[0:52]
California, Pennsylvania, to record the oral history of a woman of accomplishment, Annie Malkowiak. This oral history is being filmed by the Department of Communications Studies under the direction of Assistant Professor James Carter. And this is a first in a series of oral histories for the Cal U Women of Accomplishment, an Oral History Project. This is collaboration between the Women’s Center / P.E.A.C.E. Project and the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Center for Oral History. The purpose of the Cal U [California University] Woman of Accomplishment: An Oral History Project is to collect and preserve the oral histories of California University of Pennsylvania of Alumnae who achieved notable accomplishments. The project is intended to preserve women’s legacies, communicate their stories, and inspire future generations of Cal U students and other women to pursue worthy and noble goals. The project will capture women’s perspectives and their interpretations of the social, cultural, and political influences of their times. Of particular interest will be how attending California University of Pennsylvania shaped and enhanced their lives and contributed to their development as professionals and citizens.

[2:20]
MB: We have with us today Annie Malkowiak, and welcome today, Annie.

AM: Thank you, Michael.

MB: Such a pleasure to have you here.

AM: Same here, thanks.

MB: And as I say, Annie is a woman of accomplishment, and her accomplishments are so broad-based that it could take up the entire interview, so I’ve tried to narrow them down a bit and just give you some background, just to give you some idea of the notable accomplishments that she’s achieved, beginning with some of the firsts in Annie’s life.

Annie was the first female on an all boys basketball team in grade school. In her high school days at Ellwood City [Area School District]¹, she was the first female—or male—to score 2,000 points in Beaver

¹ Specifically at Lincoln High School
County. She was the first female athlete at Ellwood City High School to have her high school uniform retired. She was the first M.V.P. [Most Valuable Player] of the first Pennsylvania Round-Ball Classic in 1989. Some of her Cal U firsts include: the first single-season percentage record three-point shots—43.5 percent; first all-time career percentage record for three-point shots—37.8 percent; first all-time single-season record for free throws, an amazing 84.9 percent; and she was the first female public address announcer for Cal U sports, including: baseball, football, and women's basketball, and softball.

[3:44]
And let me share with you some of her awards, honors, and accomplishments as well, besides her firsts. Annie has been inducted into three halls of fame: She in the Lawrence County Hall of Fame, was inducted in 2000, the same year she was inducted into California University of Pennsylvania's Hall of Fame; and in 2007, she was honored to be inducted into the Pennsylvania Basketball Hall of Fame, and the notable accomplishment about that is that there are very few women that were inducted into the hall of fame, that is generally a majority of men who belong to that hall of fame, so that was a very impressive mark;

[4:22]
She's been the winner of at least nine M.V.P. awards—I probably came up short when I was counting; athlete or player of the week dozens of times; a number of outstanding athletic and academic achievement awards, so not only is she a great basketball player, she's a bright lady; in 1998, Annie received the John R. Gregg award for loyalty and service from the Cal U Alumni Association, a distinguished award presented by the Cal U Alumni Association every year; she was the WPIAL [Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League] scoring leader from 1985 to 1989 with 2,368 points; she set the Ellwood City High School single-season scoring record with 773 points; she set the Ellwood City career free throw percentage record—an amazing, incredible 93 percent; and she was the eighth player in Cal U history to surpass the 1,000 point plateau; and she once scored 59 points in a 72-to-59 win over Beaver High School in 1989, which means she scored, herself, as many as many points as the opposing team; and the rest of her teammates only scored 13 points to add to that night; and the list goes on and on.

And so, you can see by those accomplishments and those awards and those honors, that she certainly is a woman of accomplishment, but she has much more in her life than just her basketball accomplishments, and we are going to begin today by having Annie please tell us your name and what year you were born, and where you were born.

[5:58]
AM: Uh, Annie Malkowiak. I was born in 1971, in actually New Castle, Pennsylvania.

MB: Okay.

AM: Which is a little north of a, Ellwood City.

MB: Okay.
AM: About 10 or 15 minutes.

MB: Did you grow up there?

AM: Nope, just hospital at the time, that was the closest hospital to Ellwood City, so instead of driving to Pittsburgh, mom and dad just went up to New Castle.

MB: Okay.

AM: It was Jameson Hospital in New Castle, PA.

MB: Okay, okay, and a, so the community grew, you grew up in was...

AM: Ellwood City

MB: Okay.

AM: It’s a small, it’s a actually not a very big community, just kind of a small community, it’s kind of in between New Castle and Beaver Falls.

[6:35]
MB: Okay, and a, tell us a little bit more about that community. What kind of community is that, what kind of economy and politics and?

AM: Oh, Ellwood City was kind of like, like the Beaver Falls area—a steel mill community. Most of the people who lived there traveled down to “the valley” as we called it—the Beaver Valley to work in the steel mills. My parents moved there, my dad actually worked for a MetLife life insurance for over thirty-five years. And, my parents came in from the Natrona Heights, Freeport area. And they moved to Ellwood City because my dad got a job down in Beaver Falls. It was only about a 15 minute commute, so I guess when you talk to them, they choose that area because a, very family oriented. A lot of communities with kids, the playground, the recreational area, took a liking to the school district. So umm, they kind of just plopped right there and they have been there ever since. Mom and dad have lived there now for forty-eight years.

[7:30]
MB: Forty-eight years?

AM: Forty-eight years, they still live there.

MB: Wonderful, wonderful.
AM: It’s a nice little community. It’s very family oriented, its one of those places that cost of living is just right, there’s just enough to do, you’re close enough to Pittsburgh, you’re close enough to Cranberry for different things.

MB: Right.

AM: Now it’s actually becoming more of, more of a retirement community. You will see a lot of people who retire from their jobs wanting to move there, because it is, it’s just a nice, friendly, quiet place to be.

MB: And I would imagine that most of the kids have grown up now.

AM: Most the kids have grown up, sometimes it's funny when you go home and right outside of my parents’ house, very convenient, is the playground that has two full-court basketball courts, and when I come home, I am sometimes amazed at the lack of people that are out there, because when I was growing up—between the ball field and the basketball courts and the playground, from sun-up to sun-down—it’s just kids, after kids, after kids. And now it’s very quiet.

MB: Very quiet.

AM: So I think that gives you a sense of more older folk and less kids in the neighborhood.

[8:29]
MB: Right, right. And brothers, sisters?

AM: I have two brothers. I have a, one brother who lives in a, Minneapolis, and a, I have a younger brother who’s a, actually a traveling nurse; right now, he’s here in the Pittsburgh area working.

MB: Okay, and,

AM: So, I am the middle child.

MB: You are the middle child?

AM: I am the middle, spoiled child, because I am the only girl [laughing, laughing]. I’m daddy’s little girl.

MB: Good for you.

AM: Yeah, absolutely.

MB: Good for you, that’s a nice place to be,

AM: Absolutely.
MB: Yeah.

AM: I’m spoiled.

MB: You’re spoiled?

AM: Yeah, definitely.

[8:54]
MB: And so, it sounds like your family must have nurtured some sort of achievement or success factor; it sounds like the three of you have accomplished and done well, so were your parents influential in guiding you along your path to those kinds of values and virtues that would lead you to success?

AM: Oh, absolutely. When you figure, you know, my mom’s dad always worked in the steel mill, so you know—hard working. My dad was the same way, and my dad was in the Army, he had that work ethic instilled in him, and he grew up on a farm. So, you know, up early.

MB: Right.

[9:27]
AM: That kind of work ethic. And you know, my mom, neither one of them ever had the opportunity to go to college. My mom, I think, I believe my mom was the valedictorian of her class.

MB: Okay.

AM: But went on to, she used to work in downtown Pittsburgh at the Oliver Building. Actually secretarial work and things of that nature, and then had three kids, so choose a life that most people could back then, which was stay at home mom, and raise three kids. Dad worked, but a, she was a hard-working mom, you know. It was always, with us, you hit a certain age, it was always instilled in you, nothing is given to you, nothing is handed to you—you work for everything you get. We were always the kind of of kids that got those awards in high schools that most people laugh about—you never missed a class—the absentee award—you never missed a day of school.

MB: Right.

AM: So yeah, I have two very hard-working parents. Even after we got to a certain age, my mom took odds and ends jobs just to give us the kind of life that a, you know, for me to be able to go to basketball camp.

MB: Sure.
AM: Mom would work, I think she started her own cake decorating business, just so I could have the life of, she knew that I liked basketball so much. Well, in order to get better at it or get recognized because Ellwood City was so small, she would do things like that so I could go to camp in Ohio or Michigan or somewhere like that. Yeah, I have two very hard working folks.

[9:52.3]
MB: Now was that typical of the parents in the neighborhood? Were they all pretty much nuclear in that respect, where the mother stays at home, or, and they seem to have very traditional roles from the way you are describing it.

AM: Traditional is definitely the word. Yeah, because you know, we all went to Catholic school, I went to a Catholic grade school up until seventh grade; I didn’t go in eighth grade, it was only because they started a basketball team at the high school, so they were yanking me to come out of Catholic school, and we always joked, go to the other side, but yeah, you know, because my mom didn’t work at the time—you never want to say they don’t work, because being a stay at home mom is work,

MB: Yes it is.

AM: You would always find her and all of the other mothers of the kids that I went to Catholic school with, volunteering all their time, whether it was, you know, lunch duty or just special duties within the school, within the community. So my mom was especially was very active with the Catholic school that we were involved in.

MB: Okay, okay, you mentioned basketball courts in the neighborhood; it sounds like they were very close to your home there.

AM: I think, well you would just walk out the back door [laughter] in the back yard, people laugh, it’s no wonder, that’s what was so great when we’d come home, there’s a week in the summer time, usually around the fourth of July where I have a big Fourth of July party for all my friends, and my brother brings his kids home and his wife for that week, and we still go out into that backyard and play, at that playground, and it’s funny we sit out there and talk about all the times we had because we laughed, if it wasn’t for those two basketball courts, I really probably would not have been a decent basketball player, because I was the only girl that played.

MB: Okay.

AM: It was packed, especially Saturday morning, 8:30 in the morning, you hear that ball bouncing and you would walk out the door and there you are. Convenient for mom, look out the window and make sure the kids are okay, but she always knew where we were.

MB: Right.

AM: So it was extremely convenient to have that court there.
MB: Now did your brother, your older brother, was he the one that got you involved in basketball or was that just something you just, something you just something…. [inaudible].

AM: No, it was actually my dad.

MB: Your dad?

AM: We had that playground out there, we would go out and we’d joke, I think my Hall of Fame speech, when I got inducted at Cal, we joked because when I grew up there weren’t any Barbie Dolls, there weren’t any doll houses,

MB: Okay.

AM: It was you are the all time quarterback, I am going to show you how to play dice baseball.

MB: Okay.

AM: You are going to come outside and play basketball. You are gonna learn how to play, I am not even sure what they call it now, maybe stick ball or homerun derby, things like that,

MB: Right.

AM: And, my dad was out there playing with my brother, I got started around six or seven just out throwing a ball up, and it was my dad who pushed me to do it, you know? He saw that as an opportunity for something.

[13:18]
MB: Okay.

AM: And, I think when I was about seven, eight, my dad and mom got me involved in the Elks club, they used to have hoop, they called it hoop shooting contests. It was just free throw shooting contest. I did that from the time I was seven until the time I was fourteen.

MB: Okay.

AM: We traveled all around Pennsylvania and the country actually getting involved in free throw shooting contests, and obviously the better you were, the more you advanced to the national championships, so that’s kind of how it got started.

MB: So did he start it for you as because he saw a particular talent in you or just because he wanted you to have some activity that you said would create an opportunity for a woman that may be she would not have had.
AM: I think, then, it was just, get me to be active, and then he saw me shoot, and he was like, “well man there is something here,” I was just kind of natural.

MB: Okay.

AM: You know how some people are just naturally gifted at different things? My dad saw this, I have a pretty athletic daughter, let’s try this.

MB: Okay.

AM: Then it was, well it basketball, then it was I don’t want you to playing softball, let’s go play baseball.

MB: Right.

[13.20.9]
AM: So anything that boys were doing, my dad was proud, I got a girl that can do this.

MB: Okay.

AM: So yeah, I started playing baseball until colt league, once I got through pony league, the guys were like “that’s enough, we don’t want her anymore, she has to go to softball now.”

MB: Is that right?

AM: [laughing]. I got kicked out of a lot, when I was in Catholic school, and they didn’t have a girls team at the time, I was 5’ 6” and Sean Miller,

MB: Right.

AM: I think everyone knows who he is, he coaches Arizona now, he was two – he was in eighth grade, I was in sixth grade, and he went to our Catholic school, the coach at the time was like okay, we want you to play, because I was pretty big so I remember I played on a boys team with him for a couple of years and I still remember to this day, going down to ...it was in Beaver Valley...I can’t think of the name...I think it was St. Titus School [Catholic school in Aliquippa, PA], but uh the priests and the nuns blocked the door, they didn’t want me in, they thought it was just ridiculous that a girl was playing boys basketball.

MB: Really?

AM: So it was a chore to get in the door to play that game.
MB: How did you get in?

AM: I think my dad and some of the other dads, kinda overpowered the priests and the nuns [laughing] and we worked our way in. But yeah, we, it was a struggle sometimes.

MB: So resistance even from the establishment even at the earliest days, not even just your peers, and by the way how did your peers, the boy, and when I say your peers, I mean the male athletes, how did they accept you as a basketball player?

AM: You know what, I - It’s so funny now, because of Facebook, I still have those guys, they are my friends on Facebook, and we talk about that, now we just had our high school reunion last summer and I never met any resistance, I think there were a couple of guys that were jealous, you know like this girl is playing over me?

MB: Right.

AM: But I was good enough at what I was doing, and we were winning, I think they didn’t care but we always laugh, they always got their locker, and I always had to change in the hallway.

MB: Sure.

AM: Why does she have to wear a T-Shirt under her uniform and things like that but, you met more resistance from the parents than you did the guys that I played with.

MB: Okay.

AM: Because in some ways I don't think they knew any different.

MB: Right.

AM: But the parents were kinda the ones that would give a hard time, but then after a while I think it just grew on them. You know and I think sometimes my parents if there was something wrong, because I was a kid, they just kept it from me and dealt with it like moms and dads would.

MB: Right, Right.

AM: But we met some resistance.

[16.34.2]

MB: Yeah, so did you feel – did you feel a certain sense of accomplishment that you were able to overcome that barrier and was that a prideful thing for you to be able to, not prideful in a way that’s hottie, but proud that you were able to compete and realizing and understanding that you had this kind of real challenge in front of you playing with males and yet you were able to overcome that and win
them over. Was that an important thing for you, did you see it as that at all or did you just see it as playing basketball.

AM: I think back then, I don’t think, even as kids we didn’t pay attention to that kind of stuff, I just took it as, I was so used to that kind of atmosphere because in our neighborhood there was always more boys than girls and I had two brothers that I think I almost was accustomed to that from the playground and playing with my brothers all time, taking to their activities and I also just realized that I really took a liking to basketball and if I didn’t play with the boys, that I wasn’t going to play, so I just kinda of did it, I kinda had that attitude, I really didn’t know what was going on, I didn’t know any better, I didn’t know any different, so to me that was the norm.

MB: Okay.

AM: Until they started girls basketball [laughing] because even with the hoop shoot contest, my parents would tell me no you shoot against the girls, because I even wanted to compete against the boys there.

MB: Right.

AM: Because you know, people always instill that in your head too, well boys are better than girls, boys are bigger, they’re stronger, they’re faster, and my mentality was that “no they’re not”.

MB: Okay

AM: But I had to learn that I had to go with the girls at some point and break away from the boys.

MB: Okay, but you didn’t mind having that competitive bent with them, just you, you,

AM: I liked that

MB: You liked that.

AM: Because it was competitive, too and I think that is truly, I remember when I graduated from high school, there was a guy who was a sports writer for our local newspaper, and our local paper at home was really good to me personally, and they always did a senior article on the kids from Riverside High School, which was really close in Ellwood City, and I remember that guy that did the article, that helped with the article was a kid who grew up right down the street from us and who played with us on that basketball court every day in the summertime, then I said if it wasn’t for you guys there’s no doubt I wouldn’t have been any good in high school, and I wouldn’t have had a full ride to college, or the accolades or been able to go on the trips I was able would go on, and see what I saw, because they’re what made me better.

MB: Sure.
AM: Because I don’t even know that necessarily playing with girls would have made me as good as I was in high school or college.

MB: Right.

AM: Because guys will push you.

MB: Sure.

AM: And you are not allowed to nag, and you are not allowed to cry, get up that didn’t hurt.

MB: Right.

AM: They treated me like I was one of the guys.

MB: Right.

AM: And I think in some respects that was good, that was very good for me.

MB: Okay.

AM: Ya, know so.

MB: Now backing up, backtracking a little bit, how—you sounded like, you mentioned before awards through school that you have gotten for attendance or what have you and obviously you have done scholastically very well, so it must have been something your parents also instilled in you that you must be able to do both, you can’t do one, unless you can do the other. I am sure those priorities were set at a very early age.

[19:28.7]

AM: It was school, basketball, or if it was softball season, it was school, softball. And mom and dad knew that if you want to have the good things, you have to work for it. I mean you weren’t, there was no such thing as getting C’s or D’s that wasn’t acceptable. Because mom and dad knew you were a pretty bright kid, so you would have to put the time and work into it, so when we would come home from school, maybe some kids were outside playing, you got your homework done, mom and dad checked it, triple checked it, then when it was acceptable, then you go on. There was even chores in there, it wasn’t like you come home from school, throw you bags down and run outside, eat dinner and don’t clean up...uh-huh. It was cutting grass, taking out the garbage, doing dishes, I mean all of those things.

MB: Okay.
AM: It was as mom said, you can play basketball all you want until the street lights come on you can still shoot, but here's the things you are going to do in order to be able to play. I mean if we ever had a bad report card, you didn't go to practice, and that never happened.

MB: I was just going to say.

AM: I loved the game so much, I wasn't gonna allow myself. You know a lot of times in high school even if kids were going out on a Friday night, and I had a big project, I actually choose to stay home and get my projects done because if I didn't then I might not have a good grade, well enough to play or go to practice.

MB: Now let's transition a little bit, so when did you move to women’s basketball?

AM: Eighth grade.

MB: Eighth grade, talk a little bit about that.

AM: I was still at Catholic school, and it's funny Lisa Cantusso, who actually went to school here, her dad taught in the Catholic school that I was at. But they were starting a seventh and eighth grade program in Ellwood City for girl's basketball. And the only reason they started this program was the gentlemen who is actually the superintendent there now, he had a daughter, very tall especially for back then, who was pretty good basketball player and he wanted her to have, he didn't want her to have to wait until ninth grade. He wanted something organized for her.

MB: Okay.

AM: So they started a program, seventh and eighth grade.

MB: Okay.

AM: And they said okay, we have this school here playing, and all right, put you and my daughter together we might have a pretty good team. So they hired Lisa's dad as the coach, he's like look come up here one year, I don't remember if it was a struggle for my mom and dad or not to yank me out of catholic school, but we did, we enrolled in Ellwood City seventh and eighth grade, I went there just for one year, so I just missed one year of Catholic school.

MB: Okay.

AM: But you had to make up for it, you had to go to CCD all the time.

MB: Right, Right.
AM: One night a week, but uh...yeah eighth grade went to Ellwood City, and at the time, the Ellwood City High School Girls Basketball Team, had one of the longest losing streaks in the country, they were like 59 or 60 games, they hadn’t won a game in three of four years, and they were always getting blown away, the score were ridiculous, 84 – 10, they were pretty bad

MB: Right.

AM: So they started this seventh and eighth grade program, saw that okay maybe we have some talent, so then in ninth grade, actually Lisa Cantusso’s dad left the junior high job and became our high school coach. So Deneen and I actually moved up with him and started playing ninth grade, and you talk about segregation, whatever you want to call it, at Ellwood City, it’s not that way now, but you had a girl’s gym and a boy’s gym.

MB: Okay.

AM: And you were not allowed to cross over. The girls played in this, and it was a much smaller gym, Thursday nights on Mondays and Thursdays, and the boys got to play in the nice big gym with the nice locker rooms, on Tuesdays and Fridays.

MB: Right.

AM: We weren’t even allowed to practice in there.

MB: Did you resent that?

AM: Oh yeah, they had the nicer balls, they had the nicer uniforms, they had the nicer jump ropes, the nicer shoes, everything. But it was either you complain about it and not get anywhere or just deal with it and make the best of it.

MB: Right.

AM: And now it’s nice to see that they play, they still had that gym, they use it for Phys Ed and the girls are actually playing in the “boy’s gym” as we call it.

MB: Right, so the high school years were from ninth through twelfth grade.

AM: Correct.

MB: When you were playing on the high school team.

AM: And that’s the difference between boys basketball, for girls basketball in high school you could play on the varsity team in ninth grade, extremely unheard of, ninth graders never played on a varsity team.
MB: Right.

AM: Boys, there was a ninth grade team.

MB: Right.

AM: And then you high school was tenth, eleventh, twelfth. Whereas girls, was ninth through twelfth.

[23:27.9]

MB: Okay, okay, and so when, this team you first got onto, this was the team that was experiencing all the losses and long losing streaks that they had.

AM: Yeah, we broke that.

MB: So when you went in there, did you actually have an intent to change that, or did you just think we are going to try our best and see what happens, and how did that develop over the course of the four years that you were in school?

AM: No, no we, we, I hate to lose, I don’t care if it’s checkers, I don’t care if I am playing against a ten year old, I don’t like to lose. But no we knew right away that was a bad reputation to have. That’s all you ever read in the paper, I mean that’s all you ever saw on the news, it was kinda embarrassing.

MB: Okay.

AM: So we had that mindset well we are gonna change that, new coach, new era type thing, I can’t remember how many games we won my freshman year, but we had won probably triple the games they had won over, you know then my sophomore year we made the playoffs, totally unheard of, junior year made the playoffs, senior year made the playoffs, we were an extremely tough section with the Beaver Falls, the Beavers, the New Castles, it wasn’t an easy road, but yeah we made big turnabouts.

MB: And, was that primarily due to you and the other girl you were talking about, what’s her name?

AM: Deneen.

MB: Deneen, were you two stars on that team?

AM: Oh yeah.

MB: And then who, who did you, where did you get a supporting cast from, because you can’t do it all alone.
AM: You can’t do any of it alone, I think there was some kids, that you know, it was like one of those things, where girls, it – that was probably about the time where you saw more kid/ more females taking an interest in basketball.

MB: Okay.

AM: And they saw what we did in our one year in eighth grade, and you had some kids, it was just a matter of getting them to be committed.

MB: Okay.

AM: Because you know there were so many other things for girls to do, boys it was always sports, girls, it wasn’t, well I can be a cheerleader, I can do this, I can do that, but then you had some kids who took an interest saw hey we can win and then, I think my freshman year, I don’t remember, but we only had ten or eleven kids on a team.

MB: Wow.

AM: And then it kinda grew after that, and people started to take a liking to it and got interested in it, it was the commitment level too, you went from a team that never did anything in the summertime or in the off season.

MB: Right.

AM: To it became a real program where there was an off season, there was summer league, there was travelling around, there was going to camp and things of that nature so I think it was developed over a few years when you get the right coach and the right mind set of some of the players.

MB: Right.

AM: And leadership, saying okay let’s do this.

MB: While you are talking about leadership, it sounds that you, you really assumed that role of leadership when you got in there in ninth grade and you wanted to change things. I am assuming that you had to really take a leadership role on that team.

[26:00.6]

AM: Yeah, I think it was just kinda handed to me.

MB: [laughing]
AM: You know, I think it was just kinda handed to you, it was you know because I had a somewhat of a reputation from the free throw shooting contest, and travelling so people would see your name and they would say, that’s the girl that can shoot foul shots.

MB: Okay.

AM: Well then it was the hot shot contest that they had back in the day, where she was winning for that, so people just kinda looked up to you is how were you able to do that, and even though you were a freshman you did have seniors looking up to you because they were used to teams that never won a game and here comes this kid and she’s not too bad, hey we are starting to win, so it was kinda like instead of me looking up to a junior or senior, it was kinda like the juniors and seniors looking up to me like how do we do this, what do we need to do? Your pretty good, you’ve kinda made a name for yourself at a young age.

MB: Okay.

AM: Like what do we do, so it was kinda like me taking them under my wing instead of vice versa.

MB: Oh okay, that’s kind of interesting.

AM: It was kinda like handed to me actually, it was almost like to them too sometimes we laugh, they get the ball, it was like a hot potato, they did not want it, [Mike and Annie laughing] here you take it, we’ll get the rebound and get it right back to you.

MB: Yeah, yeah, and so as the team progressed and you started to have more success, how did, did that raise the prominence of girls basketball at Ellwood City and did, was there, how did that compare with boys basketball programs, and did that change the acceptance between the two? Because it sounds like there was a division there between the two.

AM: I think in a matter, quickly in a matter of a years time, I think people started, because you would go to their games and there would be ten or fifteen people in the stands, you know they didn’t even have cheerleaders.

MB: Wow.

AM: And in a year’s time, with us just winning ten or twelve games and doing some different things you notice the stands starting to fill up. The next thing you know, we have cheerleaders, oh wow we have a pep band, not the full pep band, but we got six or seven members of a pep band, had I know then, what I know now about Title 9 and all that, Oh, I would have raised a stink, right.

MB: Right.
AM: But I think over a period of time, people start...when it got to my senior year our games were standing room only.

MB: Really.

AM: You had to come very early for the junior varsity game, if you wanted to get a seat for the varsity game.

MB: Wow.

AM: I mean it...our games could have been played in the big gym.

MB: Right.

AM: And we would have filled both sides of bleachers, instead of having the one where you just had 25 rows of bleachers on the one side and that was it.

MB: Sure.

AM: So, yeah, it was you know, by the time my senior year I remember us getting two pairs of shoes, I remember us having nicer uniforms, we finally had warm up suits.

MB: Right.

AM: Actually somebody, the equipment manager actually did our laundry, instead of mom and dad having to do it all the time, we actually got travel bags and things of that nature. We had a great booster club, you know, things that they never had, so over a period of time, I guess is sadly enough, instead of just making it right from the get go, it took us having to win in order to get all of those things.

[28:48.4] AM: So when you look back on it, it’s like shame on you.

MB: Right.

AM: But you know now it’s where it should be, same amount of money.

MB: And your goal was just to have some self pride in your school and bring that program up and all of those other things kinda came along with that.

AM: I wanted us to be known, not for “losers”.

MB: Right.
AM: I wanted us to be respectable, I did not want us to be the laughing stock, people wanted to play Ellwood City because we were so bad, they wanted to win.

MB: Right.

AM: I didn’t like that, and I don’t think people that I played with liked that either.

MB: Right, now as you got to high school, obviously as this program started to grow, I would think that your commitment to the game, had to become even greater, you had to practice more to get to where you were.

AM: Sure.

MB: And I am sure, or let me ask you, were you still doing as well academically in high school as you were and so then how were you able to balance now, was there a changing of your priorities not with so much priorities but time, how did you manage your time to excel at both.

AM: It was school and basketball, all the extracurricular things that a lot of kids were doing, I did not do, I did some, but not as much.

MB: Okay.

AM: But I was not robbed of a childhood or anything, it was a choice.

MB: Choice, right.

[29.57.5]
AM: And, and I think it was when I started in summer time going to camp, that is when you first started hearing about, if you are good enough somebody will pay for you to go to school. But you have to work hard at it, you know there is, I think my sophomore year is when you started hearing, we were getting letters, which from schools, we had no idea, we had never, we were new to this, like why are they sending us a letter, why do they want us to come on an official visit or an unofficial visit, it was like we needed to hire somebody, because to us that lingo made no sense.

MB: Really.

AM: But it was one of those things where, wow somebody will pay for me to go to school for four years, I can go here, here and here and then it kinda clicked well I love this enough and your gonna pay me to come play for you, okay what do I need to do. I think in the summertime it was always going to camp, I can remember going to Cleveland, I everywhere anywhere I could get to, to get my name out there, because scouts weren’t coming to Ellwood City to see us play because we weren’t great, so I had to go out there to make them see me.
MB: Okay.

AM: And then you started to getting those letters, where you were getting an invitation only camps.

MB: Okay.

AM: And that’s how people got to see you and see your talents, and then okay, now we are going to go to a place called Ellwood City to see this kid play.

MB: Right.

AM: Because we saw her at camp and we liked what we saw, and now let’s see her with her team.

MB: Right.

AM: So, it was one of those things, where, and if I wanted to go to school, I had to get A’s & B’s and I had to make sure I passed the SAT [Standardized Achievement Test], it was always, with me it was always basketball year round, so I mean the year I worked with Sean Miller’s dad in the summertime, then just continually played and travelled and went to camps, and things like that, in my Junior and Senior year I played AAU [Amateur Athletic Union] ball.

MB: Okay.

AM: In Pittsburgh, you talk about a challenge, because I was the only kid on the team that wasn’t from Pittsburgh.

MB: Okay.

AM: So I was the outcast. So it was hard at first, and I knew it was hard because I was seventeen years old.

MB: Right.

AM: But I played on a team that we travelled to Miami, for the national championship.

MB: Wow.

AM: And that was a great experience,

MB: Right.

AM: But the whole time we were the outcasts, because we weren’t in the know with the McConnell name and things we weren’t from Pittsburgh, and who’s this kid coming from the outside.
MB: Right.

AM: But it paid off, because it got exposure, and I had a ridiculously crazy psychotic hard coach

MB: Yeah.

AM: But it was well worth it.

MB: Right.

AM: It was well worth it.

[32.14.0]

MB: Going back to the point in time when you said that the school started to receive letters that they had never received letters before, at that time, did you know, and you didn’t know that basketball was the road for you.

AM: Right.

MB: Would you still have been choosing to go onto college after high school, was that in the mix for you to in some way shape or form for you to advance in the higher education, whether it would be before you even knew basketball presented that opportunity.

AM: We were always going, from my mom and dad whether you played sports or not you were going to college, because they never had the opportunity to do that. Where as they said look there are opportunities for you, this is what you are going to do. Whether you play basketball or not you will go to college, and you will do whatever, and you know at the time I actually wanted to be a nurse. That changed real quickly, but yeah, oh yeah, basketball or not, I had to go to college.

MB: So the two lessons to be learned in that are one, number one recognizing when an opportunity comes along something new that you hadn’t anticipated before these letters coming in and number two taking the initiative to put yourself out there to not wait for them to come to you for you to make sure you put yourself out there, so that you can create the best opportunity for yourself.

[33.25]

AM: And that’s mom and dad.

MB: That’s mom and dad.

AM: Mom and dad were the ones who said, well they recognized when nobody’s coming here well let’s go over all this literature for this camp, and this camp, and what’s going to give our daughter the best
opportunity, we have a kid who has some talent, we think she can get to college and get an athletic scholarship what can we do to help that along. So it was mom and dad sitting down and saying well how about this camp, it was my dad on the phone lobbying making calls, asking people, you have been through this for years, which is the best for my daughter, which isn’t going to do her any good.

MB: Right.

AM: So I mean my dad did the leg work.

MB: Right, your mom did the wedding cakes.

AM: Mom did the wedding cakes, mom worked extra hours, you know working night turns at Giant Eagle, and things like that, so we had the money to go to camp, then dad was on the phone, well I want her to be here, and I want her to be there and I want the best for my kid.

[34.09.5]
MB: And so, how did you, you could see the sacrifice that they had to make.

AM: Oh yeah, they made a lot of sacrifices.

MB: And so your response to that sacrifice I’m sure had something to do with how you performed also.

AM: Oh absolutely, even all the way through college, even now coaching, you know it’s always in the back of my mind, you know make your mom and dad proud, make sure you are setting a good example for these kids, make sure you’re doing and saying the right things make sure you have that work ethic that your mom and dad had because I want people to say, Wow, Annie was a good coach because..., or Annie was a good person because...I want, when people meet my parents, I want them to say man you got a great kid.

MB: Right.

AM: Your daughter is this, this, this and this. Because if they don’t, they are going to be like “I screwed up”. So even when I played I always did everything for my mom and dad to make them proud, and I don’t think they could care less if I scored 2,000 points, or whatever, but it made me feel better.

MB: Sure, sure.

AM: Yeah, it did.

MB: Sure, and so then talk about how then you came from Ellwood City to California.

AM: Strange, because I didn’t want to come here, umm-because I mean it was one of those things too, where you really had to be smart and that’s where you have to be mature when you are eighteen,
because we got a lot of Division 1 offers. I really wanted to go to Penn State and play and I went on my official visits, and then just one day, I’ll never forget, we went up, went to the football game, met with the coach, she actually told me I was too fat.

MB: [laughing]

AM: She said I was too fat to play, and I said I wasn’t too fat for the past two years, how did I get so fat that I can’t play for you.

MB: Right.

AM: Broke my heart, then you know you do, you start researching and talking to people about the difference between Division 1, Division 2, when it really came down to it, sure I wanted to be a Division 1 player and I could have, but it was with all the travel, how much would my mom and dad be able to see me play, so you come that sacrifice that they made comes into play.

MB: Okay.

AM: Mom and dad sacrificed how many years, how many family vacations for me to do this, well why not go to a school where they will be able to see every single game I play.

MB: Right.

AM: Because even the Lock Haven’s weren’t too far of a trip on a Saturday.

MB: Right.

AM: So when it came down to it, it was well what do you want to study, and how close was it to home, because after your four years you’re done.

MB: Right.

AM: There wasn’t a WNBA [Woman’s National Basketball Association] back then, not that I even could have, I had my chance to go overseas and play professional, but after my four years I had had enough. When it came to Cal, it was probably when we were in the playoffs, my senior year, I remember Nick Mandich showing up a game and the guy that was coaching our team was really good friends with him, and Nick was an assistant here.

MB: Okay.

AM: And he did, he had the great personality, just down to earth, sincere, you knew that he was, as my dad would say a BS’r, you knew where you stood with him, he was a kinda look you in the guy kind of guy. And said look this is our program, this is what we’re about, this is what we were, okay we’ll come
visit. We came down, there wasn’t Route 43, you had to go all the way to the Speers exit and driving down you are like where are we going, and Cal didn’t look like it does now.

MB: No not at all.

[37.05.4]
AM: Dr. Armenti wasn’t here.

MB: Right.

AM: Paul Flores was the coach, but we came we visited, and the offer was right, they had the education that we wanted, so it was kinda like one of those things, you look at the schedule, wow mom and dad we play Clarion [University], IUP [Indiana University of Pennsylvania], Edinboro [University], they are all so close to you, so you sit down and say I want my mom and dad to be able to see me play.

MB: Right.

AM: Here’s where I am going to go to school.

MB: Right.

AM: And it worked out, it worked out really well.

[37:31]
MB: Yeah, so kinda like everything, coming out of the clear blue sky, huh?

AM: Yeah it’s just something

MB: Didn’t really anticipate or see it coming.

AM: I mean I was this close to going to the University of Vermont.

MB: Really, and you also said something else about the education you said the education that I wanted was here, you mentioned earlier you thought you wanted to go into nursing and at some point you changed decided that was not for you.

AM: No.

MB: And when you came to Cal you were enrolled in the Elementary Education program, so tell us about that decision of that career thought change.

AM: Well I think it was just one of those things where some of my summer jobs I worked at a day care, and our softball coach in high school owned a day care at home so he was like do you want to work,
sure, I started working at the day care and just doing that and then being a volunteer coach for the bitty leagues, that’s what we call them around here now.

MB: Right.

AM: And that whole teaching aspect comes into play.

MB: Okay.

AM: So I was, I liked it, it was a lot of fun, I thought well I’ll go into it, and oddly enough when I came to Cal to enroll in Elementary Education, I liked it, I liked it, but it took all the way until my senior year that I actually took a semester where I didn’t take any education classes, and I wanted to take communication classes.

MB: Okay.

AM: And I tell my parents now because, I remember driving home to Ellwood City one day, my mom is like what are you doing here, I was like [sighing] is it too late to change my major.

MB: [laughing]

AM: Which is something that is not uncommon now right.

MB: Right.

AM: When I took these communication classes, I got A’s, I loved them.

MB: Yeah.

AM: Yeah, I went to school for 4 years you know for education and that’s what you’re gonna do. I stuck with it.

MB: Okay.

AM: But, and then you know it was easy for me and Dr. Sletus was my advisor at the time and when I was done, it was one of those things where tried to get a job and they said listen, if you want now’s the time you are one of those kids don’t graduate, go get a job and then try to come back to school, get your Master’s now while you can.

MB: Okay.

AM: And it was easy for me because I got an assistantship and I just stayed on here, I became a substitute teacher, kinda grew into the area, just kinda liked it.
MB: Okay.

AM: Got my Master’s Degree from Cal, went out landed a teaching job for a few years, and after I landed a teaching job I hated it more than anything in the world.

MB: Really.

AM: Because I was confined to one place.

MB: Okay, this was not you.

AM: This is so not me.

MB: No.

AM: Hated it.

MB: Your whole life up until that point in time had been nothing like that.

AM: Yeah, no I mean it was one of those things where I had this, being around athletics all my life I had this love for athletics, and I am thinking well what can I do.

MB: Right.

AM: To get into athletics, so [both talking at same time]

MB: Sorry.

AM: That’s alright no go ahead.

MB: Your second degree was is in Special Education.

AM: That’s what I taught.

MB: Okay, so

AM: I think that’s what burned me out.

MB: What, why did you choose Special Education, after Elementary Education.

AM: Honestly, because that’s what everybody said to.
MB: Okay.

AM: They said it was a fit, because you would be certified K-12, I was only certified K-8, if you are Special Ed, and I volunteered a ton of my time to Special Olympics, and they’re like you like it, your patient enough it’s a fit, they don’t tell you that 99 percent of your job is sitting down and doing paperwork.

MB: Right.

AM: [40.23.5] You get burned out quickly.

MB: Right.

AM: I hated it with a passion.

MB: Well I don’t blame you.

AM: And I got out of it.

MB: Yeah.

AM: And I am very happy that I did.

MB: And the Special Olympics, going back to that, when and how did you get involved with Special Olympics.

AM: We were here in Hamer [building on California University campus] one night and I was just shooting on my own, and a bunch of these kids came in with Nancy Skobel.

MB: Okay.

AM: And they said we are supposed to have practice, do you mind, I’m like no, no sure and they came in Hamer, and I’m like what are you guys doing? They said this is Special Olympics and Dr. Hunter, and Ashley were in there and he had come to our games so I knew, I recognized his face from being at our games, started talking to him, and he said hey would you mind, we could use some help. So that one night, it was just yeah sure, it was the most fun I ever had.

MB: Really.

AM: Because those kids could care less about anything, they just had fun, and they were what everybody should be, they were good sports, they didn’t care if you scored, or I scored.
MB: Yep.

AM: It was the best hour of my day, I'm like wow this is a lot of fun. They were like if you really liked it we are coming back on Thursday. I am like okay, so I went back on Thursday and then I just did it. And we went to the, it was the first time ever they got to go to Penn State for the state games.

MB: Okay.

AM: And we travelled with them, and oh it was probably one of best experiences I ever had.

MB: Really.

AM: You talk about learning lessons that did it.

MB: That did it for you.

AM: Absolutely...I mean those kids they love unconditionally, they appreciate the things in life that you should, so I just kept doing it. Then Summer Special Olympics turned into Winter and I kept doing it and doing it and doing it and then when I got involved in high school coaching, obviously it kinda was too much, I was still able to volunteer some of my time, but that group of kids that I had, for those many years grew up and they were out of it.

MB: Right.

AM: So...when they got out of it, I kinda got out of it. And then just focused my attention to high school.

MB: Well getting back to your college days here at Cal U, who were some important influences on you while you were here, and how did they influence you, and what was if anything what was really special to you about being at Cal U.

AM: I think the influence part I think too was when I first got here, Jan McConnell was the Athletic Director, and totally back then, right, having a female Athletic Director was unheard of.

MB: Okay.

AM: Absolutely...I mean those kids they love unconditionally, they appreciate the things in life that you should, so I just kept doing it. Then Summer Special Olympics turned into Winter and I kept doing it and doing it and doing it and then when I got involved in high school coaching, obviously it kinda was too much, I was still able to volunteer some of my time, but that group of kids that I had, for those many years grew up and they were out of it.

MB: Right.
AM: So when you would talk to her and see how she stood her ground, okay, this woman got a good head on her shoulders, I would say she is somebody, and then the guy that recruited me, was a really good guy, somebody you could look up to. He had everything that my parents were about.

MB: All right.

AM: He had a great personality, but he was very dedicated to his job, he was a very honest guy had a lot of integrity and he was an extremely hard worker and he put his heart and soul into what he did.

MB: Right.

AM: So it was one of those things, how could you not want to play for this guy.

MB: Right.

AM: He is very passionate about what he did, and then.

MB: And you mentioned his name, his name was...

AM: Nick Mandich, in fact I think he came to our playoff game last week, he called me up and said he wanted to come down, he still lives in Washington.

MB: Okay.

AM: And then you know, it was kinda oddly enough, it was weird, one of those things you just click with somebody, my senior year was the first time Dr. Armenti was here, in ninety-two [1992], and he came to one of our games, and I remember you had the hospitality room after the game and I remember meeting him and his wife, and I’ll never forget, I’m sitting on I guess it was a heater, because it was a classroom, and coach Flores coming over to me and saying the President of the University wants to meet you, he liked the way you played, you know sit up straight, do, don’t be embarrassed, it was the first time I met Dr. Armenti and then the rest is history. He is probably one of the biggest supporters of what I do, and our program here, so...

MB: Absolutely.

AM: I think those three people, you know by far.

MB: Okay.

AM: Are the most influential people, I’d say being here at Cal, and I think what sucks you into Cal is that family atmosphere.
MB: Okay.

AM: You know even now, when we bring recruits to campus, and now you just look it and you’re like holy cow, because it didn’t look like this when I was here.

MB: Sure, sure.

AM: But it’s one of those things, you just tell people don’t judge a book by its cover.

MB: Right.

AM: Wait till you get here and wait until you start meeting people and then you’ll see what were talking about because I could tell you about it until I am blue in the face but until you get here, and experience it, then you will see what I’m saying, Cal sucks you in, and I think it’s the close knit very personable, sometimes you go to Division I school and you have to make an appointment to see your own head coach.

MB: Sure.

AM: You don’t get a lot of that one on one attention.

MB: Right.

AM: Here, I think, we are a lot better than a lot of our sister schools, we do spend a lot of time one on one with people, go out of our way, do that little bit of extra, it doesn’t matter if it’s 4:00, if it’s 4:10 and you need something I’m going to go out of my way and do it for you.

MB: Right.

AM: You know that kind of thing, I think that family atmosphere and close knitness [if that is a word] it’s kinda of what sucked me in, and it brought me back to Cal.

[45.21.7]

MB: Yeah, yeah, and I would agree with you on that, I am a two time Cal grad and I’ve been an employee for 17 years and I often talk about the Cal U family and the Cal U community, I’ve never found finer people anywhere and as you say, if you need help at any time, people are willing to step up and help you.

AM: Absolutely.

MB: I think there’s a lot to be said for that and I think that regardless as you say in some other schools or institutions you don’t get that one on one, as a matter of fact you are lucky sometimes if you can even talk to your professor or if anyone even knows who you are.
AM: That’s right.

MB: So I would concur with you on that one.

AM: Yeah.

MB: So Cal has been a good experience and it continues to grow, and I think it has the potential to influence a lot of other people coming after us.

AM: Oh, absolutely.

MB: And, and the things that you’ve done, to help pave the way, those are the things, that have paved the way, just like other people paved the way for you.

AM: Sure.

MB: You have been paving the way for those other people here at Cal. And let’s share a little bit with the audience about your coaching experience and what I’d like to talk about, tell us the different levels you coached at, and maybe the different ways you communicated with the different ages of young ladies, that you have been involved with.

AM: I think, I mean, I’ve always coached high school, and when I was in Grad School here, I coached at California High School [school district in Washington County, PA] and I coached at Uniontown [school district in Fayette County, PA], but I also coached AAU [Amateur Athletic Union] basketball, in which we travelled all over the country playing, and that was a great experience, because that gives you a lot of experience coaching, at an elite level.

MB: Okay.

AM: You know because the talent is a little bit different, in high school you have kids that you really think want to be there, but you still have some kids that are just there because they want to belong to something.

MB: Right.

AM: So, you know, in high school your getting a 2 hour time allotment, in which you try to squeeze everything in and you have to teach the best kid as much as the kid that doesn’t have as much talent.

MB: Sure.

AM: You have to spend as much time, whereas when you are coaching AAU [Amateur Athletic Union] it’s every kid is the best kid.
MB: Okay.

AM: You know, so I coached high school, I coached AAU for ten years, and I coached high school for about seven or eight, I coached AAU more than I coached high school, high school, I think people know this, it’s disappointing, because it’s extremely political, and it makes it really difficult and I’m headstrong, I’m blunt, I’m very forward.

MB: Right.

AM: And that was probably extremely, it was the hardest challenge was coaching high school basketball because I knew what it would take to be successful, I knew what I wanted to instill in the girls that I was coaching, but sometimes you hit that roadblock where you’re not allowed to teach them what you want to teach them.

MB: Right.

AM: And you want to do what is right by the team but there is a school board or there is a principal, telling you nope you are going to do it this way, so I probably didn’t last as long as high school as I wanted to because in high school I really wanted to make a difference with kids.

MB: Right.

AM: I was at Uniontown, I had a lot of kids who came from single parent families, or no parent families, so to me it wasn’t about teaching the game of basketball, I tried to incorporate it’s about life to, a lot of things you learn playing athletics, which I think people overlook, you can instill in kids, it’s a life lesson.

MB: Right.

[48.29.4] AM: So high school by far was my biggest challenge. And I think the reason I got out of it was I couldn’t handle the politics of it anymore.

MB: Right.

AM: I like to play the game, but I don’t like that game.

MB: Sure, sure.

AM: You know what I mean, so I had to make a decision, and I got out of it, where as at AAU you don’t face those challenges, it is about the game, it is about the lessons, and you can teach those, and then when Coach Kendall got hired here at Cal, I was still here, and I had started the booster club, I noticed that the men had one, and the women didn’t.
MB: Okay.

AM: So I went to Karen and Dr. Pucci, and said I want to start a booster club, why don’t these girls have, I didn’t have it, why don’t they have it? So they told me what I needed to do, so we started that, now I started working closer with Coach Kendall, and started talking to him one day about, hey there’s this kid here, there’s this kid here, and he was like, you played here, so then in time he said why don’t you volunteer. So that’s how I got into coaching at Cal, and volunteer and did a lot of stuff for them.

MB: Right.

AM: I would go to practice every day, then at night I would be the PA [public address] announcer.

MB: Right.

AM: You know then go to practice the next day and then when he left, I was involved in the hiring of Darcy.

MB: Okay.

AM: And then when Darcy came, it was like one of those things too, instant click, you knew you had somebody good, wow this is going to be however long she’s here.

MB: Right.

AM: Then started getting involved with her, then I got hired as a part time coach, and I have been involved here ever since. It is night and day, people will see me, do you want to go back to coaching high school, oh heck no, abso, never.

MB: No, no.

AM: People say never say never, no never, I will never, when I am done coaching college basketball, I will never go back to high school.

MB: Okay.

AM: There is politics in everything, you do.

MB: Sure.

AM: But you know you are older, more mature now, you know how to deal with it differently. But this is just...it’s just a whole other life when your coaching college basketball. From the backgrounds of the
kids, to just different challenges than you face in high school, you know because college is different, the travel, the places you go, I’m still never amazed where basketball takes you.

MB: Right.

AM: What we get to see, even when we make our team now, when I say make, we pretty much lay down the law, you will do community service, you will give back, you know you will do these things because you need, a lot of kids now a days in my opinion I think come into college, whether they are an athlete or not, with their hand out, what can you do for me.

[50:45]
MB: Right.

AM: That’s the most frustrating thing to me as a college coach, these kids were stars in high school and they come here and they’re like got their hand out, and I’m like uh-huh in your four years that’s going to change.

MB: Okay.

AM: So Brooke Winters is a great example, she is an All American on our team, this was her senior year.

MB: Okay.

AM: When she came, she was one of those kids from Pittsburgh, who was a stud, as we like to say, then she came in thinking well, do that for me.

MB: Right.

AM: Why aren’t you making my schedule, what are you talking about, you know, what do you mean why am I not making your schedule, you can make your own schedule.

MB: Right.

AM: That’s what now, that’s all people do. And from the time, talk about a transformation from the time that kid was a freshman until now, she went from being a kid to being a woman.

MB: Really.

AM: And that’s something that we’re proud to say we had a hand in between Darcy and Mark and our coaching staff. And that’s something we take a lot of pride in, she’s a 3.5 student, she’s an All American on the basketball floor, she does give back to the community as a kid and I think she will when you talk to her, her overall experience at Cal is something we wanted, like I had such a great experience here,
and I want to make sure that any kid that comes through has that same experience I do, I want them talking about Cal ten to fifteen years from now.

MB: Sure.

AM: I want her to say Annie I got a really good player for you, and I want her to come to Cal because my experience was good.

MB: Right.

AM: So, and you can do that at the college level.

MB: Right, okay, you can have a different kind of an impact.

AM: Absolutely.

MB: A much greater, individual impact on an individual.

AM: Sure.

MB: They are more willing and open to listen to that and particularly you set the standard before that, you set a bar, they know as just when you were shooting the free throws years ago, that people saw you as a leader so they were willing to come on board, well they have seen what you have done at Cal, and again in all respects, not just playing basketball, your involvement with committees, and communities, and the initiative you have taken if when I look at your resume, and I look at the number of committees you have listed six, I’m sure you have probably been on more, but what was really stuck out in my mind on that, out of the six, you were either the co-chair or the chair, or the President of four of those six, so you seem to always gravitate towards that leadership role because of your competitive nature.

[52.46.3]

AM: You can call me a control freak that might be what it is.

MB: Control freak

AM: It might be obsessive compulsive, I have to....

MB: [laughing]

AM: Well I think it is one of those things to like, if somebody asks me, I always get the why do you do so much, don’t you know how to say no, I’m like, if somebody asks me, you know then it’s one of those things, where okay I’ll try it, and then you go to a meeting and the next thing you know, well this is pretty interesting.
AM: And then, I am one of those people it’s funny, it’s an extreme, it’s like all or nothing, if I am going to do it, I am going to do it all out, head on fire, or I am not going to do it at all. There isn’t any in between for me.

MB: Right.

AM: And that comes from being an athlete I think.

MB: Sure, sure.

AM: I want to do it right, I really want to do it right, so you know that’s why, I don’t mind responsibility.

MB: Right.

AM: Because sometimes you get on a committee like that, you take it as a challenge.

MB: That’s right.

AM: You know, I was telling you before we came on about our golf committee, and you know somebody asked me if I would get into the fundraising roll, I never thought I would be into it, but it’s with athletics, it gets, you know we raise money for our students to be able to come to school, and play basketball, football or whatever.

MB: Right.

AM: I am the only female.

MB: Right.

AM: Talk about a challenge, but you know my boss had said I want to make you a co-chair of this, you know what do you mean a co-chair what does that involve, well here’s your goal, this is what you have to raise, this is what we have to do, this is how many forces we have to have, this is what we need to do, well you put me in charge, I said yes, well it’s my name attached to that.

MB: Right.

AM: So just like anything if my name is attached to that, I want people to say wow this is a great event.

MB: Right.

AM: Because my name is attached to it.
MB: Right.

AM: Then once you do it, you do it well, you’re stuck with it.

[54:12.7]
MB: [Laughing]

AM: They’re not taking that now, unless I retire that’s not being taking away.

MB: No, that’s right.

AM: But it’s okay.

MB: Yeah, yeah.

AM: It’s good.

[54.20.1]
MB: Yeah, well interesting, another interesting aspect, you talked about your love of communications and then you somehow got involved in being the PA [public address] announcer for the sports here at Cal U, share with us how that came about and how you were accepted as a female sports announcer.

AM: Yeah.. that was, well actually we..when Dave Smith used to be the PA announcer for a lot of the sports, well then he became the sports information director, so it was too much of a conflict, he couldn’t be at an event, doing it, so they were looking, well they said...they were really having a hard time finding anybody to do it, so they asked me, well I knew the game, I had no idea what I was doing, but it just came to me, it was one of those things, I just sat down at the game, got the microphone and your personality comes through, because you have to have a personality to do that.

MB: Right.

AM: So I did the women’s games and then Coach Brown said, well I want you to do our games, oh if you don’t mind, I don’t mind. He didn’t mind at all, so I started doing the men’s and the women’s games.

MB: Okay.

AM: Coach Brown came up one day and said you know bud, there’s no other woman in the country that does a men’s game, well yeah, then Mike Kulokayowski was here.

MB: Okay.
AM: And he’s like well Dave did football, Annie you have a great...do football, then I started doing the football games and I think it was Bruce Wald that said stud...there’s no woman that does football in the country.

MB: [Laughing]

AM: Well I did not look at it like that, I had fun doing it.

MB: Right, right.

AM: People are coming in and saying, is that a woman up there, this is great, you have a woman doing men’s sports.

MB: Yeah.

AM: And I just did it, I loved it though.

MB: Right.

AM: I just kinda stuck with it, I looked forward to doing it, it was a lot of fun, kept me involved with athletics.

MB: Sure.

AM: Got me into doing a lot more things, but it was pure enjoyment.

MB: Right, right.

AM: Then like now I still do, softball because it doesn’t conflict with basketball.

MB: Sure.

AM: This year I did a few of men’s basketball games, when the regular guy couldn’t do it.

MB: Okay.

AM: But you know somebody else does ours now, but I still...baseball doesn’t play here anymore, so I can’t do baseball, when Coach Lockhart came, they had somebody else in mind, so I kinda got out of doing the football Public Address announcing, but I still do, have my hands in it.

MB: Right.
AM: I always said one day, I wanted to boot the guy off the Steelers and do that.

MB: There you go.

AM; I did, I still liked him but.

MB: I was just going to say.

AM: He’s kinda old I think.

MB: But you still have a goal there.

AM: I do have a goal, but I think they have somebody in mind though.

MB: Hey.

AM: Talk about politics.

MB: You never knew before where you’d get to be. So you know...

AM: Someday I might meet the right people.

MB: You’re so competitive enough, that again, if that opportunity were there, you would recognize it.

AM: Oh yeah, I think it would be great.

MB: And I know you would take the initiative to do that.

AM: Oh yeah, I think it would be great.

MB: I certainly think that’s a statement of your legacy here at Cal U, and by the way, what do you consider, do you feel you have a legacy here at Cal U?

AM: Not yet, not yet in fact, we talked about that well, two years ago now, when I got that Loyalty and Service award.

MB: Yes.

AM: From the alumni office, I even said in my speech, you know it’s about giving back and to me you know at some point, you know I’m still kinda young, financially you might not be able to give back as much as you want, but to me at this point, it’s about giving back my time, I think my legacy at some point, because I will retire from Cal, unless I get fired someday, you never know, but I hope not, I’ll retire
from Cal and I think I want my legacy to be “a person who was giving, not necessarily always financially, but giving of their time”.

[57:38.6]
MB: Right.

AM: And I was always the person who went out of their way to do for others, that golden rule, do unto others as you want done to you.

MB: Right.

AM: I think that’s something great to live by, that’s what my parents live by and that’s what I want to live by.

MB: Right.

AM: So I think that’s how I want my legacy to be. I think I have a long road to fulfill that yet.

MB: Do you have a message that you would like to send to future generations of Cal U students and other women in general?

AM: Well, I think just to other women in general because I think even though it is 2010, believe it or not there are still, unfortunately there are gender equity issues, still, and I think it’s one of those things, where you could be one of those people when you are faced with a challenge of complaining about it but not doing anything about it, or you can somewhat complain about it, I don’t like to say complain, bring it to light, and try to make a difference like make change in a good way. There are still a lot of things I see in my life that might not be right, or it shouldn’t be that way, it should be this way, so I would tell somebody don’t just sit back and wait for somebody else to do, do it yourself.

MB: Right.

AM: And you could take heat for it and you might take heat for it, but isn’t it worth it, if you affect the change for the better, and that’s what I would, and that what we tell our kids now, and that’s what I would continue to tell women, certainly, but even guys.

MB: Right.

AM: You know because you could have the reverse gender equity as well.

MB: Absolutely.

AM: But, yeah that is what I would say, make a difference, I try to spend my life making a difference, in some way shape or form.
MB: Right, right.

AM: I would tell anybody to try to do that.

MB: That’s an outstanding.

AM: Be persistent.

MB: Be persistent.

AM: You have to be.

MB: There is a lot to be said for persistency.

AM: Absolutely.

MB: Yeah.

AM: Absolutely, one of the...last year at our banquet, Lindsay Johnson, one of the biggest compliments she could have given me was the kids bought the coaches something, the one thing the kids bought me last year was two plaques about determination and persistence.

MB: Right.

AM: And I have them displayed in my locker now, because to me that is probably one of the best compliments somebody could give me.

MB: Right, I believe I have a quote from Calvin Coolidge, and I can’t give you an exact quote right now, the world being full of geniuses, world being full of idiots, world being full of this, but it said there is no substitute for persistence, and persistence will win out overall all the time. So I think your message is timeless and I think that the values that you have espoused by everything you’ve done here at Cal, have been shown that, have demonstrated that, have validated that, that is a good path to take, and I think that certainly your accomplishments, you are a woman of accomplishment, and we are happy to have you here at Cal, and let me ask you if there is any parting thing that you would like to say that I haven’t asked you about, that you would like to bring up.

[1:00:19.2]

AM: No I don’t think so, I just think you know people, Cal is a good place, I mean I think this, when someone asked me to do this project, I mean it was a no-brainer for me.

MB: Right.
AM: To do this, whether I was friends with the people who are doing it or not, I think it’s good to get the message out there to people, and I have my greatest memories of life even from high school, my best memories are from Cal. My greatest friendships, my best friends have all come from Cal, and it’s one of those things, anywhere you go in life, no matter where you work or what you do, there is always something that people don’t like, you can always find a gripe about something, but I found that being here, I have far more positive things, than I do gripes. That’s probably the one thing that keeps me coming back every day, and I am one of those people, when Monday morning at 5:30 rolls around I get up, I’m not, oh man I gotta go to work, I love coming to work, so I think that says a lot about Cal, and the people who are here.

MB: Right, right, I have often said that I have never worked a day since I got hired at Cal.

AM: That’s right.

MB: Yeah.

AM: It’s an enjoyable place to come to.

MB: And I would like to say that you can add to your lists of firsts, as the first woman to participate in the women of Cal, Cal U’s Women of Accomplishment.

AM: Yeah.


AM: Good.

MB: And we are glad you’re that person, we feel that you exemplify many of the virtues and things that are good about Cal.

AM: Thanks.

MB: And on behalf of California University, The Women’s Studies, and the Women’s Center, and the P.E.A.C.E. Project, and the Library of Congress Center for Oral History, we thank you for all that you have done and thank you for what you will continue to do for Cal, and I would just like to say I have been privileged to have you as a colleague and a friend and I feel privileged to have shared this time with you.

AM: Wow, my pleasure, you are very welcome. Thank you.

Music starts........