a touchdown and I looked around over my shoulder to see if anybody was behind me and nobody was within ten yards of me and I stepped in a - some kind of a hole and I started falling and I fell on the ten yard line and we did not score a touchdown and PLU beat us six to nothing. But everyone remembers that story that was here at that time. If you'd have been in the stands, you would have been bugging me about that for years, I know. But I did do some things that were a little more positive too.

Smith: I came here in '56 and I - the first football I saw played by Central was on the rodeo grounds before they discovered that that soil is full of vermin and scratches and cuts weren't healing properly and then they examined the soil and found out that it was poisonous.

Beardsley: That's true.

Smith: But what I remember most is that we played oftentimes in the rain and five plays into the game you couldn't read numbers on the players uniforms for mud. You must have fond memories of the mud of the rodeo grounds.

Beardsley: That's true. They didn't have very good equipment for clearing the field as far as snow in those days but we played with two or three inches of snow all over the field and that was not a pretty sight.

Smith: Now, did you go to school any place after having graduated from Central, Eric?

Beardsley: Yes I did, Milo. I went to Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts. Originally it was the International YMCA College and the reason I went there was when I was growing up in Yakima I had a real wonderful mentor called Gus Shen who was the Physical Education Director of the YMCA in Yakima. He always talked about Springfield College and so that was always in the back of my mind. I did like YMCA work and I - because of him, I ended up going to Springfield College and received a Master's of Science. It is a great school.

Smith: Good. Did you have any trouble adjusting to going to school in the east?

Beardsley: That's right, that was in Massachusetts. That was definitely in the east. Well, my wife was with me at that time. I think she had a harder time than I did because she had never been away from her mother - or that far anyway and she did communicate by phone but we were gone for a little over a year. So it was a long time probably for her but we both had adjusted and had some great times back there. We didn't want to stay there.

Smith: Now, did you teach in any departments on campus other than in physical education?

Beardsley: No, I didn't Milo.

Smith: And what kinds of classes did you teach?

Beardsley: Well, I taught a lot of activity classes and then I did teach - one class that I taught all the time I was here at the college was a theory class in elementary school physical education for elementary school teachers and I taught that almost every quarter and I even taught that years after I retired through the extended program on the other side of the mountains. So I did teach an awful lot of elementary school teachers about physical education at the elementary level and that was one of my favorite courses.

Smith: Did you teach wrestling?

Beardsley: Yes, I did. I had an activity class in wrestling and I taught many different people what I knew about wrestling anyway.

Smith: Now I had a - I had an advisee many, many, many years ago who took a class in wrestling without my knowing it. I had not okayed it. I found out later he was in a wrestling class and I called him in and I said, 'Why are you taking wrestling?' He said, 'Well, I want to take a class in wrestling and one in football and one in basketball,' because he said, 'My ambition is to be a sports announcer.' And that made very good sense. I said, 'Why were you sneaking around me?' He said, 'I didn't think you'd okay it so I just didn't say anything about it.' 'No,' I said. I thought that was a very good decision. I think we need more sports announcers who have some grounding in fundamentals of the sports they're announcing. That was Pete Cunningham. You might not remember Pete. His dad had worked for the Daily Record down here for years before and he was almost a four - a straight four point student all the way through school. Phenomenal young man. Now Eric, we've come to that marvelous question that I'm sure that you can respond to, what humorous events do you recall in or out of your activity area or in or out of your teaching area? Humorous events?

Beardsley: Well, of course I had a lot of humorous events as far as my coaching experience mainly. For example, I was a real stickler on when we went on trips that when we - since we were on school money we never used school money for any kind of pastry or - as far as our diets. Of course, I used to have to - every time I'd see one of my wrestlers eating a donut or some kind of pastry I'd blow my stack. Of course, they kind of teased me a little bit on this at times. But anyway, this one time down in Portland I had a group of kids that really liked to get on me about that and I had gone out that night and came back fairly late and when I got in - crawled in bed, I felt something in there that was rather uncomfortable and I kind of didn't know what to think. I really got out of bed in a hurry. I didn't know exactly what it was but anyway, I turned on the light and what I found in there was a huge butterhorn about the size of, you know, one of those cow pies. Here they had got in in my room somehow and they were trying to make a point, I guess. That I was a little bit too much of a stickler on pastries and so on but anyway, that was one story and we did have lots of them. There was another story that was also in Portland where we took one of the student trainers with us. He'd never been on a trip with any athletes before and he was kind of a shy little guy but he was really excited about going. He wore horn-rimmed glasses. But anyway, when we got to the hotel where we were staying, he ended up - we had to bring - because of having an uneven number we had to put three kids in one room and he ended up with two of our real cut-ups on our wrestling team. In that room - of course they each had a bed and then he got the roll away. Of course, they got up to the room before he did and when he got up there they were there and they attacked him and took all of his clothes off down to his shorts and put him in this roll away with his feet sticking out one side and his head sticking out the other. Folded up and took it- this is on the seventh floor- rolled it out into the hall, put him in the elevator and, of course, down at the bottom floor he - the door opens and here's a bunch of people standing there and he says, 'Help!' Anyway, that was kind of - of course, you had to have sense of humor with those kids but that was another story that I'll always remember.

Smith: I'm glad that you remembered some humorous things that happened while you were coaching. Now, I'm going to ask you to look at the other side for a minute. Other than the shortage of money, can you

remember any particular events or situations that you considered problems at that particular time? Problems for you as a coach?

Beardsley: Well, there was one disappointing moment during our - probably during the time where we had probably a couple of the greatest wrestlers that ever went through the program here and that was the year we competed - it was the third year we competed in the Nationals and it was in Lockhaven, Pennsylvania. We were at that tournament and then a week later the NCAA Division 1 tournament was being held in Kent State. But anyway, we ended up in third in the Lockhaven NAIA National Tournament that year and we had two national champions and then we - every wrestler - we took six wrestlers and all six of them placed. Anyway, I took four of those six from Lockhaven to Akron, Ohio to compete in the NCAA Division 1 - that's the biggest tournament in the whole United States and anyway and I had two - like I said I had two wrestlers that I thought could have gone all the way and a lot of other coaches did too. But anyway, when we arrived in Akron, Ohio we - which is right close to Kent - we stayed in the YMCA there and we were working out. We were really excited about the tournament and then the next day when we had to go in for weigh-ins and everything we found out that they weren't going to allow us to compete because the paperwork had not been done. Somebody did not - I don't know who it was whether it was at the top level or at a lower level somebody did not get the paperwork sent in. So the NCAA would not allow us to compete and they would not take, you know, a verbal commitment over the phone. So here we were sitting there with these four kids and like I say, two of them, I think, could have gone all the way. I know the coach from Portland State, his team ended up second in that tournament that year and he said if we'd have been there, we would have taken points away from this - the other teams that would have made it possible for them to end up winning the whole thing and he felt that the two kids we had were better than the two national champions at their weight. So that was, you know, really a big disappointment.

Smith: Was that slip up on the paper work on this campus?

Beardsley: Yes, it was. I had assumed -

Smith: Were you able to trace it down when you got back?

Beardsley: I think so, but I don't think it's something that we want to...

Smith: That's true.

Beardsley: I mean it was a big disappointment mainly for the wrestlers. We were doing a great job at that time, you know, wrestling on a real high level.

Smith: You bet.

Beardsley: In fact, we beat Oregon State that year home and home in a duel meet and that in those days nobody did that hardly. So we had quite a bunch of wrestlers.

Smith: You had a young black wrestler, Eric, that was a personal friend of mine and still is. He had a little bit of trouble on campus trying to be accepted by his fellow black students because they said that he had sold out to whitey by the fact that he was participating on your wrestling squad. I don't know if you knew that but he came into see me one day with tears rolling down his cheeks and I said, 'How can I help you?' and he said, 'I just went to the black student's room over in the Union Building and they kicked me out and said, 'You're not welcome here because you sold out to whitey.' And I said, 'You have - what, aren't they proud of you. You have made a considerable name for yourself nationally and you came back to this campus bringing great honor to the campus and I think you also brought great honor back to the black students of Central. Were they not proud of that.' He said, 'Well, some of them may have been but the most vocal ones felt that I had sold out.' Did you have any race problems because of your mixed squad?

Beardsley: No. This story you're telling me is the first time I've heard that.

Smith: Is it really?

Beardsley: Yes, I don't think we ever had any problems.

Smith: You know who I'm talking about?

Beardsley: Oh yes, he was a national champion, too.

Smith: Yes. Yes.

Beardsley: He and I had a great relationship. In fact, a lot of people thought that he shouldn't have even gone to the Nationals that year because he had a four and nine record - dual meet record but I knew that he had been wrestling some of the toughest - against you know, like Oregon and Oregon State and he lost a lot of matches real close and then when the conference came along he just ran away with it and then he goes back there and he really caught fire back there in his second round match, he ended up against - it was in Lake Superior - was constantly where the tournament was being held and in the second round he met the hometown boy who had been runner up the year before and, of course, was the only chance they had at a national champion and they were all expecting that and this wrestler of ours just tore him apart. It was unbelievable what a showing he put on. He went on and he won the whole thing and it was - what a great success story that was.

Smith: We were very proud of him on campus. I wish that his fellows in the black student union would have been also.

Beardsley: That's hard for me to understand because we also had a little Japanese fellow on that same team and they -

Smith: Keino.

Beardsley: He's no longer - he died a couple of years ago of diabetes.

Smith: Oh boy.

Beardsley: He was 43 years old. Pretty young to die. But the thing about those two guys that I appreciated was that some of the wrestlers that year were a little disappointed in me because of one wrestler who was kind of - they thought he was going to be a leader for them. They realized that - later on that he really wasn't and he kind of got them into - he didn't like the way I was coaching. They thought I was spending too much time on technique. Of course, this guy that was kind of the instigator thought that we should be wrestling more. He needed more technique work than anybody on the team. But anyway, they were going to hang me in effigy. They had - part of the team had - they were, let's see, part of the team was for me and part of them was against me and they had a meeting and they wanted me to come into the meeting and I came into the meeting and it was really interesting because all the minority kids I had on my team were backing me 100% and it was the - I was having problems with the Caucasian kids rather than the minorities. So I always felt I had a good relationship with minorities.

Smith: Right. Now Eric, as you think back, what administrators on campus were especially helpful in the execution of your program?

Beardsley: Well, I really have to give Adrian Beamer who was our Athletic Director at that time a lot of credit because he was not easy to get money from but he was always very supportive of wrestling. I - other

than Adrian, of course, the athletic director is the one - is the key person as far as your athletic program and if he's really supportive of you, I think that's - you've got - you're fortunate there. He was.

Smith: Thinking clear across campus, not only in relationship to athletics but in relationship to teaching, to the day to day execution of the institution, who are the administrators that stand out in your memory as having been most significant in your judgment in the operation of the University?

Beardsley: Well, I came when McConnell was still President here when I arrived and then he left shortly after that, I think.

Smith: I think it's because you came that he left.

Beardsley: That could have been part of it. I always felt Jim Brooks was very supportive and did a fine job. Perry Mitchell, of course, he was in the Registrar at that time but I think he was a good person as far as athletics were concerned. Very supportive. Of course, Milo Smith was one of my great supporters.

Smith: Well, you know you did something that - you're the only coach that I know of that ever did this. I can remember in several situations where there were young men who were considering the possibility of coming to Central and possibly wrestling and you'd either call me up or you'd bring the student down to see me and give me a chance to talk to the student. This is what we are, this is what we can do for you and it was almost the case of you don't have to believe coach Beardsley, he's willing to let you go out and talk to other profs all over campus and I appreciated the fact that you trusted a lot of us talking to your incoming athletes. I was so pleased then, of course, as the season went on to see these young fellows functioning on the team to the benefit of the squad and then thought well maybe something I said might have helped that young man make his decision to come to Central.

Beardsley: I'm sure it did. That's why - otherwise I probably wouldn't have taken advantage of you. I knew you had - what you had to say was very convincing and also you were a great supporter of our program.

Smith: I thought it was wonderful.

Beardsley: You seemed to be there at most of our matches and we did appreciate that.

Smith: You bet. Well I - most of us who followed wrestling appreciated the fact that it was an individual sport and conditioning was of the ultimate importance and I don't think you found the drinker/carouser functioning on the wrestling squad ever. They took care of themselves.

Beardsley: That's true.

Smith: Now, do you recall any particular problems that existed between let's say your athletes and the faculty that sometimes you had to go to bat for them?

Beardsley: Well, yes I always - of course any time you recruit a young man, you feel a strong responsibility for him and, of course, there were a few individuals that I recruited that really had some problems with the grades and of course, I always felt that if there was a chance of saving an individual then I would go to bat for them and in many cases I did, maybe get a grade change. I think, though, that looking back at most of those professors that made that change never regretted it because in many cases those students went on and finished school and many of them are doing really well now and they may not have.

Smith: From your viewpoint, Eric, do you recall any significant problems that existed between students and administration here on campus?

Beardsley: No, I really don't Milo. I don't really feel that there was any conflict there.

Smith: Did any of your students get involved in any of those Vietnam War period campus marches and the students marched downtown and raised heck all over campus because they were so unhappy about the Vietnam War? Did many of your athletes participate in that kind of campus activity?

Beardsley: Not that I'm aware of. They may have but I was never aware of it. They didn't, you know, usually I didn't know about a lot of things. In other words, I used to get lots of calls if they were in grade problems or if they were having financial problems or - very seldom would they tell me if they were having, you know, girlfriend problems or some of those other type of problems so they could have been involved but I probably would have known about it too because we were a small enough campus in those days that we - it didn't take long for the word to get around if somebody was being a little different.

Smith: Was there any time left in the young man's day or night that he could work part time while going to school?

Beardsley: I think so. I think a number of our students did that. We were not what you'd call a high pressure program. In other words, we were - none of our kids were on scholarship and we weren't - we had usually one workout a day. Some colleges nowadays have three workouts a day. Of course, you're talking about these high pressure programs and these kids are all being - their education is being taken care of. They are being financed, in other words. But none of our kids were ever financed and that's why I feel so good about what happened in those years.

Smith: Sure. Now can you give us for the record right off the top of your head some information relative to how many national championships did you have? The gym used to have a number of banners up there for the wrestling program. I am disturbed that they have suddenly disappeared.

Beardsley: I am too.

Smith: I am hoping we can get them back up. I'm doing some complaining.

Beardsley: Maybe we can. I hope so. Good.

Smith: Do you have any particular list that you could give us of the numbers of outstanding athletes that were in your program through the years? Now I know that you have been admitted into the Hall of Fame up here at the education - at the athletics department. How many of your wrestlers have been accepted into the Hall of Fame for example? Do you know?

Beardsley: Well, I think we've got - let's see - we've got at least five or six that are in that Hall of Fame. We have - we have two that are in the National Hall of Fame and, of course, I'm in the NAIA National Hall of Fame. Also we won two individual National Championships during my years of coaching. We were runner up one year and I think we were third two years, fourth two years. We had some great years in the late '60's and the 70's were great years for us.

Smith: Eric, do you know if many or even any of your wrestlers went on to coach wrestling.

Beardsley: Well, that's the thing I'm really proud of is the fact that this year - actually it's been going on for a number of years now, they have the State Championships - high school championships held in the Tacoma Dome and it's like a big reunion for me every year. I'm so lucky. I go over there to the tournament there and I can't go - I'm a member of the High School Wrestling Hall of Fame also and so they allow us to go anywhere we want in that building. So I'm right down there on the floor with all the coaches and everybody else - all of the other Hall of Famers and I can't go ten feet without running into one of my ex-wrestlers whose coaching or somebody I've coached against or somebody that's, you know, coached against me. So it's a wonderful moment every year for me to go over there. I'm so proud of the fact that so

many of my kids finished and went on and got into some kind of a career and so many of them - oh, I'd say 70% of them went into the teaching and coaching and they're doing so well.

Smith: That's good.

Beardsley: So I feel - that's one of my - should be one of my really important legacies when I'm at the end of my time.

Smith: Okay Eric, now we come to a list of very short subjects that I'd like to ask you to comment on if something comes to you. If it doesn't we'll move on. Concerning your period at Central, any comments concerning the salary schedule?

Beardsley: Well, I always had kind of a argument with that because I always felt that people who really needed to have their salaries increased were those people that were just starting out and had large families and in many cases it was always - when you got a salary increase it was always on a percentage basis and I always kind of felt that it should have been an across the board raise because at the top they're all getting further and further away from those at the bottom and at the top they don't really need it as much and that was my - so I kind of had a gripe over that and then people were held back, I think, because they didn't have the doctorate and I was always kind of disappointed in that because years later I found out that in the code it states that if you are recognized by your peers as nationally, you know, outstanding then you can be raised to any level that they want to raise you to and I know that there are people held back because of that and the administrators a lot of times they pretend that they don't know about that particular part of the code.

Smith: Okay, while we're there, how about commenting on the faculty code. Did you feel that it was significant in your career?

Beardsley: Well, I think it certainly had its place and I think there - I think that sometimes the administrators, the people who are responsible for the people under them don't really know the code or they pretend that they don't know the code and that is kind of disappointing. They - here all around you people are being promoted for - because they may not have the doctorate but they have - they are known nationally and are recognized nationally yet they're - some of them are getting advanced or promoted and others are not. In other words, I think in some ways there's some fairness that should be taken into consideration.

Smith: Okay, would you make any comment concerning academic freedom at Central?

Beardsley: Well, I've always felt that was important. I think that I don't recall any situations in my years where it was not really - real effective and that it was not being considered.

Smith: How about the Faculty Senate?

Beardsley: Well I know that they always - the years that I was here anyway - they were always very highly respected. People - the people involved in that part of the program were really doing an important job and a good job.

Smith: Any reaction to town and gown relationships?

Beardsley: Not really, I always felt there was a really good relationship there.

Smith: I've recently become so surprised that I read in the paper that President Nelson is very interested in trying to improve the relationship between the town and the University and if something has happened to the relationship it has had to have happened within the last five years because up until I left in '91, I

thought that we had been on a gradual improvement program for the previous 25 years and that we had a good support from downtown and the support was mutual. I was rather surprised to read that in the paper. How about long range planning on campus?

Beardsley: Well, I'm sure it's been pretty good. The only thing is that all of a sudden comes up that I don't know how it ever got through but this nuclear energy power that is going right through campus with these huge poles and these big wires. The wires haven't been put up yet but that is going to just - you talk about the view of the beautiful valley and the fact that it's really is going to be a sour note, I think, and as years go along it's going to get even worse.

Smith: You believe the local editor of the paper, ugly, ugly, ugly?

Beardsley: It - why he should put a couple more uglies in there, I think.

Smith: Well, I personally believe that it will still be possible to see the view without even noticing those poles after the first couple of years. They won't even see them.

Beardsley: That's possible.

Smith: I suppose it's a problem of timing.

Beardsley: It could have been done in another way. We'd have had to spend more money, I guess.

Smith: That interests me though that we are accused as a University oftentimes by non-university people of spending money carelessly and yet many of those are the same people now who say that the University should have found the \$5 million to bury those wires. I need a little more consistency in attitude about the state spending of money on this institution.

Beardsley: I wish we'd have had a little bit more information on it, though, at the time. It seemed like the thing that was being argued was the parking - the loss of parking more than it was the fact that they were going to have to not unbury the wires and put the huge nuclear like wiring up.

Smith: Do you have any feeling about the building naming policies on this campus?

Beardsley: Not really, no. I think they are fine.

Smith: There are two basic attitudes. We have always had a very human attitude about naming. We have felt that it was perfectly all right to name buildings for living people so that they and their loved ones can really learn to appreciate the honor that has been given and now I understand that there are any number of new people that have come on campus who have come with the other attitude from other places that no building should ever be named for a living human being. Only after they are deceased when they can no longer enjoy and appreciate it.

Beardsley: Well, I don't know. The policy that has been in place has always been fine with me as far as I'm concerned.

Smith: Me too. I enjoyed the fact that Reino Randall and Sarah Spurgeon and any number of people were able to appreciate the naming of a building while they were still living.

Beardsley: You bet.

Smith: I know Victor Bouillon when the old library building was named after him that was one of the happiest days in his life and he said so.

Beardsley: I bet.

Smith: I was so disappointed really when the library had to be moved out of that building because he had served so well on this campus for so many years and he felt that it was a greater honor to have a library named for you than any other kind of building because he considered that the central focus to the campus.

Beardsley: That makes sense.

Smith: Okay, how about academic organization, Eric? You were here as I was when we went from departments to divisions to schools and every few years we changed academic organization. Do you have any comment relative to that now that P.E., for example, is in the school of professional studies?

Beardsley: Well, it's kind of confusing or it was confusing to me. I think if there's a real good purpose for change then I think that's wise but it just - change to be changing things for no really good reason I - I don't know. But it's hard for people that - as you get older it's even harder for you to accept change. So I know that I - as far as change it's harder for me at this time of my life to accept it. I like things to go right along the way they have for years.

Smith: Any comment concerning the hiring policies and practices at Central during all the years you were here?

Beardsley: No, I really don't have any qualms with what has taken place there.

Smith: How about the pre-college preparation and quality of students who enter Central?

Beardsley: I think that's important because I think the quality of the student reflects on the college and I think that they have to come up to certain standards that would qualify them for a university.

Smith: Now, having come on campus in '59, you were here when there was too much talk about the fact that Central had become the place where you go to school if you flunk out of the U or you flunk out of Washington State and for a few years that probably was true. I knew any number of students who were here because they did not keep their grades up on the other campuses and many of us faculty members were very embarrassed that that was true and little by little we were able to turn it around and we no longer were embarrassed because we weren't taking the flunk outs. Do you recall having worked with a lower quality student?

Beardsley: Well, not really because I know that there has always been a - there's been criticism over the fact that athletes sometimes get breaks and I know that in those early years especially I had - we did some research on the quality of our students and it was amazing how many of our wrestlers were well above a 3 point and most of our students graduated and went on and became - got into good jobs.

Smith: Now Eric, were you the recipient of any award or honors? I know about - we know and have on tape now that you were elevated to the NAIA Hall of Fame and the local Hall of Fame. How about any other awards or honors that you have been awarded?

Beardsley: Well, I'm a member of the High School Wrestling Coaches Hall of Fame and I'm also a member of Yakima Valley Community College's Athletic Hall of Fame and then also I'm a member of the Northwest Community College Association Hall of Fame. So actually I'm on - I'm in five Hall of Fames which are - I feel real good about.

Smith: Now, this next question hardly pertains to you but I'm going to ask it. What specific contribution do you feel that you made to the progress of your department or school? Well now, I'll speak partly for you in that had it not been for Eric Beardsley we probably would never have had, at least not nearly so soon, an outstanding wrestling program. Certainly you've brought that to this campus. What other contributions do you feel you made up there?

Beardsley: Well Milo, I really feel that the thing that I feel most proud about is the fact that I really trained a huge number of wrestling coaches for the state. Of course, high school wrestling and junior high school wrestling is really big and that I think is awfully important and I feel that I used to - for years I ran a camp called Tall Timber Wrestling Camp and every year we'd have students up there and they were getting college credit for being there. It was a non-profit corporation, as far as the camp, and a lot of those - and then we'd invite coaches, high school coaches with their wrestlers to come and be counselors there and then I would go out and bring in the best coach I could get in the country and every year we'd have a different really outstanding coach and I think that probably, that camp which I was the Camp Director and that camp ran for 16 years and probably did more to develop wrestling coaches in the state of Washington than any other camp that I can think of. It was one of the few that was being run at that time. So I think, you know, as a coach my contribution is that I really did train a lot of outstanding coaches and hopefully, I think I did train a lot of good elementary school teachers in terms of their knowledge of physical education at the elementary level.

Smith: Now Eric, did you have enough time in your life outside of teaching and coaching and recruiting to serve on any major committees while you were on the campus? Faculty committees?

Beardsley: Well, the only major committee was the Committee for Promotion/Advancement and that was - I served on that for about the first five or six years that I was on campus here.

Smith: Did you ever serve on a Building Committee?

Beardsley: No, but I felt that was probably one of the most important committees.

Smith: Did you ever serve as a part time administrator up in your area at all?

Beardsley: No I didn't.

Smith: Are there programs or activities on the campus that you feel are not justified on a university campus?

Beardsley: I really don't feel I have any qualms about any of the other programs.

Smith: Now you were married when you came to Central?

Beardsley: Yes I was. In fact I met my wife here. We were here as students.

Smith: She got her education here also?

Beardsley: Yes she did, right.

Smith: Good for her. Yes you were a student here and you did get a degree here. What year was that degree?

Beardsley: 1950.

Smith: 50. Do you have any relatives other than your wife who have attended Central?

Beardsley: No.

Smith: Did you at any time serve in the military?

Beardsley: Yes I did.

Smith: Which branch?

Beardsley: The United States Coast Guard.

Smith: What rank did you hold?

Beard sley: Seaman First Class.

Smith: What was your work?

Beardsley: Oh, it was a lot of guard duty. I was on a coast guard cutter for a while. I ran a shore boat for a while and that type of thing.

Smith: Did you ever have a chance to use any of the G.I. Bill when you came back to college?

Beardsley: Yes I did, fortunately.

Smith: Good. Now, is there any area that we have not touched on that you would like to make comments for posterity. This is going to go in the State Archives and 25 years from now, somebody's apt to sit and listen to what Eric Beardsley thought back in 1996. Shoot.

Beardsley: Well, there's one thing I should have mentioned when you asked about relatives. My daughter did go to school here and she graduated from Central and this last summer she received her master's degree and she teaches at Orondo, a small school about ten miles north of Wenatchee on the Columbia River and she just loves it and she is a third grade teacher. Anyway, she's doing well and we're really proud of the fact that she after getting married and having a child came back and finished her college at Central.

Smith: You had a son that was a fine athlete. What is he doing now?

Beardsley: Well, he's in business up in Bellingham and he's in the yard maintenance and landscaping business and doing really well.

Smith: Any other comment that you'd like to make for history.

Beardsley: I just have to say that I'm proud of the fact that I've had the opportunity to be at Central and meet people like Ham Howard and Milo Smith and Bob Jones. And I hope I'll be seeing a lot of them down the road.

Smith: You betcha. I'm so pleased that you were in the Coast Guard because you are one of the few Coast Guardsman that I have ever personally known and I wonder what kind of a man would get in an outfit that would wear a little sailor suit like I had when I was in the first grade.

Beardsley: Thanks a lot. Well, I had two older brothers that were in the Coast Guard and that kind of influenced me.

Smith: Where were you born and raised?

Beardsley: In Yakima, Washington.

Smith: You couldn't have hardly been influenced to join the Coast Guard from having been raised near the water then, could you?

Beardsley: No that didn't have anything to do with it.

Smith: I do understand that that - that the figures from World War II for example gave indication that the young men who were raised in the coastal communities and were raised in boats were more apt to go into the coast guard and navy while the fellows who were raised inland were more apt to go into the marine corps and into the army. If there's nothing else Ham, let's cut the tape.